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**Front cover:** Detail of the statue of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in the College church. Photo: Fr Alexander Balzanella

**Back cover:** Palazzola from the air

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# Editorial

JOACHIM TEIGEN

It has become almost traditional to apologise for delay in publication. In present circumstances, however, we feel more like bursting into a psalm of praise at being able to appear at all. For the fact that we can still claim to be the official organ of a living college we have to shower our gratitude in many directions.

**J**hus began the editorial of the November 1940 issue of this magazine, and I would be hard-pressed to find words more aptly describing my own sentiments. While in the process of writing this year's editorial, it suddenly occurred to one of my brethren that it would be quite the special year for the magazine, resulting in his exclaiming, "What a time to be the editor of *The Venerabile!*". Indeed. And when this issue reaches all you readers, do know that this editor might very well be bursting into a psalm of praise at being able to publish *The Venerabile* in the most extraordinary of years.

And my gratitude likewise shall be showered in many directions. To my team, Elliot, Martin and Edward, for having helped and put up with annoying messages while in their respective dioceses having plenty of other things to do. I thank all the contributors who have given of their time, generously providing that which makes up this magazine. I owe a special thanks to Fr James McAuley, Academic Tutor and former *Venerabile* editor, for having guided me through the last stages of finalising this issue, carefully formatting everything, and never letting me go more than two days without the question, "How's *The Venerabile* going?". And thank you to Fr Rector for helping me throughout the process, giving much needed advice as to whom to ask for contributions, with himself becoming one of the major contributors!

It seems a natural reaction in challenging times for one's thoughts to wander in the direction of ages past, to give us a clearer vision of who we are and where we ought to go. The observant reader will notice that many of the articles this year do indeed offer a rare glimpse into the historical life of this College in all its variety. With feature articles covering things both old and new, a *Nova et Vetera* section, which had gradually transformed into something quite different than its historical forebear, was deemed superfluous this year. Moreover, the absence of the Sports Report is itself a testimony to the Exile of 2020, as the scheduled sports activities were unable to take place. Another consequence of the Exile and pandemic of 2020 is that many jubilees and historic occasions, which would otherwise have characterised a magazine such as this, have had to settle for a more sober coverage. A concrete expression of this is the choice of a cover photo. It seemed appropriate that in a year, when Christendom has entrusted itself to the intercession of Our Lady, her statue in the College Church, fondly missed by many students during the Exile, should adorn the front cover. We hope that the two articles describing (very different) scenes from a *villeggiatura* will at

the very least serve as a token of the immense gratitude we current and former students owe to the acquisition of Palazzola 100 years ago this year.

Another thing the observant reader might notice is that the name of the editor sounds conspicuously non-English, and they would be right. In his search for an editor, Fr Rector went to the ends of our great continent to find one, and the lot fell upon this Norwegian. The Scandinavian presence in English seminaries is nothing new, but please indulge me while I seek to justify the Norwegian editorship of the English College's official magazine. The Church whose son I am was founded on the Christianisation work of St Olav, who brought with him not only the Gospel, but also bishops and priests from England to establish ecclesial structures in his own kingdom. Thus, it has been claimed that Norway's is the only daughter church of the English Church. Regardless of the historical merits of such a bold statement, please consider the publication of *The Venerabile* 2020 as a humble offer of thanksgiving to the English Church by her much indebted grandson.

If the last year has shown us one thing, it is that extraordinary blessings can come out of even the most challenging times. One of them is to be brought back to the essentials of who we are and what we do as a Church and as a College training future priests. Where else could we seek refuge than in the rock of salvation who is God Himself? And did not the hunger of the faithful for the sacraments during the past months bring back memories of the days of the College Martyrs? Again, I am sure that countless blessings have been bestowed on us, and so the last, but foremost showering of gratitude goes to Our Lord, who never abandoned our College community, but rather tied us more closely together than before in a fraternal bond of love. So, I will end by quoting our College proto-martyr, St Ralph Sherwin, as he wrote to his uncle and friends the eve of his execution in 1581: "God grant us both His grace and blessing until the end, that, living in His great fear and dying in His favour, we may enjoy the other forever."

*Our Lady, Health of the Sick, pray for us!*  
*St Ralph Sherwin and Companions, pray for us!*



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## The Exile of 2020

MGR PHILIP WHITMORE

*W*ednesday 4 March 2020 is a date that will long remain fixed in our memories - and in the history of the VEC. It is the day the Italian Government decided to close schools and universities, initially for a ten-day period.

Prior to that, the Corona Virus was a news item that evoked a variety of responses. We had lived through swine 'flu, bird 'flu, and SARS. In each case we knew that a deadly disease was spreading in certain parts of the world, and we were advised to take precautions against infection. But in each case, the fears subsided and the impact on our lives was small. Many thought the Corona Virus would be similar. The statistics for deaths in China were sobering - but as many people pointed out, the number of annual deaths from 'flu was similar.

Towards the end of February, we heard news of an outbreak in northern Italy - that is to say, a number of cases were identified and measures were taken to isolate ten small towns. Passengers arriving at Rome airports began to experience temperature screening. It was beginning to look more serious. We knew that some of the Colleges in Rome were making plans to evacuate, should matters deteriorate.

In College, we took our cue from Foreign Office advice, which at the beginning of March did not counsel any particular action to those living in Rome, only to those who had visited the ten Northern Italian towns that had been isolated. Of course, we

monitored the advice carefully, realising it could change. As long as the Pontifical Universities remained open, it seemed only right that we should remain too.

The fateful afternoon arrived. As it happens, I was at a meeting of rectors in the Gregorian University when I learned of the Government's decree, closing schools and universities throughout the land with immediate effect. For at least the following ten days, no teaching would take place in the universities - instead, they would develop methods of "distance teaching". I arrived back in College with only a little time to spare before our evening community Mass. There was a palpable sense of unrest and uncertainty. Having consulted the staff, I made an announcement at the end of Mass: all the students were asked to gather in the Garden Room at 9.30pm for a briefing.

The timing gave us space for an emergency staff meeting, at which to work out a plan of action. We saw that some of the students were uneasy at the prospect of remaining in Rome, especially since at that stage, the UK and the Nordic countries seemed largely free of infection compared with Italy. We realised we should give the men the option of returning home if they wished. They would be expected to return to Rome if and when the universities reopened. It was clear that some bishops were urging their students to return home. Meanwhile, those of us remaining in College would adopt a different timetable. Lectures would have to be followed online. We would celebrate Mass at 12.30pm. And following the advice of the Vicariate of Rome, we would adopt precautionary measures during the liturgy - emptying our holy water stoups and avoiding the sign of peace.

About half the students opted to return home. A small group of students went for a retreat to Bagnoregio from 5 to 8 March, as planned. There was a particularly fine spirit in the house for those few days when our numbers were significantly reduced. Many made comparisons with the days of the blitz, when our forebears had to band together to support one another, much as we were doing then. House jobs could no longer be carried out in the usual way, because so many were absent. Everyone had to chip in and help out. And everyone did.

The "new normal" began on Monday 9 March, when the retreatants were back with us and we entered into a pattern that we thought might last for some time. It lasted only a few hours.

A lockdown was introduced in Lombardy beginning on Sunday 8 March. There were to be severe restrictions on movement. As the lockdown was announced in advance, it led to a mass exodus from Milan on the Saturday evening. On the Sunday itself, a decree of the Vicariate of Rome announced the cessation of public liturgies in churches. We would no longer be able to welcome visitors to Mass in College.

In the course of Monday 9 March, news reached us that the health service in Milan was completely overwhelmed. Observers of the situation in Milan were in no doubt that the lockdown would soon be extended to Rome. Life in College could become very difficult if no one was allowed out and no one allowed in. We realised we would need to evacuate the remaining students. Within hours of my announcement of this decision, the lockdown was indeed extended nationwide. Fortunately, the students were still able to travel home the following day. Fr Anthony Doe and Fr John Metcalfe also travelled home, while the other three staff members remained behind, holding the fort.

\* \* \* \* \*

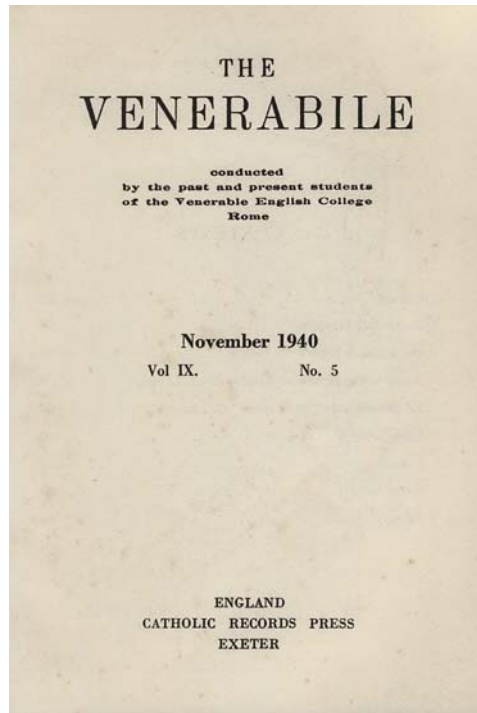
Thus began the exile of 2020. It must count as the fourth in our history, after the Napoleonic exile (1798-1818), the Second World War (1940-46) and the legionella episode (2000-2001). This time, at least, the journey was more straightforward than in 1940 (see *The Venerabile*, November 1940).

The universities had been offering online teaching since the previous week. We now had to adopt a similar approach to formation. We agreed that formation tutors would contact their students each day for at least a brief exchange, with more extended conversations at agreed times. Fr Anthony continued to offer spiritual direction online. Rosanna Giacometto, who remained with her family in Rome, offered human formation online. Pastoral classes, with whatever adjustments were needed, could continue to take place via online platforms. And I undertook to send a daily message to the whole dispersed community.

At first our intention was to reconvene after Easter - in Rome if possible, but should that prove impossible, then in England. There was talk of using the premises at Ushaw. Sadly, the rate of infection continued to rise in Italy - and within two weeks of our men's return, the UK went into lockdown itself. It must have been particularly trying for those students who had self-isolated for two weeks on their return, to emerge from their quarantine into a national lockdown.

So the closure of the universities in Italy was extended way beyond the initial ten-day period. The Holy Father led prayers for the worldwide pandemic from an empty St Peter's Square. His audiences and morning Masses were live-streamed, as were his Easter liturgies. Those of our students fortunate enough to be staying in presbyteries were in many cases involved in arranging the live-streaming of parish liturgies themselves. Those not fortunate enough to be living in the same household as a priest were obliged to fast from the sacraments for months on end, like so many of the faithful.

As it became clear that we would not be able to reconvene after Easter, either in Italy or in the UK, we had to rethink our programme. We decided to reinstitute the Thursday conference and House Groups for the six weeks of the semester remaining after Easter. Online platforms made this possible. After the conference, we would pray Vespers. To make this work, we had to mute all but two participants, while inviting the



*The front page of The Venerabile November 1940.*

## EXODUS, 1940

Probably lights were burning late in the Government offices on the Wilhelmstrasse on the night of Wednesday, May 15th, 1940. Reports were being precisely filed and indexed from Rome, which at this period Teutonic thoroughness had seen to it should be truly spy-ridden with Nazi agents in and out of uniform—all to weave a steel net to strangle any remnant of Catholicism in the policy of the Fascist State, whether at home or abroad. And in Rome, though the conscript soldiers down in the Farnese must have realised semi-consciously how near Italy was to the folly of war, yet, as they straggled home to barracks after a day's vigilance against "spontaneous" demonstrations, they looked puzzled on noting the brilliant lit windows on the Monserra' and the Montoro. For it was 10.30 p.m. of a day which we had spent in feverish activity. The rooms and stairs still presented a scene of savage confusion. Wildly-scrawled notices flapped lop-sidedly from wall and door; a musty tang hung in the air, and many a trunk, spilling over with objects made priceless by years of hoarding, tripped some unwary *chargé d'affaires* in his career down the corridor, so that his scattered orders became menaces, or finally petitions; but still no one listened. Each man was tortured with the same tantalising problem: whether to leave or not to leave a zimarra, a cherished print or rare text book. Half-clad figures yelled derisively to one another as they added yet another rag to

*The first page of the article describing the Exile of 1940.*

others to join in silently with one choir or the other. After Vespers, the students were divided into what are technically known as “breakout rooms”, so they could discuss together questions arising from the conference.

The universities were faced with the prospect of conducting examinations at a distance. Oral exams could only take place via online platforms. Written exams could not be invigilated. Many professors asked for papers to be submitted in lieu of formal exams. Many students reported that the workload increased after the closure of the universities. Perhaps the professors thought their students now had no other responsibilities! I took every opportunity to disabuse them of this notion.

Looking beyond the exams, we held onto the hope that we would be able to reconvene for the *villeggiatura*, giving us an opportunity to reconnect with one another, to say good-bye to our leavers, and to proceed as planned with the ministries, candidacy and diaconal ordination. By 11 May, however, it was clear that this would not be possible either. Palazzola was closed, the Diocese of Albano was reluctant to give permission for any of the ceremonies to be conducted, international travel was difficult if not impossible, and it was likely that quarantine requirements would be strictly imposed.

At the time of writing, the exams are about to begin. We plan to reduce the frequency of contact during June, while making it clear that students are welcome to contact us whenever they wish. The year will close with a live-streamed liturgy from the College Church on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. We are sorry not to be able to say a proper good-bye to our leavers. We will look for an opportunity to invite them back for a celebration with the community at some point next year, if international travel becomes possible once again.

It is heartening to see the figures for infections and deaths declining markedly in Italy. We hope and pray that the UK will follow suit. International borders are gradually being reopened, as Italy among other countries seeks to attract tourists over the summer months. We pray that we may be spared a “second spike” of infections, but we are conscious that September could see a lockdown reintroduced. With this in mind, we are preparing for what could turn out to be a very different style of community life in the autumn, when we are determined to reconvene here in College, if we possibly can. Our Lady, Health of the Sick, pray for us!



**MONSIGNOR PHILIP WHITMORE** is a priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster. He has been Rector of the Venerable English College since 2013.



# The 44 Martyrs – Martyrs’ Day Homily 2019

CARDINAL MARC OUELLET

Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly. (1 Peter 4:13)

Dear friends, I am honoured and very grateful to celebrate with you the commemoration of Saint Ralph Sherwin and his companions, the 44 martyrs of the Venerable English College, less than two months after the canonisation of John Henry Newman, another glorious witness in the history of Catholicism in the United Kingdom. It is fitting that as we remember these illustrious Christians, we immerse ourselves in prayer and commune with their heavenly joy to ask for their help so that we can better accomplish our own mission as witnesses of Jesus Christ in our times.

The bloody episodes that for long followed the schism of England in the 16th century left an indelible mark on English culture and institutions, but they did not succeed in breaking the ties between those who remained Catholics and the Roman Pontiff, whose mission is to guarantee the unity and universality of the Christian faith. Saint Ralph Sherwin and his companions, each in their own way, have borne witness to the blood shed in the name of the faith. Fifty years after the schism and spurred on by an education that remained discreetly Catholic or by an experience of conversion, they

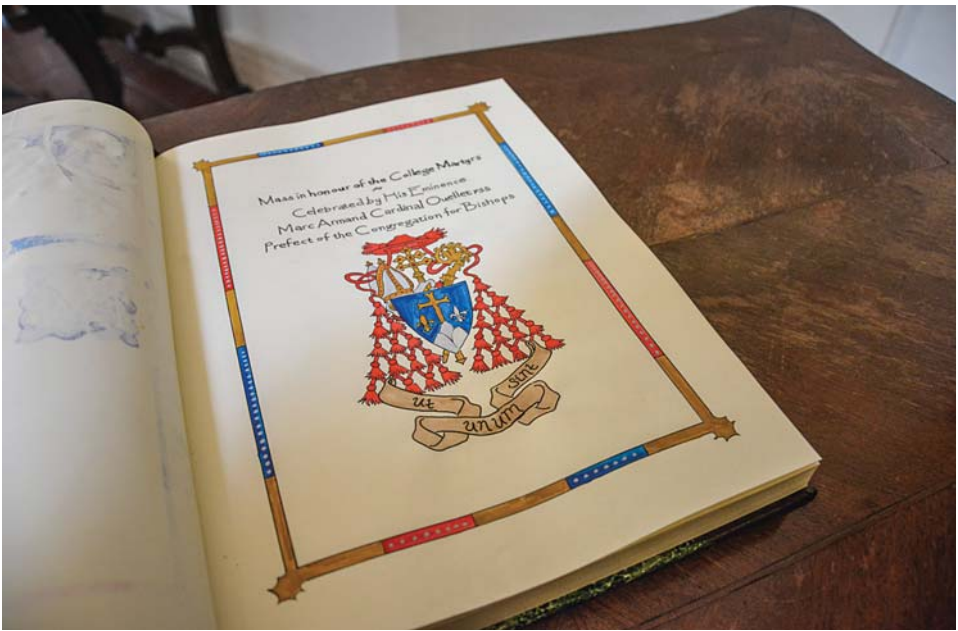
became priests with the help of the Roman College that prepared them to risk their own lives for the restoration of the Catholic faith in their homeland. To run this risk was to respond to the conditions of their personal faith but also to the vibrant awareness that, by virtue of its history and tradition, this people belonged to the sole fold of Christianity.

Regardless of how an independent view may interpret their passion as youthful enthusiasm, tinged with idealism, or as untimely and superficial zeal faced with their chances of success, nonetheless these courageous men, in the face of adversity, could neither bring themselves to surrender nor to compromise. They were well aware of the awaiting dangers of imprisonment, torture and death, yet they were willing to face martyrdom, drawing support from their preparation based on the Gospel: “Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life.”

The first of the list, Ralph Sherwin, burned with a sacred internal fire similar to that of the Apostle Paul who told the Corinthians: “I did not come with sublimity of words or of wisdom. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” He longed to leave for England, already anticipating the supreme battle, not out of reckless bravery that could be attributed to his fiery temperament, but out of an intimate call to bear witness to the absolute value of the faith. At the time of his arrest as an underground Catholic priest and of his conviction for high treason, he cried out using the words of Scripture and of the Sacred Liturgy: “This day that the Lord has made is a day of joy! Let us rejoice exultantly!” Such words are words of madness in the eyes of the world, an incomprehensible statement. But for one who “prefers nothing to Christ”, and who understands his life as a response of love to the love of the Crucified One, it is the supreme wisdom that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Glory, instils into his privileged witnesses.

The Venerable English College’s first martyr bears a brilliant testimony to the evangelical beatitude of persecution, but it came at the cost of his terrible sufferings that made his martyrdom exemplary and unforgettable. Newman describes in a well-known sermon the fate of the first martyrs of the Church, stating that the suffering and death of these martyrs was as foreign to ancient culture as it is to ours for two reasons: “First, their suffering was voluntary. They lived their lives with warnings of persecution, threats of torture if they continued in the Way, and daily anxiety over their own safety and the safety of their loved ones. Their fears were compounded by temptations to abandon the faith, and pressure from those who did abandon it to join them”. The second reason was that “the sufferings of martyrdom were for the most part public, attended with every circumstance of ignominy and popular triumph, as well as with torture”. This was indeed the case for most martyrs persecuted by the British Crown, which needed to assert its absolute authority over the Kingdom’s religion through public and terrifying killings.

Although on another level, this was also to some extent Newman’s destiny. He was subjected to a long struggle with his conscience before God in less tragic but no less difficult circumstances, for he was internally led to courageous acts of faith that sanctified him but also crucified him in the following of Christ, such as isolation and



*The Visitors' Book, skilfully illustrated by Edward Hauschild for the occasion.  
Photo: Theodore Sharrock*

exposure to being misunderstood, suspected, denounced and persecuted, even at the time of his belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. "Rejoice to the extent that you share in the sufferings of Christ, so that when his glory is revealed you may also rejoice exultantly."

The Word of God from the First Epistle of St Peter singularly illuminates the passion of the 44 martyrs and their readiness for martyrdom. This Word also places us under God's judgment with regard to the limits of our faith and our time. These martyrs actively sought to incarnate their love of Christ through a disposition to suffering that amazes and frightens us today, despite our familiarity with the contemporary persecutions of Christians which are more numerous and gratuitous than ever. This is because we live in societies that flee suffering using all means, including alcohol, drugs and assisted suicide, which in my country is designated by the veiled appellation of "medical assistance to die". Are we not spiritually at the opposite end of the spectrum from martyrdom, still inhabited perhaps by a theoretical remnant of faith, a pick-and-choose sort of religiosity, but unable to offer our bodies in sacrifice to share in the sufferings of Christ? Is not the willingness to accept trials, illnesses and constraints of life the first step of a Christian readiness to suffer?

There is a vocation crisis everywhere in the West, based on demographic issues, but mostly caused by a decline of faith in Divine Love. For, in order to give oneself totally in priestly celibacy, consecrated life and even in sacramental marriage, must one not be grasped and challenged by the beauty of Love as revealed in Jesus Christ? "Only Love is worthy of Faith" writes the great Swiss theologian von Balthasar. May the legion of martyrs, who call upon us today, foster the development of a vocational culture under the sign of Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, for their testimony of love until death is proof of the power of the eschatological irruption of the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ. May our preaching often echo it and constantly





*Cardinal Ouellet presiding at the Mass on Martyrs' Day.  
Photo: Theodore Sharrock*

regenerate us in the evangelical joy of which Pope Francis often speaks: “If you are insulted for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.”

I would be remiss if I did not mention the particular and specific significance of the Venerable English College’s martyrs, which consists in their adherence to the Supreme Pontiff, the universal Pastor, chosen and established by Christ, and Guarantor of the visible unity of the Church as Bishop of Rome. The fruitful seed of these martyrs has protected and preserved the purity of the Catholic faith among the people of God who walk in England. We can see this in the new fruits of ecumenical rapprochement: respect, fraternity, reconciliation, dialogue and exchange of gifts between Anglicans and Catholics. Special mention should be made here of the recent canonisation of John Henry Newman which has aroused a joyful gratitude full of hope throughout the British nation.

Let us unite in prayer of praise and thanksgiving for the testimony of the 44 martyrs we celebrate, pleading with Saint John Henry Newman for a renewal of personal and ecclesial faith in impoverished societies that are forgetting God. Let us offer ourselves with humility and courage to share in Christ’s sufferings, whether through our fidelity to our daily duty, through a witness of faith more open to the social and ecclesial dimension, or through an increased ecumenical effort in the service of Christian unity, the cause for which those we celebrate today have died. Amen!



**HIS EMINENCE MARC CARDINAL OUELLET** has been Prefect of the Congregation for Bishops since 2010. From 2002 to 2010 he served as Archbishop of Québec, Canada.



## Reflections on the 50th Anniversary of the 1970 Roman Missal of Pope St Paul VI

BISHOP ALAN S. HOPES

The purpose of the Second Vatican Council was to renew the Church. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC), on the Sacred Liturgy, was promulgated on the same day as the document on Social Communication, *Inter Mirifica*, 4 December 1963. Since the precise components of the *Ordo Missae* had not yet been established in 1963, that juxtaposition of documents seemed providential, and affirmed for liturgical scholars that the pastoral advantages of communication were a necessity for the reformed liturgical rites. This article will outline essential points of divergence and convergence with what had gone before, in fulfilment of the apostolic mandate that “texts and rites should be ordered in such a way that they express more clearly the holy things they signify.”<sup>1</sup> This will clearly demonstrate the mindset that the new liturgical books inspire, both in faith and tradition.

The Roman Missal received its Apostolic Constitution on 3 April 1969 from Pope Paul VI. It would no longer stand alone as the only book needed for the celebration of Mass. Within a re-organised Liturgical Year, it would serve in partnership with the Lectionary as a separate liturgical book, “that a more lavish table of the Word of

God be spread before the faithful, that the treasures of the Bible be opened up more widely.”<sup>2</sup> On 6 April, the Sacred Congregation for the Discipline of the Sacraments published the decree for the Order of Mass, including the ‘General Instruction’. On 25 May, the decree on the Lectionary was published. 1970 saw the ‘*editio typica*’<sup>3</sup> of the Roman Missal and the Lectionary. Subsequently promulgated liturgical books, quite apart from those used at ‘Ritual Masses’, would indicate expansive ministries to be exercised at the service of the Eucharistic Sacrifice accompanying the Roman Missal and the Lectionary: The Book of Gospels and the *Graduale Romanum*.

The Missal has seen three editions in English. The English translation of 1970 was given little time for maturation. It was followed by two further editions in English in 1974 and 2010. They were based on the hermeneutics of two hugely influential documents: ‘*Comme le prévoit*’<sup>4</sup> (CLP) and ‘*Liturgiam authenticam*’<sup>5</sup> (LA) promulgated in 1969 and 2001, respectively. Each expresses the different mindsets within their brief. *Comme le prévoit* states: “A liturgical text, inasmuch as it is a ritual sign, is a medium of spoken communication. It is, first of all, a sign perceived by the senses and used by men and women to communicate with each other.”<sup>6</sup> In contrast, *Liturgiam authenticam* pronounces that: “new texts composed... are to contain nothing that is inconsistent with the function, meaning, structure, style, theological content, traditional vocabulary or other important qualities of the texts found in the *editiones typicae*.”<sup>7</sup> A subsequent *motu proprio* on translation in force since 2017, ‘*Magnum Principium*’, has reflected on both of the previous documents to steer translations in the future. In its faithfulness to tradition, it has defined a triple *fideliter*, which comprises fidelity to the Latin language, along with the need for the translation to be intelligible and understood in a particular milieu.

Healthy tradition and legitimate progress have been embraced by the divergent opening rubrics of the Mass in the Roman Missal. The terms *sacerdos paratus* and *populo congregato* suggest different theological understandings and pastoral priorities. They are the opening words of the rubrics of the Missals of 1570 and 1970 respectively and are retained in subsequent editions. The rubric prior to the celebrant beginning Mass in the Missal of 1962 refers to the vested priest. The Missal of 1970 refers to the assembly that has gathered. A reservation about the concept of private Masses is reinforced in the transition from the Missal of 1970 to the *editio typica* of 2002. The latter renames the separate section found in the Missal of 1970: *Ordo missae sine populo* or ‘The order of Mass without a congregation.’<sup>8</sup> In contrast, the third edition of the Missal, while acknowledging the existence of legitimate circumstances for saying Mass privately, refers to its corresponding section as ‘The Order of Mass at which only one minister participates’.

Bringing the people to the heart of the Eucharistic celebration has more than changed the emphasis. The people are greeted and they respond. The ways in which they participate in the liturgical action have developed rapidly, especially in the inclusion of lawful pastoral adaptations. However, what these past fifty years of the Roman Missal since 1970 have really changed is the role of the Holy People of God and how they express their faith. “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as



*Priests and congregation gathered for Good Friday in College, 2019.*

strangers or silent spectators; on the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers they should take part in the sacred action conscious of what they are doing, with devotion and full collaboration.”<sup>9</sup> Few at the beginning could have realised that this paradigm shift affected the entire pastoral activity of the Church. The faithful were transformed from a certain passivity by this endeavour. The doctrine which Christ entrusted to his Church is constant.

At the root of this effective transformation was the identified distinction but necessary uniting of liturgy and a developed sacramental theology that the post-conciliar rites championed. The Council of Trent was the context of the liturgical books that had legislated practice for four hundred years. Trent had been convoked to defend the teaching and practice of the Church. As Enrico Mazza observes: “The method of Trent was, above all, dependent on the medieval heritage of which the council was the trustee.”<sup>10</sup> The outcome was an external understanding of a sacrament, which depended on the priest alone. The recipient was not deemed part of the action itself and did not even answer ‘Amen’ when receiving Holy Communion.

SC 7 is the masterpiece that accomplished a broadened consideration of the presence of Christ and it is this understanding of ‘presence’ that pervades the Missal



*The Gospel being proclaimed on Maundy Thursday 2019 by then deacon Benjamin Hilton.*

of the last fifty years. “He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass... He is present in the sacraments... He is present in his Word... He is present when the Church prays and sings, for he promised: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.’” This confirmed the combined function of the assembly, the role of the minister and the nature of the action. The Eucharistic celebration governed by the Missal presents two main focuses: The Lord who gathers and the assembly that is gathered. The priesthood of Christ corresponds to the priesthood of the faithful, shared by all the baptised and correspondingly by the assembly which the Second Vatican Council referred to as “a priestly community.”<sup>11</sup> The assembly is presided over by the ordained minister whose priesthood is ministerial because he serves Christ and he serves the Church. He stands at the service of both Christ and the assembly. He is not the only minister since the assembly is served by a variety of ministries, even though the assembly needs an ordained priest. This has charted the development of collaborative ministry, born out of the ecclesiology where priest and people together listen to the Word of God that each proclaims and are united in the same prayer, as expressed, for example, in Eucharistic Prayer III: “grant that we who are nourished by the Body and Blood of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may become one body, one spirit in Christ.”

Pope Saint Paul VI outlined his mindset regarding his expectations of the liturgical reform in the audience of 19 November 1969: “The reform that is about to be disclosed corresponds to an authoritative mandate of the Church; it is an act of obedience; it is a fact of coherence between the Church and herself; it is a step forward of its authentic tradition; it is a demonstration of loyalty and vitality, to which we must all readily adhere.” In the fifty years of its service to the Church, the Roman Missal has been faithful to this ‘coherence between the Church and herself’, so that the Church:

faithful to the mission entrusted to her,  
may continually go forward with the human family  
and always be the leaven and the soul of human society,  
to renew it in Christ and transform it into the family of God.<sup>12</sup>



**RIGHT REVEREND ALAN S. HOPES** has been Bishop of East Anglia since 2013.

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#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (SC) 51, in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS) 56 (1964), 114. SC 51 was quoted by Paul VI in the Apostolic Constitution of the Roman Missal.
- <sup>2</sup> SC 35, AAS 56 (1964), 109.
- <sup>3</sup> The *editio typica* is the original Latin edition of the text.
- <sup>4</sup> Instruction *Comme le prévoit* (CLP) on the translation of liturgical texts for celebrations with a congregation, 25 January 1969: Not 5 (1969) 3-12 (French; issued in six major languages).
- <sup>5</sup> Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Liturgiam authenticam* (LA), AAS 93 (2001), 685-726.
- <sup>6</sup> CLP 5.
- <sup>7</sup> LA 107.
- <sup>8</sup> ‘Order of Mass without a Congregation’ is how the second edition of the Roman Missal in 1974 translates ‘*ordo missae sine populo*’.
- <sup>9</sup> SC 48.
- <sup>10</sup> Enrico Mazza, *The Celebration of the Eucharist: The Origin of the Rite and the Development of its Interpretation*, trans. M.O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), 247.
- <sup>11</sup> Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* 11, AAS 57 (1965), 15-16.
- <sup>12</sup> The Roman Missal, Third Edition, 1. For the Church: B, Collect, 1298.



# Cardinal Reginald Pole and the pre-Tridentine English origins of seminaries

MAURICE WHITEHEAD

Among the last of the decisions of the Council of Trent (1545–63), at its twenty-third and final session convened in July 1563, was agreement on Canon 18, entitled *Cum adolescentium aetas*, often referred to as ‘the decree on seminaries’. That document is generally taken as the starting point of a new system of seminary education and formation for future priests, which has been developed and refined over the succeeding four-and-a-half centuries, down to the present day. It is often forgotten, however, that much of the rationale underpinning the 1563 decree found its inspiration in a decree on the same subject formulated in London seven years earlier, during the reign of Mary Tudor, in 1556.

Whereas the reign of Mary has long been viewed by historians as a failed attempt to resuscitate dying Catholicism in England and Wales, recent scholarship has revealed the strength and zeal of Mary’s leading clergy. It has also identified in the Marian church many trends which would later characterise the continental Counter-Reformation in the wake of the Council of Trent. Indeed, Eamon Duffy has gone so far as to suggest that Mary, alongside her cousin, the papal legate Cardinal Reginald Pole (1500–58), “‘invented’ the Counter-Reformation’ in England.<sup>1</sup>

The return to England in November 1554 of Pole as papal legate marked the beginning of a period of reform of the Church in England and Wales. On St Andrew's Day, 30 November 1554, Pole reconciled the realm to the papacy in an impressive ceremony which took him from Lambeth Palace to the Palace of Westminster, preceded by six Garter knights. Little over a year later, following considerable preparations, Pole opened a legatine synod in London on 2 December 1555. This was his single most important action as legate, and the synod achieved considerably more than has generally been recognised.

Most of the synodal decrees concerned aspects of Church reform. These included re-affirmation of the importance of the sacraments, the necessity of clerical residence and the need to suppress absenteeism, the need for effective preaching, and the regular visitation of all dioceses, as well as visitation of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. One of the most innovative decisions of the synod came in the eleventh decree, enjoining the dean and chapter of every diocese to ensure 'that in cathedrals a certain number of initiated persons be brought up, whence, as from a seminary, men may be chosen who may be worthily set over churches'.<sup>2</sup>



*Portrait of Cardinal Pole by a follower of Sebastiano del Piombo (c. 1485–1547), from Magdalen College, Oxford.*



Bishops were required to set aside a fortieth part of the income of their diocese towards the finances which each new seminary would require for payment of staff and general running costs, and benefices with annual incomes in excess of twenty pounds were to be taxed similarly. In both cases, allowance was made for tithes, subsidies and feudal dues. The synod decree recognized that such a new initiative imposed a very considerable financial burden, particularly given the immensely confused state into which the Church had fallen in England over the previous two decades since Henry VIII's break with Rome. The synod fathers hoped, however, that the clergy would accept the new tax 'without grudging, on account of the piety of the object both as regards God and his Church, which is now grievously disfigured from the want of fit ministers'.<sup>3</sup>

Each diocesan seminary, to be governed by the chancellor of the cathedral church, or 'some other suitable person', was envisaged as being under the direct patronage of the bishop and his chapter whose responsibility it was to appoint officers to implement the new arrangements. Members of the academic staff of the seminary were to be examined by the bishop in person, who would also indicate what books were to be studied. After ordination to the priesthood, each graduate of the seminary was to be appointed to the cathedral itself, there to work, initially at least, under the supervision of the bishop and his chapter. The precise curriculum to be followed within seminaries was to be the subject of further, later deliberation by the synod – something which, it transpired, circumstances in the late 1550s in England were not to allow.

It is interesting to note, throughout the text of the synod decree, the centrality of the role of the bishop in seminary education and formation. Here, Reginald Pole was greatly influenced in his thinking by what he had witnessed of the pioneering work of his late friend Gian Matteo Giberti (1495–1543), Bishop of Verona from 1524. Throughout his diocese, Giberti had ensured the implementation of a programme of radical clerical reform, well before the Council of Trent had met, through a combination of constant residence, which was not universally the norm among the episcopate of his day, and through regular direct contact with his clergy.

Though there is no mention in the decree of 1556 of any provision of a Roman experience as part of the future formation of the clergy of England and Wales, the fact that Pole had by then endowed the library of the English Hospice in Rome with a number of choice theological works from his personal library – a number of which survive in the library of the Venerable English College today – suggests that he may well have had such a possibility in mind.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, had the cardinal lived longer, the Hospice may well have had a seminary attached to it up to two decades earlier than 1579, the date of the foundation of the Venerable English College.<sup>5</sup>

While the Synod of London was in session, from 2 December 1555 until its temporary prorogation on 10 February 1556 (it was never subsequently reconvened), Reginald Pole was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, in place of the then-imprisoned Thomas Cranmer (1489–1556). The aftermath of the Dudley conspiracy of December 1555, which aimed to depose Mary and to replace her with Elizabeth as queen, prevented Pole's travelling to Canterbury for his consecration. Instead, he was ordained priest on 20 March 1556, consecrated archbishop in the Observant Franciscan house

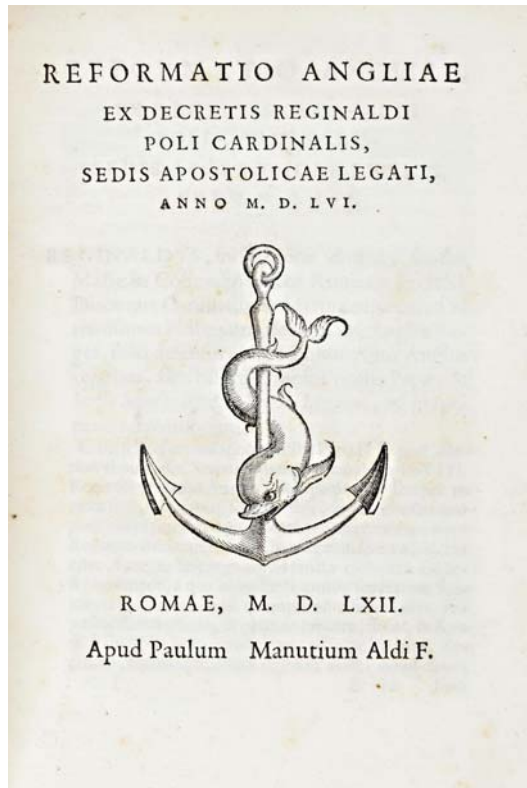
at Greenwich two days later, and, on 25 March, at the Canterbury peculiar of St Mary Arches in London (later known as St Mary-le-Bow), he received the pallium which had been sent from Rome. Detained in London by much work in attending both to the reorganisation of the Church in England and to his duties as a member of the privy council, Pole did not finally visit Canterbury until 1557.

Though the 1556 decree on seminaries was never formally instituted in England, Nicholas Heath (c. 1501–78), Archbishop of York, Thomas Watson (1515–84), Bishop of Lincoln, Gilbert Bourne (c. 1510–69), Bishop of Wells, and Cuthbert Tunstall (1474–1559), Bishop of Durham, each on their own initiative, made provision for schools under their respective dean and chapter, in accordance with the 1556 synod decree.<sup>6</sup> In doing so, these spiritual leaders demonstrated a level of zeal and enthusiasm which put to shame the subsequent efforts of many of their continental counterparts.

That Pole's reforms failed to have much more general impact was largely due to lack of time and to the scale of the problems left by two decades of religious turmoil. Reginald Pole's death on 17 November 1558, a victim of the influenza epidemic then sweeping the kingdom, occurring only a matter of hours after the death of Mary Tudor, followed swiftly by the accession of Elizabeth I and the beginnings of another major upheaval in religion within the realm, brought an abrupt end to any hope of implementation of the cardinal's plans.

Instead, his proposals for ecclesiastical reform, including those concerning the creation of seminaries, were published in Rome in 1562 as *Reformatio Angliae ex decretis Reginaldi Poli Cardinalis, sedis Apostolicae legati, anno MDLVI* at the press of Paolo Manuzio (1512–74), the third son of the celebrated Venetian printer, Aldus Manutius. This work was much read by those involved in the final session of the Council of Trent: indeed two hundred copies of the work were specially sent to the Council fathers in Trent and this clearly influenced their shaping of the decree on seminaries, *Cum adolescentium aetas*, published in 1563.<sup>7</sup>

Though previous legislation of the universal Church or of provincial English synods had included



*A copy of the Latin version of the decrees of the 1555 Synod of London, published in Rome in 1562.*

suggestions and ideas concerning future clerical education and formation, prior to 1556 there had been nothing comparable concerning the notion of a seminary. Following Trent and that council's deliberations on seminary education, the provisions of the Synod of London of 1556 were subsequently largely forgotten in England amid the momentous events of the Counter-Reformation period.

When, in the late 1820s and early 1830s, within the Church of England, there developed a growing interest in the future of clerical education, the Chancellor of the diocese of Chester, Henry Raikes (1782–1854), published his *Remarks on Clerical Education* (1831). This encouraged the two English Universities of Oxford and Cambridge to improve theological examinations and the bishops to require a theological degree as a prelude to holy orders – something which was also attended to in 1832, following the foundation of the University of Durham. During the 1830s, Raikes developed an interest in the provisions of Reginald Pole's synod of 1556 and, having translated into English the 1562 Latin text of *Reformatio Angliae*, he published this as *The Reform of England*, in 1839.

As copies of that translation are today only marginally less scarce than the published Latin text of 1562, and as the text of the 1556 London synodal decree on seminaries is so little known, Henry Raikes's 1839 English translation of the latter is reproduced in full, in the appendix below, as a reminder of the ways in which seminary education might have developed in England and Wales had Mary Tudor and Reginald Pole both lived longer than they did.

## APPENDIX

### The Eleventh Decree

*That in cathedrals a certain number of initiated persons be brought up, whence, as from a seminary, men may be chosen who may be worthily set over churches.*

Since at this moment there is a great scarcity of ecclesiastical persons, more especially of persons fit to be set over churches or clerical duties, or for serving in them: and this inconvenience can in no way better be met than by forming and preserving in cathedral churches a sort of nursery, and, as it were, a seminary of ministers. Therefore, with the approbation of this same assembly, we enact and decree that all metropolitan and cathedral churches of this kingdom be obliged to bring up a certain number of youths, in proportion to their respective incomes and means, and the size of the dioceses to which they appertain.

And the young persons the most to be desired for this object are those who are at least eleven or twelve years old, and who know how to read and write, and whose disposition and bent afford more certain ground for hope that they will become priests, and will for ever devote themselves to serve clerical offices.

We especially wish the children of the poor to be chosen into these seminaries, but without excluding the sons of opulent parents, so that they prefer to their own comfort the desire of serving God and his Church. Grammar should be their first study;

subsequently, on their removal to the metropolitan or cathedral church, they should be instructed in ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline under the auspices of the chancellor of the church, or some other learned and serious person who may be selected for that office.

Of these youths two classes will be formed, one of those more advanced in age and knowledge, whom we wish to act as acolyths, and who in addition to their board and clothing, which is termed their bounty, will also receive annually something of stipend; and another class of the younger boys, who only have their dress and board. But all, as well of the former as of the latter class, shall use the clerical tonsure and dress, and the same style of living, and shall serve when needed in the divine offices of the Church.

Moreover, whosoever of the class of acolyths shall have arrived at the age prescribed by law, and shall have advanced in morals and learning, shall be introduced to sacred orders, and shall lend their assistance to the cathedral or metropolitan church in whatever office may seem fit to the bishop and chapter. And according to their respective deserts [*sic*] the bishop or chapter will take care that some church preferment be bestowed on them. And in the stead of those who from the class of acolyths shall be promoted to holy orders and the greater duties of the Church, must be substituted those of the lower class who nearest approach them in morals, age, and learning; while other youths of the city and diocese may be admitted to the grammar school, and the other advantages offered for study, provided they have been brought up respectably and are well conducted, who may use the same garb and live in the same way as the others who are maintained by the Church. And out of these the most competent and the one that most evinces a disposition to serve the Church, shall be substituted in the place of any one of the clergy who shall drop.

And since for the maintenance of this nursery of youths there must be some annual income temporarily provided, adequate to meet the expense of boarding the youths, and paying the salaries of their instructors, until a fixed endowment can be made from the revenues of benefices hereafter to become vacant, and to be forever assigned to so sacred an object as the present, or in some other way, which we hope ere long to be accomplished; we enact that all archbishops and bishops, after deducting tenths, subsidies, and crown rents, shall pay annually the fortieth part of the revenues which they draw from their sees for the maintenance of these youths, and the payment of the teachers who instruct them in grammar and in ecclesiastical doctrine and discipline. Which payment we also wish and command to be made by all who either now hold, or hereafter shall hold, any prebends or ecclesiastical benefices whatsoever; so that in short form the incomes of their benefices which, whether one or more held together, may amount to the yearly value of twenty pounds, after the deduction of tenths, subsidies and crown rents, as before stated, they should pay year by year the fortieth part, to be applied to the above objects in that diocese in which their preferment is situated.

This impost, weighed down as they are with other and many burdens, we yet trust they will meet without grudging, on account of the piety of the object both as regards God and his Church, which is now grievously disfigured from the want of fit ministers.

We furthermore ordain that the bishop, together with the dean and chapter of the cathedral church, shall conduct the management of this school of youths, and shall give in charge to certain individuals to collect this rate from all those who are

bound to pay, at such times and places, and under such censures and penalties, as may be laid down at the discretion of the aforesaid bishop and chapter. But the other still numerous remaining points which have to be settled respecting the well and successful administration and maintenance of this school, will be, with God's blessing, provided for in the next convocation.

But inasmuch as it is most conducive to sound doctrine and the preservation of good morals, that the education of youth be entrusted to masters commended by the orthodoxy of their belief, the respectability of their life, and their attainment in learning; we therefore enact that no one be appointed master in any school in any place whatsoever, or in any way exercise the office of teacher, unless he has first been carefully examined and approved by the ordinary of the place, and charged respecting the books to be read in schools, as well for instruction in learning as for improving the morals of youth. And whoever disobeys this decree must incur the sentence of excommunication and be suspended for three years from the functions of a teacher. While they who are already entrusted with the direction of schools, should have their creed, their practice, and their learning carefully inquired into. And if they are found to be such as we have required in this ordinance, they may be confirmed in their appointments and charged on all the above stated points. But should they prove to be otherwise, we command their removal and the substitution in their place of other fit persons.<sup>8</sup>



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#### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Fires of faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (London: Yale University Press 2009), 207. For a recent overview of the changing historiography of this period, see Frederick E. Smith, "The Origins of Recusancy in Elizabethan England Reconsidered," *The Historical Journal* 60, (2017): 301–32.
- <sup>2</sup> The English translation of the original Latin texts of the synod decrees is taken from Henry Raikes (ed.), *The Reform of England by the Decrees of Cardinal Pole, Legate of the Apostolic See, Promulgated in the Year of Grace 1556, translated from the original Aldine edition, as published at Rome in 1562* (Chester, 1839), 50.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.
- <sup>4</sup> A number of Pole's book donations to the English Hospice, which survive today in the College Library, were loaned in 2018–19 to the *Comune di Bagnoregio* for an exhibition entitled 'Reginald Pole, tra Michelangelo e Shakespeare'. See *The Venerabile* 36, No. 4 (2019), 50–51.
- <sup>5</sup> For documentary evidence in support of this possibility, see Joseph Crehan, "Saint Ignatius and Cardinal Pole," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 23, (1956): 72–98, and particularly 97–98; and John P. Marmion, "The London Synod of Reginald Cardinal Pole," unpublished MA thesis, Keele University, 1974, 175, footnote 3.
- <sup>6</sup> Smith, "The Origins of Recusancy," 308.
- <sup>7</sup> Marmion, "The London Synod of Reginald Cardinal Pole," 266.
- <sup>8</sup> The text is reproduced from Raikes's *The Reform of England*, 50–54, but with Raikes's capitalisation modernised. An original copy of Raikes's now scarce translation is available in the Schwarzenbach Reading Room at the Venerable English College.



## Destination Palazzola 27 May 1920

MGR JOHN ALLEN

Thursday, 27 May 1920, St Bede's feast day. It's very early, half past two in the morning, when Robert Meagher and three companions leave the *Venerabile* and stride down a dark, deserted Monserrà on their way to Palazzola. This is the day eagerly awaited: the house-warming at the new villa, the very first visit by the students. The whole College is going there later in the morning, by train to Albano, then on foot round Lake Albano. But these four have chosen to walk the whole way. Out through the Porta San Sebastiano, on down the Via Appia Antica, breakfast with bread and Trappist chocolate by the Acqua Marcia fountain as dawn breaks, swinging past Bovillae's ruins, on into Albano, a sharp left turn, a climb to the lake's volcanic rim – and *ecco*, the glorious vista of distant Palazzola, nestling in Cavo's shade.

The four are fortunate. They choose the right cart track round the lake and are the first of the student body to arrive. Many others lose their way on the unknown paths before finally reaching their goal. Robert Meagher expressed their fascination:

How is one to describe the delight and untrammelled joy that we felt when we began to explore the unbelievable surprises of the house and gardens? Here were shower-baths, quickly put to use; there, cloisters, chapel, large public

rooms, gardens, and even the caves and huge rock mentioned by Pius II. It was, however, the actual situation of the place and the stupendous view rather than the welcome, but man-made amenities, that literally took our breath away.

From the garden, with its rows of tomato plants, artichokes, cabbages and neat little boxwood hedges, one's gaze turned northward and westward in a vain attempt to take in the absorbing panorama stretching out before it. The glories of that view, embracing as it does one of the most historic plains in the world, were never to pall, whether the early morning sun was lighting up the Campagna and dissolving the mists of the night, or the waters of the Tyrrhenian sea were turning into liquid gold as the blazing hour of sunset came on apace, and purple shadows began to steal forth over Bovillae and the Appian Way. No wonder then that we were content to sit relaxed and contemplative in the shade of the ilexes, until the clamorous arrival of hungry mouths brought our pleasant reverie to an end.<sup>1</sup>



*The Rector, Mgr Arthur Hinsley.*

*Photo: VEC Archives*

The rector, Monsignor Arthur Hinsley, had arranged a *pranzone* to mark the grand opening and had then slipped away to England. A plaque in Palazzola's refectory tells us some of those who were present:

To God the Greatest and the Most Good. While Arthur Hinsley was Rector of the Venerable College of the English in Rome, the summer resort was transferred from Tusculum to Albano on 6 April 1920.

The Cardinal Protector, Aidan Gasquet; the Bishop of Clifton, George Ambrose; John Prior, Auditor of the Sacred Roman Rota; Horace Mann, Rector of the Beda College; Canon William Lee; James Redmond, Vice-Rector of this Venerable College, with all the Students applauding celebrated the first festive meal here on 27 May 1920.

Then, when the holidays had begun, on the following 15 July Canon William Lee set up this inscription so that the memory of such auspicious events might be passed on to future generations.

The Latin inscription is much more succinct, the English translation more verbose. Even so, we need to put flesh on meagre bones. Who were these worthies? Why should they be here?

Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846-1929) was a monk of Downside Abbey. After a breakdown in health in 1885, he devoted himself to historical studies, writing in particular of mediaeval monasticism in England and the Reformation. He was appointed a member of the Pontifical Commission to study the validity of Anglican orders, leading to *Apostolicae Curae* in 1896, and elected abbot president of the English Benedictines in 1900. Aidan Bellenger noted:

Gasquet's influence was considerable and owed much to his amiable personality and ready wit, his ability to make friends and to influence those in the highest echelons of church and state. Indeed, in 1903 Francis Aidan Gasquet was very nearly appointed as the first Benedictine Archbishop of Westminster.<sup>2</sup>

Gasquet was President of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Vulgate in 1907. Pope St Pius X named him Cardinal in 1914 and he lived at the Palazzo San Callisto in Trastevere. He played an important part in ensuring the appointment of a special envoy of the British Government to the Vatican at the beginning of World War I. He became prefect of the Vatican archives in 1917 and librarian of the Vatican Library two years later.

He took a special interest in the Venerable English College, becoming Protector in 1915. A Cardinal Protector 'stands in the same relation to the College as a bishop to his own seminary'. Following a visitation of the *Venerabile*, the Congregation of Seminaries and Studies in 1917 named four deputies to serve under Cardinal Gasquet to carry out its decrees. It was this visitation, and the subsequent efforts of Gasquet's committee, which led to the sale of the villa in Monte Porzio and the purchase of Palazzola. The year 1920 also saw the publication of the first history of the *Venerabile*, written by Cardinal Gasquet himself. Richard L Smith sketched a homely portrait of the Cardinal's character and his love for the College:

The Cardinal always remained the same, wonderful company. He might tire after a while, but his interest in the College, which had always been warm if only for its long history, now widened into a steady concern over all its 'inmates'. Whenever one saw him, he seemed up to date in the reports of our general health...He made friends wherever he went.<sup>3</sup>

Present too on 27 May, though not mentioned on the commemorative plaque, was the Cardinal's secretary, also a Benedictine, Dom Philip Langdon. He was one of the four deputies named by the Congregation.

George Ambrose Burton (1852-1931), came to study at the *Venerabile* in 1884 at the age of 32. Before that he taught at his alma mater, Ratcliffe College. Ordained priest in 1890, he returned to his home diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, serving in the Cathedral parish and in South Shields. He was appointed bishop of Clifton in 1902. During World War I many Belgian refugees found refuge in his diocese. That, and the huge army camps around Salisbury Plain, presented serious problems in providing the



necessary spiritual care. Bishop Burton's pastoral letters of the war years were particularly inspiring and were often quoted in the local press. Unemployment, too, was a problem and the bishop earned the admiration of many by addressing mass meetings of the unemployed in Bristol.

As a student at the *Venerabile*, it was said of him:

His influence in the House was naturally very great – he was not conscious of it, but the seriousness of his outlook did change things in many ways... His knowledge of the classics was so great and intimate that it was no uncommon practice to quote to him a line of Horace or Virgil and he would continue the quotation for many lines and if it was Horace he would finish the ode... It was not so much in Latinity or in Greek that he influenced the House – it was too high for us weaklings – but in his knowledge of Church History, especially the medieval and Renaissance periods.<sup>4</sup>

From the *villeggiatura* at Monte Porzio, Burton had first visited Palazzola in 1888 with Mgr Giles. As he records in his diary (Liber 824 in the College archives):

We dined in the refectory of the Capuchins, into which a tribe of coenobitical cats every now and then furtively intruded, to be whipped out with little ceremony by a snow bearded friar, who, having spent some years in the neighbourhood of the Tigris, delighted to regale us with morsels of Arabic.<sup>5</sup>

As bishop, he was a frequent and well-loved visitor to the College and the villa, and a fine orator. He was a natural choice as a speaker at the grand opening.

John Prior (1861-1926) had an early connection with the *Venerabile*. He was born of Irish parents in Darlington and baptised by Dr Robert Cornthwaite, a former rector of the College, who that same year became Bishop of Beverley. John Prior was at the College 1878-1884. A fellow student recalled:

Prior was slightly built and had a very lively gleam in his eyes. He was junior to me in the College and I well remember him in the days before he tightened the reins of self-control. He had a most infectious perception of humour, and his bubbling, almost uncontrollable laughter was a joy. As a student he took to the Scholastic system like a duck to water. Though he was my junior, I often brought him my problems and learned more from him than from professor Mazzella.<sup>6</sup>

By all accounts a brilliant student, though with indifferent health, he returned to his diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in 1884. He had an enthusiastic love for dogmatic theology, especially as a foundation for preaching, became involved in the Modernist crisis to defend Cardinal Newman's posthumous reputation and had a deep devotion to St Thérèse of Lisieux, having helped with her cause for canonisation. Though in later days a model of Roman calm and decorum it is recorded that once as a student he had to

flee the College chapel having been overcome by a fit of giggles. He was back in Rome as vice-rector 1888-1898, then vice-rector of the Beda College 1898-1908. Arthur Hinsley, a student under Prior, remembered that, 'As vice-rector he was above all things just. His passion throughout life was justice and fair play.'<sup>7</sup>

In 1908 Pope St Pius X restored the Roman Rota and John Prior was chosen as Auditor, or Judge, for English language affairs. He continued to live in the College. When Hinsley bought Palazzola, Mgr Prior fully approved. 'The new seat of the English College *villeggiatura* is in the very centre of the Alban Hills... Nothing of the old traditional memories will be lost by the change.'<sup>8</sup>

Horace Mann (1859-1928) was rector of the Beda College from 1917 to 1928. His appointment followed the decision of the Congregation of Studies to separate the Beda College from the *Venerabile*. The Beda moved to temporary quarters in the Prati di Castello, rented from the Polish Hospice, before transferring to Via San Nicola da Tolentino in 1922.

Mgr Mann was the outstanding English historian on the medieval papacy in the early 20th century. From 1902, when he was headmaster of St Cuthbert's grammar school in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, he wrote nineteen volumes on the Lives of the Popes and 61 articles in the Catholic Encyclopedia (1907-1914). Mgr Mann would be observing this day the feast of his College's patron, St Bede. The day was moved to 25 May in 1969.

William Lee (1875-1948) was born at Mitchelstown, County Cork, and educated at St John's College, Waterford, and Oscott. Ordained in 1901 he served as curate in Bristol until 1903, when he was appointed secretary to Bishop Burton and diocesan treasurer. He was administrator of the pro-cathedral from 1910. During World War I he did much welfare work among the Belgian refugees who had come to the west country, for which he was awarded the MBE in 1920. As Bishop Burton's health began to fail in his later years, Mgr Lee deputised for him at many ceremonies. He was in turn consecrated as bishop of Clifton in 1932. His episcopal line can be traced back via a number of English vicars apostolic, and includes two cardinal bishops of Albano, which diocese of course includes Palazzola.

James Redmond (1886-1972), born in Liverpool, studied at the old Douai School in France, moved with it to Woolhampton when it was forced to close under the French Laws of Association, and completed his studies at Upholland. After his ordination in 1913, Archbishop Whiteside sent him to the Beda College (then sharing quarters with the *Venerabile*) for further studies. So began his long and happy years of work in Rome as vice-rector of the *Venerabile*, 1917-1931.

What was that first pranzone like? What was on the menu? What was said in the speeches? Unfortunately, we have few clues. It must have been a very good meal, because Robert Meagher wrote afterwards:

Of the pranzone and the speeches that followed I retain but the haziest recollections; though in my mind's eye I can still see Bishop Burton standing in his place at the table and gesticulating occasionally with a large bandana; but his sonorous periods and the rolling music of his Latin quotations elude the straining ears of memory.<sup>9</sup>



*The photograph taken in the garden on 27 May 1920.*

*Photo: VEC Archives*

We have but one black and white photograph, now in the College archives, taken that day in the garden at Palazzola, showing through the trees a glimpse of Cardinal Gasquet with guests and students.

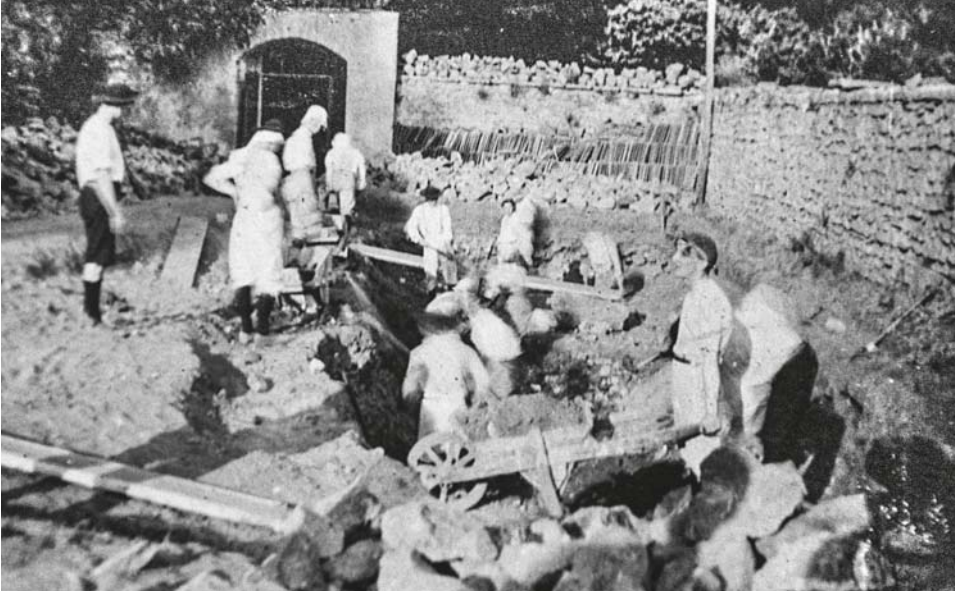
John Garvin of Liverpool only arrived at the College in 1923, so he was not present at the pranzo in 1920. Writing in 1925 from hearsay he reported:

His Lordship the Bishop of Clifton in an opening speech signified his entire approval of the change from Monte Porzio to Palazzola, and after regretting the past glories of 'dear old Monte Porzio' and enlarging upon the joys of *villeggiatura*, was seconded by Mr Barre on behalf of the students.<sup>10</sup>

Augustine Norbert Barre was a Salford student, at the *Venerabile* from 1914 to 1921. He experienced three different *villeggiature*: Monte Porzio until 1917, Montopoli in 1918 and Palazzola in 1920. In 1919 the students returned home for the summer. How many students were with him that day at Palazzola? Numbers in the College had been small. 'Nobby' Barre, as he was known, recorded that no games were played between the English and Scots Colleges in the years 1914 to 1919, the reason being

The small number of students in both Colleges, especially in the Scots'. We ourselves were down to thirteen at one time, out of whom four or five did not play.<sup>11</sup>

When the First World War ended in 1918 there were no more than ten students in the College. With 'Nobby' Barre were also Joseph Scarr of Hexham and Newcastle and Robert Meagher (making a rhyming trio!) of Liverpool. Among the others were John Donnelly, later a revered Canon of the Shrewsbury Diocese, Edward Ellis, later Bishop of Nottingham, and Bernard Grimley, also of Nottingham Diocese, a famous broadcaster in



*Seminarians digging the pool.*

*Photo: VEC Archives*

the 1930s, stalwart of the Catholic Missionary society, and editor of the *Catholic Gazette* and the *Catholic Times*.

In 1919, however, that tiny band was swamped by an intake of post-war students, 33 in number, from 16 dioceses. All these presumably were present on that historic day of 27 May 1920 at Palazzola. 27 were eventually ordained. They included two future Archbishops of Birmingham, Joseph Masterson and Francis Grimshaw, Matthew McNarney, a Canon of the Lancaster Diocese renowned for his ‘People’s Services’ and other broadcasts on the BBC throughout the 1950s, and John McNulty, later a devoted priest of the Salford Diocese. ‘Nobby’ Barre himself won the gold medal in theology in his year at the Gregorian. He would serve in Salford as bishop’s secretary, chancellor and parish priest in Bolton, where he is still remembered as ‘a deeply learned and wise man’, with a lively devotion to the English martyrs.

Fortified by the pranzone, Robert Meagher and two others walked back to Rome that day. The others preferred to take a short siesta and then descend precipitously to Acqua Acetosa for a swim. But great clouds began to pile up over the Sabines and the Latin Vale, their thunder echoing ominously. The subsequent storm with its torrential rain caught out the whole student body. Meagher recalled:

*In spite of our Odyssey we were the first to reach the *Venerabile*, and soon forgot, in the amusing spectacle of drowning rats aplenty struggling through the portals of the College, our own misadventures. Thus the first visit to Palazzola ended.<sup>12</sup>*

Would the menu on that historic day have been very different, one wonders, from that enjoyed four years later at the centenary celebrations for the restoration of the Roman College to the Society of Jesus by Pope Leo XII on 17 May 1824? Those celebrations were begun by a High Mass in the Church of Sant’ Ignazio sung by Cardinal Merry del Val

with the Rector of the *Venerabile*, Mgr Hinsley, as sub-deacon. Following a papal audience at the Vatican, the guests, including students of the English College, dined at the hospice of Santa Martha with this menu:<sup>13</sup>

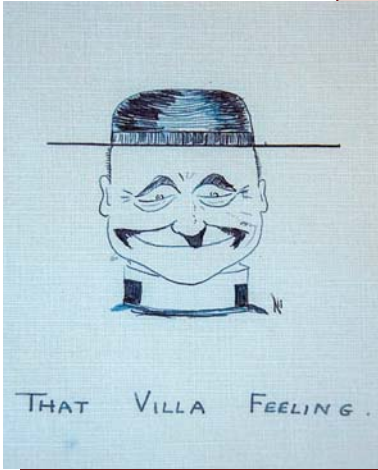


Photo: VEC Archives

### *Gustatio*

De perna et butyro (ham and butter)  
Absinthiatum romanum (vermouth)

### *Fercula*

Ius cum globulis subactis e farina et butyro (soup)  
Vitulina more genuensi (veal)  
Pisa nostrati paratu (peas)  
Pullus paroptyus (chicken)  
Acetaria (salad)

*Vina:* Urbiventanum album  
Urbiventanum rub  
Tusculanum

### *Secunda Mensa*

Caseus (cheese)  
Tyropatina ad quadras rosato conditas  
more Anglorum (Zuppa Inglese!)  
Poma (apple)  
Potio ex faba arabica (coffee)

*Buon'appetito!*



**MONSIGNOR 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 parish priest of Our Lady of Grace, Prestwich, Manchester and President of the Old Brotherhood of the English Secular Clergy.

### ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Robert W. Meagher, "Early days at Palazzola", *The Venerabile* IX, no. 1 (October 1938): 32-33.
- <sup>2</sup> Aidan Bellenger, "Cardinal Gasquet (1846-1929): An English Roman", *British Catholic History* 24, no. 4 (October 1999): 552.
- <sup>3</sup> Richard L. Smith, "Cardinal Gasquet", *The Venerabile* IV, no. 3 (October 1929): 271-272.
- <sup>4</sup> Ambrose Moriarty, "Bishop Burton – An Appreciation", *The Venerabile* V, no. 2 (April 1931): 114-115.
- <sup>5</sup> Mgr William Giles in Nicholas Schofield, "'Dear Old Monte Porzio' – the nineteenth century villeggiatura", *The Venerabile* XXXII, no. 2 (2001): 50.
- <sup>6</sup> Monsignor Kolbe in James Redmond, "Monsignor Prior", *The Venerabile* III, no. 1 (October 1926): 7.
- <sup>7</sup> Arthur Hinsley in James Redmond, "Monsignor Prior", *The Venerabile* III, no. 1 (October 1926): 12.
- <sup>8</sup> John Prior, "From Monte Porzio to Palazzola", *The Venerabile* XX, no. 4 (1962): 299. Mgr Prior wrote the piece in the early 1920s. It was published for the first time in 1962 to mark the fortieth year of publication of *The Venerabile*.
- <sup>9</sup> Robert W. Meagher, "Early days at Palazzola", *The Venerabile* IX, no. 1 (October 1938): 33.
- <sup>10</sup> John Garvin, "Palazzola in Modern Times", *The Venerabile* II, no. 3 (October 1925): 229.
- <sup>11</sup> Dr A. N. Barre in E. J. K., "The Scots' Match", *The Venerabile* III, no. 2 (April 1927): 150.
- <sup>12</sup> Robert W. Meagher, "Early days at Palazzola", *The Venerabile* IX, no. 1 (October 1938): 34.
- <sup>13</sup> "College Notes", *The Venerabile* II, no. 1 (October 1924): 74.



## The College Lexicon

CHRISTOPHER LARKMAN

*T*he English Hospice in Rome is an institution which has evolved in many ways since its inception in 1362. As we look into the future, many of us try to imagine what this historic English institution will look like in say 50 years' time. Will students studying for the priesthood continue to spend many years in one institution or will the training become more varied, thus compromising the viability of the College as a seminary as we know it? Will it revert to its original vocation as a hospice or something similar?

As we know, the English College has been a seminary since 1579 and was set up to meet the need to train men for the priesthood in England and Wales at a time when persecution prevented any reasonable chance of safe training back at home. It was also set up following the Council of Trent, which had given clear principles of what the church required of its clergy.

In the 16th Century, therefore, the English Hospice became the English College seminary. It seems that the fundamental way in which the College operated for the following four centuries changed little.

My time at the VEC (1963-1970) spanned the biggest change in the College as a seminary since the days of the martyrs. Indeed, I suspect the students from the martyrs' days would have felt quite at home mixing with the likes of us at the beginning of those years as we paraded around Rome in groups of four in our black

cassocks and clerical hats. As far as I am aware, not a lot has been written about those pivotal years in the life of the College and the inspiring leadership of the then Rector, Mgr Leo Alston. Clearly Vatican II was very much the driver of change as the Church began to make itself relevant to the challenging post war era.

Life at the College in 1963 was so different to what students experience today. When we left England in October 1963, we expected to remain in Rome for seven years and only to return home once. The internet did not exist. Phone calls were expensive and only used in emergencies. Letters were the main means of communication and took some days. Students in each year group became very close to each other spending most of their daily lives together. We learned so much from one another and supported each other through those years together. Most of us were straight from school with just a few a little older, having been to university. Our year group remains very close and we continue to keep in touch and meet up regularly.

Michael Cooley (1955-1962), Fergus Mulligan (1971-1975) and I decided that we wanted to produce a snapshot of the College over the past seventy odd years to record something of the life of the College during this period. We chose to do this by collecting words and phrases which were commonly used by students and we produced what we call the 'Lexicon'. It may not be surprising that a local 'dialogue' thrived in the rarefied atmosphere of the 'enclosed' College. The Lexicon attempts to be both a 'snapshot' and a 'celebration' of the life we had together.

The Lexicon has been compiled thanks to contributions from many 'Old Romans'. Since its completion we have had many words of appreciation, as well as offers of additions to be made. I think for many of us it has been rather like looking at a selection of photos together and remembering – mostly with warmth – the life we shared at that time with our colleagues. Our hope is that the Lexicon will indeed provide a useful addition to the College Archives, recording – in perhaps a rather unusual style – something of the life of students at the College in a time of great change and challenge.

A sample of the terms in the College Lexicon, some now extinct, and some of a more contemporary origin and still in use:

TERM	DEFINITION	PERIOD OF USAGE
<i>Admiratio</i>	Canon law term (Latin: scandal) imposing a strict code of conduct on clerics in Rome, to ensure they never caused scandal by actions such as smoking in public or going to the cinema.	Up to 1960s
<i>Ange</i>	Name for the Dominican Angelicum University, pronunciation Anj.	1990s onwards
<i>Beaks</i>	Students' name for the staff as a group.	Up to 1970s
<i>Blackout Man</i>	The person responsible at St Mary's Hall for ensuring no lights were visible to Luftwaffe bombers.	The 1940s

TERM	DEFINITION	PERIOD OF USAGE
<b><i>C'è lo sconto speciale per il Collegio Inglese?</i></b>	Colloquial, basic and occasionally successful phrase for use when haggling or purchasing anything; 'Is there the special discount for the English College?'	Up to 1960s
<b><i>Council Estate</i></b>	Student name for the small, basic rooms with few and limited facilities on the 44 Corridor.	1970s to 1980s
<b><i>DBLs, DBS</i></b>	Drinks before lunch/supper, devised by Michael Morton.	1970s onwards
<b><i>Fat Tuesdays</i></b>	Day when pizza, chips and beer are served in the refectory at supper.	1980s onwards
<b><i>Film man</i></b>	House job to negotiate hire of films to be shown on feast days and to load same to the projector. He also edited out supposedly 'unsuitable sections', as in Cinema Paradiso.	Up to 1960s
<b><i>H bomb</i></b>	Cocktail devised by Peter Humfrey who reversed the proportion of the three ingredients in College Cocktail.	The 1970s
<b><i>Reading the Fathers</i></b>	Going to take a siesta after a meal.	The 1960s
<b><i>Soup run</i></b>	Helping the Sant'Egidio community deliver soup to the homeless living on Rome's streets.	2000s onwards
<b><i>Tab man</i></b>	The student charged with sourcing and supplying tabs (cigarettes), often from highly dubious sources, dating from the time when most students smoked.	Up to 1960s

*If you would like to receive a copy of the Lexicon or if you have some items, which you think should be added, please contact the author at: [chriskarkman@gmail.com](mailto:chriskarkman@gmail.com).*



**CHRISTOPHER LARKMAN** was a seminarian at the VEC from 1963 to 1970.





## The College Cocktail - A scene from the *villeggiatura* of 1968

FR JOHN METCALFE

“Ooh, Mr Metcalfe. That was very good.”

“Oh, thank you, Sir.”

“But it was rather strong.”

“Well, thanks very much, Sir. It’s very kind of you to say so.”

“You’re not making it again!”

“Oh, Sir!”

Thus ended my career as maker of the cocktail *extra urbem*. Rectors (in this case, Leo Alston, otherwise a kind and gentle old man) have a dread habit of changing the course of history! But Alston’s contribution was nothing compared to that of his successor, Cormac Murphy-O’Connor, who, eager to make an early mark on this venerable establishment, decreed that the college cocktail would be replaced forthwith as the opener to the greater feasts by Buck’s Fizz. This anodyne mixture of cheap champagne (actually cheap prosecco) and even cheaper orange juice came and went without any fizz at all - it was disgusting. But the dearly beloved cocktail was not seen again. (There has been a bottle in my fridge for the last five years, but this has been

a lone protest against ‘progress’. Occasionally I have made some for the *salone* but someone drinks it all.)

Of course, it was rather powerful, two glasses particularly so, but few will remember this, as the memory is the least reliable of the faculties to be engaged when talking of the College cocktail.

The recipe - I really do remember this - is (classically) one part gin, two parts Punt e Mes, and four parts Cinzano Bianco. Jock Tickle, a renowned expert in such matters, says that if you like it a little stronger you should increase the amount of gin, which sounds reasonable. A further sign of ‘progress’ is that Cinzano Bianco is rather hard to find these days, so one has substituted (sweet) White Martini, but it really is not the same and the search for the Cinzano is worth the effort. I do find also that four parts of Cinzano gives a certain unwelcome sweetness to the mixture, so I have reduced the quantity to three parts which seems to restore the bitterness of memory (or perhaps it is equivalent to Jock Tickle’s ‘extra gin’). Perhaps I should really blame a general distaste for sweetness throughout society, which may be a kind of ‘progress’. Or perhaps it is just old age, which is progress of a kind, I suppose.

If the present rector would like to make a mark on history...

## The College Cocktail

- 1/6 gin
- 2/6 Punt e Mes
- 3/6 Cinzano Bianco

Stir all the ingredients  
in a stirring glass.

Strain and pour into a cocktail  
or a coupe glass.

Serve neat, garnish with  
a twist of orange.



**FR JOHN METCALFE** is a priest of the Diocese of Hallam, rector of Hathersage and parish priest of Bamford, Derbyshire. He was Pastoral Director at the College from 2015 to 2020.

# News from the College Archives 2019–20

MAURICE WHITEHEAD

In more ways than one, the academic year 2019–20 has been an extraordinary one in the life and work of the College Archives.

At the consistory of cardinals on 1 July 2019, Pope Francis announced his intention to canonise Cardinal John Henry Newman on 13 October following. Shortly after this announcement, the British Ambassador to the Holy See, Sally Axworthy, approached the Rector with an enquiry: would the Venerable English College (VEC) be prepared to host, on behalf of the Embassy, an exhibition to mark the canonisation?

Following rapid agreement, the Ambassador created a small team, including Embassy staff, two representatives from the VEC (the Rector and Maurice Whitehead), together with other Rome-based representatives from the Beda, the College of Propaganda Fide, the International Centre of Newman Friends, the Anglican Centre, and the British School at Rome. It was soon agreed that the exhibition be entitled *John Henry Newman: a Saint in Rome*, and that it should focus specifically on Newman's four visits to the Eternal City:

- for five weeks in 1833 as an Anglican clergyman and Oxford don while on a tour of the Mediterranean with friends;
- for thirteen months in 1846–47 as a seminarian preparing for ordination to the priesthood at the College of Propaganda Fide and discerning his further vocation;
- for three-and-a-half-weeks in 1856 as Provost of the Birmingham Oratory, to resolve a dispute between the Birmingham and London Oratories;
- for six weeks in 1879 in order to be made a cardinal by Pope Leo XIII.

Given that life in Rome generally closes down for much of the month of August, plans needed to move apace to ensure that everything would be ready in time for the October canonisation. The Ambassador invited Maurice Whitehead to take overall charge of the exhibition project and the Oxford-based Newman scholar, Dr Paul Shrimpton, to act as a specialist consultant. Having agreed that the *Salotto*, off the main ground-floor entrance corridor of the VEC, provided an ideal exhibition space, the project planning team identified pertinent documents and artefacts from the collections of the VEC, Propaganda Fide, the International Centre of Newman Friends and the Anglican Centre and secured all necessary permissions for their display. Happily, Joanne Cappa-Gunduz, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy to the Holy See, negotiated the loan of a set of secure, top-quality display cases belonging to the *Vicariato di Roma* and housed at the Palazzo Maffei Marescotti and these were carefully transported to the VEC by the

Embassy's works staff. Even more happily, the display cases were generously donated to the VEC at the end of the exhibition.

Thanks to a wonderful team effort and an immense amount of hard work, bilingual texts in English and Italian, for banners explaining the aim and purpose of the exhibition and for guiding visitors around the four main sections of the exhibition, were drawn up and colour illustrations identified. Within a very tight timescale, the banners were professionally designed and manufactured, every display item was provided with an explanatory label in English and Italian, suitable lighting was installed in the *Salotto*, and, to the immense relief of the organising team, the exhibition was securely in place forty-eight hours prior to the official opening on Thursday, 10 October 2019.

Given that the opening took place in the presence of approximately one hundred guests of the British Ambassador to the Holy See, including a large number of ambassadors, senior clergy and press reporters, news of the display spread rapidly: over the following four days, well in excess of one thousand visitors, including many visiting Rome from all corners of the globe, came to visit the exhibition. Thanks to the genial help and support of Monsignor Luis Cuña Ramos, director of the Propaganda Fide Archives, it was possible to display not only a range of rarely exhibited documents relating to Newman's period as a student for the priesthood and his ordination in Rome as a deacon and then as a priest, but also a wonderful mannequin bedecked in the garb of a seminarian of the College of Propaganda Fide of the mid-1840s, as worn during Newman's time as a student there. These and many other priceless documents and artefacts relating to St John Henry Newman were carefully guarded by security staff provided by the British Embassy to the Holy See.

The location of the exhibition in the *Salotto* provided the ideal setting for such a display – and the provision of subtle background sacred music, from a CD recording by the Schola of the Venerable English College, helped create a special atmosphere. Official groups of visitors to the exhibition included an all-party Parliamentary group from

Westminster – members both of the House of Commons and of the House of Lords – on Friday 11 October, and the Westminster Diocesan Youth Ministry Newman Pilgrimage Group, led by Bishop Nicholas Hudson, former Rector of the College, on Monday 14 October.

Immediately following the Newman canonisation Mass at St Peter's on Sunday 13 October, the Prince of Wales, who had attended the ceremony as the representative of the Queen, was driven



*HRH the Prince of Wales signing the Visitors' Book during his visit to the Newman exhibition at the English College.*

*Photo: Chris Warde-Jones/Clarence House*

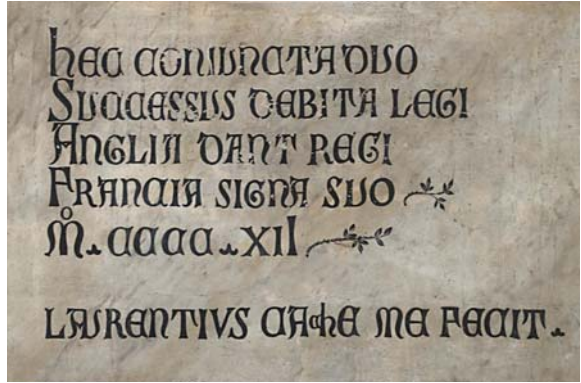


*Coat-of-arms of King Henry IV of England.*

*Photo: © Marcin Mazur, reproduced with permission*

*The inscription from 1412 noting the name of the stonemason Lorenzo Cache.*

*Photo: © Marcin Mazur, reproduced with permission*



directly to the VEC to visit the exhibition – his second visit to the College in the space of two years. Guided round the display by Dr Paul Shrimpton, Prince Charles engaged closely with the exhibits before retiring to the College garden to take tea privately with the Rector. As with his first visit to the College on 4 April 2017, the Prince clearly enjoyed the occasion. His second visit was subsequently memorialised by the presentation to him privately of a framed photograph of the incised stone coat-of-arms of Henry IV of England, dated 1412, today located immediately outside the *Salotto* in which the Newman exhibition was held. The coat-of-arms stood for centuries above the entrance of what is today Via di Monserrato, 48, but which, from 1362 onwards, was the entrance to the English Hospice – known in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as the King’s Hospice – a title it retained until 1538 and Henry VIII’s break with Rome.

Back in England, while the Newman exhibition was in preparation, the VEC’s major benefactors, Urs and Francesca Schwarzenbach, kindly hosted a reception and special dinner on 20 September 2019 at their Berkshire residence, in aid of the VEC Heritage Collections Appeal Fund. In a pre-dinner talk, Maurice Whitehead provided an overview of the VEC’s Heritage Collections and an account of recent developments and future plans for further outreach activities.

Since the opening in April 2019 of the new Schwarzenbach Reading Room, reported in the 2019 edition of *The Venerabile*, much work has been done to enhance facilities for researchers using the Archives. In September 2019, the VEC was fortunate in being able to purchase a complete set of *English Recusant Literature, 1558–1640* (Solar Press, 1967–1979), a now difficult-to-find facsimile edition of some 630 titles published in 394 volumes, comprising the majority of the published output of the English Catholic community at home and abroad from the accession of Elizabeth I down to the eve of the outbreak of the English Civil War. Believed to be the only such set of volumes in Italy, this

collection is a research resource of the first importance and is a very welcome addition to the Reading Room.

Thanks to the generosity of a donor who wishes to remain anonymous, the College Archives were further enriched during the summer of 2019 through the acquisition of three very fine original maps dating from 1755. Together, these form the *Nuova carta Geografica dello Stato Ecclesiastico* – a revolutionary mapping of the Papal States compiled by the highly accomplished County Durham-born cartographer, Christopher Maire, SJ (1697–1767), Rector of the VEC from 1744 to 1750. The set of maps was an important by-product of a major trigonometrical survey, stretching from Rome to Rimini, that Maire undertook from 1750 to 1752 with his distinguished Croatian Jesuit scientific colleague, the celebrated Ruggiero Giuseppe Boscovich, SJ (1711–87) at the behest of Pope Benedict XIV. Quite remarkably, Maire and Boscovich together calculated from their survey data the meridional circumference of the Earth to within 19 kilometres of its present-day reading. The set of maps links closely to the cultural history of the College and particularly to the extensive and well-documented pioneering scientific work, involving the use of telescopes and other instruments located on the roof of the VEC, that Christopher Maire undertook in the late 1740s during his time as Rector.

Thanks to the development over the past year of the series of blogs, again supported by other generous sponsors and first announced in last year's magazine, regular new insights into the riches of the College's history, represented in its Heritage Collections, are now being increasingly shared with a wide international audience. Any reader of this article who has not yet visited the blog posts at [vecarchives.org](http://vecarchives.org) is warmly invited to do so – and to click the button at the foot of the page for a free subscription to future posts.

While the academic year 2019–20, at least down to the start of the Covid-19 lockdown in Rome on 9 March 2020, witnessed another constant stream of researchers wishing to consult the Archives, research completed by scholars using the Archives in recent years has begun to bear fruit in publication – and two examples will help illustrate this growing trend.

First, the Rome-based musicologist, Patrizio Barbieri has produced a ground-breaking article entitled '*Abate Wood in Rome: the ingegnossissimo mattematico* who made the first pianoforte "that was brought to England"' (*Early Music*, 46 (2018), 501–516). Drawing on important background material in the VEC Archives, the article concerns the life and work of the remarkable Louis Wood (1709–55), who, in his day, was known in Italy as Luigi Wood. Born at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, outside Paris, the son of Laurence Wood, a physician at the court-in-exile of James II, Louis Wood was the youngest student ever to have been admitted to the VEC – at the age of eleven, by special dispensation, in 1720. Having been ordained as a sub-deacon, Wood decided not to proceed to full orders as a priest, instead pursuing a career as a highly accomplished inventor, and building, among other things, some of the earliest pianofortes, among which was the first taken from Italy to England.

Secondly, Fr Brian MacCuarta, SJ, Academic Director of the *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu* – the central archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome – has undertaken further work in the VEC Archives on Henry Piers (c. 1567–1623), one of the earliest convicts, or lay boarders, to study at the VEC between 1595 and 1597. Following the

launch at the VEC in November 2018 of his edited volume, *Henry Piers's Continental Travels, 1595–1598* (Cambridge University Press, for the Royal Historical Society, 2018), Fr MacCuarta has pursued further research on Henry Piers and has discovered important new information in the hitherto under-researched *Membrane* section of the VEC College Archives – a large collection of parchment scrolls dating back as far as 1280. This material has contributed significantly to his revised biographical article on Piers for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, published in June 2020.

In addition to these publications, the year 2019 also saw the publication of a book chapter on aspects of the history of the Venerable English College during part of its time under Jesuit administration: this was an abridged version of the previously unpublished second Schwarzenbach Lecture given at the College by the present writer on 1 May 2016.<sup>1</sup>

### Official visitors

As in recent years, the Archives have welcomed many official visitors to the VEC who have expressed an interest in seeing and learning about the Archives. These include:

- Reverend Dr Jeff Kloha and Dr Anthony Schmidt, respectively Chief Curatorial Officer and Senior Curator of the Museum of the Bible, Washington, DC, and Dr Mark Vlastic, Senior Fellow and Adjunct Professor of Law at Georgetown University, and Principal at Madison Law & Strategy Group, Washington, DC (11 September 2019)
- Callista Gingrich, US Ambassador to the Holy See (6 November 2019)
- Dr Daniel Pratt Morris-Chapman, Interim Director of the Methodist Ecumenical Office, Rome (8 November 2019)
- Dr Sebastian Hierl, Drue Heinz Librarian at the Arthur & Janet C. Ross Library of the American Academy in Rome (18 November 2019)
- A large group of Jubilarian priests from England and Wales (21 November 2019)
- A group of 15 pilgrims from the Anglican diocese of Chichester who were shown a variety of pre-Reformation documents, including material relating to Chichester and Sussex (27 November 2019)
- A group of 20 doctoral students from the Northern Bridge Consortium [*see below*] (21 January 2020)
- Dr Matthew Preston, Research Analyst at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London (5 February 2020)
- Nicholas Carne Wilson, a descendant of Sir Edward Carne (c. 1496–1561), ambassador of Mary Tudor to Pope Paul IV and, subsequently, Warden of the English Hospice in Rome (7 February 2020)
- Raphael Hunsucker, Radboud University, Nijmegen, and network manager of the International Interdisciplinary Institute, Rome (27 February 2020)

## Northern Bridge Consortium Internship, October 2019–March 2020

The Northern Bridge Consortium, a partnership of five universities in the North of England and two in Northern Ireland, financed by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, supports doctoral students in the Arts and Humanities both through the development of advanced research skills and through work placements within the UK and abroad, better to prepare them for the world of work.

Following the first, highly successful visit of Northern Bridge students to the VEC in January 2019, Emma Wall, a second-year PhD student in medieval Italian Literature at Durham University, applied to undertake a five-month work placement in the VEC Archives from October 2019 to March 2020 and was accepted.

Emma proved a great asset and, during her time at the College, undertook a wide range of work. This included the cataloguing of a series of almost 600 documents, running from 1598 to 1685, completed by individual students of the College shortly after their arrival in Rome. In these they answered questions relating to their family, upbringing, education, state of health, their religious background, and their intentions in coming to Rome to study, thus producing a wealth of information for historians. Though a two-volume edition of these documents, known as the *Responsa Scholarum*, was prepared and published by Sir Anthony Kenny in 1962–63 as volumes 54 and 55 of the Catholic Record Society, the cataloguing of this material down to item level was both long overdue and also a particularly demanding task. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for security reasons, and to evade spies observing the College and its members, most students adopted at least one alias, and sometimes more – and these important details are recorded within the *Responsa*. Undaunted by the complexity of the archival material, Emma rose to the challenge, successfully and accurately entering and cross-referencing the many multiple student identities into the electronic archival catalogue, all for the benefit of future researchers.

Prior to this, at the start of her internship, Emma had produced a detailed catalogue

of all the papers held in the Archives relating to Palazzola. The timing of this task was particularly fortuitous, as Monsignor John Allen of Salford, a former VEC student archivist, planned to spend six weeks of the late autumn of 2019 researching the Palazzola papers for a new history of the Villa, written to mark the centenary of its purchase by the VEC in 1920 (the celebration of which was subsequently postponed until 2021, owing to the Covid-19 pandemic). The newly catalogued Palazzola archive was ready for immediate use when he arrived in Rome to begin his research.



*Emma Wall at work in the Schwarzenbach Reading Room, December 2019.*



## VEC student engagement with the Archives

As in recent years, students joining the College at the start of the academic year 2019–20 were given a guided tour of the Archives on their first full day on 23 September 2019. Andrew Coy, the student archivist, helpfully updated the *Liber Ruber*, or register of College students, dating from 1579 to the present day. He also worked on maintaining the series of scrapbooks kept in the Third Library, documenting through news cuttings aspects of the contemporary history of the Catholic community of England and Wales at home and abroad.

The dynamic work during the year of Joseph Rizk as sacristan led to his working closely with the Archives in a major stocktaking exercise, cross-checking the relics preserved both in the Martyrs' Chapel and in the College church with their official certificates, kept in the Archives. Joseph's equally careful work in preserving and creating an inventory of vestments in the sacristy of the College church, and his research into the history of the earliest surviving vestments, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has been invaluable. That work now needs to be built upon during the year ahead to ensure that information captured recently is entered as a permanent record into the ever-growing database of the VEC Heritage Collections.

Soon after returning to their home dioceses, following the start of lockdown in Rome on 9 March 2020, some VEC students in lockdown in parishes found themselves being asked to use some of their time to help sort out parish records. As several contacted the Archives for help and guidance about preserving records correctly, and as there was no existing 'one-stop' Internet-based resource offering such information, Maurice Whitehead, by then himself in lockdown at home in Swansea, where he was keeping the work of the Archives going virtually, began addressing the situation by creating a new resource on the VEC Archives website entitled *Preserving religious archives, libraries and museums*.<sup>2</sup> Though there is further developmental work to be done on this resource, it has already proven useful to VEC students during lockdown – and it is hoped that it will also prove helpful to a much wider constituency of users as it develops.

## Outreach from the VEC Archives

The outreach work of the VEC Archives continued at the start of the academic year 2019–20, with a lecture given by Maurice Whitehead at Ushaw College, Durham, as part of a conference entitled *Libraries, Learning and Religious Identities: Britain, Ireland and the European Context, c. 1100–c. 1900*. This was organised by Durham University as the inaugural conference of the new Durham Residential Research Library, based at Ushaw. Entitled 'Unlocking a Hidden Heritage: Opening up the pre-1798 library of the Venerable English College, Rome', the paper explored some of the VEC's book treasures and placed the VEC rare book collection within the wider context of English and Welsh Catholic libraries in continental Europe in the early modern period.

English and Welsh Catholic links to continental Europe provided the background to three papers given by Maurice Whitehead and two seminarians of the VEC – Alexander Balzanella (Westminster) and Elliot Hanson (Cardiff) – at an international conference held in Lugano, Switzerland from 11 to 14 February 2020 as part of the concluding celebrations

surrounding the 400th anniversary of the *Confraternita San Carlo Borromeo di Lugano*. Hosted at the *Facoltà di Teologia di Lugano*, the third day of the conference, entitled *San Carlo figura europea: attualità per il III Millennio*, was devoted exclusively to English and Welsh dimensions to the life, work and enduring influence of St Charles Borromeo (1538–84).

Maurice Whitehead's paper, "Ignem Veni Mittere in Terram": the Anglo-Roman links of St Charles Borromeo', sought to explain why St Charles Borromeo was so supportive of early members of the Venerable English College: it traced the antecedents of many aspects of St Charles's reformist agenda as archbishop of Milan to the remarkable pioneering work undertaken by Cardinal Reginald Pole in London in the mid-1550s, explored in a separate article in this issue of *The Venerabile*.

Elliot Hanson graciously stood in at short notice to read a paper prepared by Dr Paul Bryant-Quinn, Associate Research Fellow at the University of Exeter and an alumnus of the VEC, who was unfortunately indisposed. Entitled "Di natione oltramontana": San Carlo Borromeo and the Welsh', this ground-breaking paper, the result of considerable archival research in Milan, revealed the importance of the circle of Welsh secular clergy in Milan who helped implement reform during St Charles's years as archbishop there, from 1564 until his death in 1584.

Alexander Balzanella's paper, 'Nineteenth century English devotion to St Charles Borromeo', demonstrated how, by the year 1900, England had no fewer than sixteen churches dedicated to the saint – a significant number, *pro rata*, for the size of the Catholic population, compared to the seventy such dedications in the whole of San Carlo's native Italy. His paper then went on to explore the reasons for the saint's popularity among English Catholics of that period. This lecture complemented a lecture given earlier on the same day by Sophie Andreae, Vice Chair of the Patrimony Committee of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, entitled 'Churches of St. Charles Borromeo in England: Architecture and Significance'.<sup>3</sup>

Taken as a whole, the English and Welsh conference day in Lugano demonstrated admirably the ways in which the study of the history of the English and Welsh Catholic community can contribute to wider international history – and the many ways in which the Venerable English College, its Archives and Heritage Collections can contribute to that larger picture. Sincere thanks are due to the many sponsors and supporters who make that work possible.



**MAURICE WHITEHEAD** is Research Fellow and Director of Heritage Collections at the Venerable English College, Rome. He is also 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.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Whitehead, "Established and putt in good order": The Venerable English College, Rome, under Jesuit Administration, 1579–1685", in James E. Kelly and Hannah Thomas (eds), *Jesuit Intellectual and Physical Exchange between England and Mainland Europe, c. 1580–1789: 'The World is our house'?* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 315–336.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see: [vecarchives.org/about/preserving-religious-archives](http://vecarchives.org/about/preserving-religious-archives) (accessed 25 June 2020).

<sup>3</sup> For an article based on part of her Lugano lecture, see Sophie Andreae, "The Milan Connection", *The Tablet*, 27 June 2020, 10–11.

# Schola Report 2019-20

REV. ANDREW COY

The beginning of the academic year in September 2019 brought with it a welcome influx of new voices. No small number of these hailed from the Scandinavian lands, and the presence of bearded Danes and bassy Finns added a certain *je ne sais quoi* to the Schola. Alas, even these new recruits failed to boost numbers to what they once were, and we started the year with twelve members: half the number we had a couple of years ago. Nevertheless, every cloud has a silver lining, and the smaller numbers undoubtedly made practices easier to lead. I would also say that there was a certain purity of sound which resulted from the reduced number: no doubt lending weight to that old adage of quality being of greater value than quantity.

As ever, Martyrs' Day was first on our 'to do list.' This year, we sang a setting of the *Anima Christi*, by Auguste Chérion (1854-1904). It is a relatively simple piece and did not take long to learn. However, the key to its success was in the dynamics. We worked on this and the Schola responded magnificently. It was an excellent opportunity to practise singing softly, while maintaining pitch and accuracy. On the day, the singing was beautiful, and exactly as I had envisaged – one of those moments which makes it all worthwhile!

This year's Advent Meditation was devised with the help of Joseph O'Brien, under the theme of 'light shining in the darkness'. The meditation opened with those tender words of Hosea 11, of a father caring for his children. This was followed by Vaughan Williams' setting of *The Truth Sent from Above*. This very English, and somewhat mournful, setting of the story of the Fall was familiar to many members of the Schola, and it was sung with the subtle dynamics that such a piece requires. The second reading was taken from Isaiah 2, in which the prophet exhorts the descendants of Jacob to walk in the light of the Lord. This was followed by *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*. Ordinarily a very familiar piece, this proved something of a challenge. The seven verses were sung in Latin and alternated between plainchant, a two-part arrangement, and a three-part arrangement. The length of this piece meant that we invariably dropped in pitch, reducing the bass section to a silent grumble in the last of the three-part verses. In order to spare our valiant basses from undue embarrassment, I pitched it a little higher, only to make the *Gaude, gaude!* of the chorus almost impossibly high for the tenors. Eventually, a balance was struck, and the piece held together... just. The third reading was a rather striking extract from Alexander Pope's *Messiah*. This was, fittingly, followed by an extract from Handel's *Messiah*: the beautiful aria, 'Comfort Ye'. Sean Elliott shone as soloist, accompanied on the chamber organ, which worked well in the generous acoustic. The fourth reading was taken from *Gaudium et Spes*, in which Christ is hailed as the goal of human history, and the joy of every heart. The congregation then rose to their feet and joined in the singing of that stirring hymn of peace: *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*.

The tone of the readings and music then developed a slightly different direction.

We heard the beautiful poetry of the Song of Songs, in which the beloved is compared to a young stag (Song of Songs 2:8). This was paired with Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus*,



*The Schola Master emeritus is a man of many talents, and his masterful playing of the organ will be missed just as much as his skilful directing of the Schola.*

*Photo: Piotr Wagnanski*

sung beautifully by a mini Schola (Ryan Browne, Sean Elliott, James Finnegan and Piotr Wagnanski). It was a moving rendition, sung at a relaxed tempo to bring out the very best of Palestrina's relentlessly beautiful harmonies. The final reading was taken from the First Letter of St John, in which God is the light by which we see (1 John 1:1-7). This was followed by Harold Darke's setting of *In the Bleak Midwinter*. Alas, we had no choirboys for the solo parts, but James Finnegan and Ryan Browne provided these in their own tuneful way. After the Rector's address and the singing of the *Alma Redemptoris Mater*, we processed out singing *Of the Father's Love Begotten* - an all-round favourite, and (unbeknownst to us) a fitting way to end the Schola year.

While some preparations were made in February for the station Mass at San Lorenzo in Damaso (Palestrina's *O Crux Ave*), the evacuation of the College due to the Covid-19 pandemic brought an abrupt end to the Schola year and, for no small number of us, an end to our time at the English College. It has been a great joy to sing in the Schola for the past five years, and an immense privilege to serve as Schola Master for the past two. Alas, all good things must come to an end, and it is time for me to hand on the baton to my successor, James Finnegan. I do so knowing that he will lead the Schola with a formidable combination of energy and skill. For my part, I shall greatly miss singing in the Schola, as I prepare to begin my ministry in the Diocese of Northampton, and I am very grateful for the joy that has come about through participating in the musical life of the College. As St Augustine noted, "music is given by God's generosity to mortals having rational souls in order to lead them to higher things."<sup>1</sup> So, thanks to Him who has given us this great gift, to inspire us in our celebration of this Faith, ever ancient and ever new.



**REV. ANDREW COY** was ordained deacon for the Diocese of Northampton on 5 July 2020 and has been assigned to the Cathedral Parish of Our Lady Immaculate and St Thomas of Canterbury, Northampton.

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Epis. 161. *De origine animae hominis*, 1, 2; PL XXXIII, 725.

## For the Choir Master: A dirge. Thanatoid. To be played without accompaniment

JAMES FINNEGAN

Nobody ever remembers a silver medallist. Far fewer remember those who, in the changing rooms of the Stade Olympique, were thwarted by a severe respiratory disease before even their first gulp of Gatorade. Those of us who have had the joy and honour to sing under Andrew Coy's direction will remain forever grateful for his leadership, as well as his greatness and skill – always rooted in patience and humility – which has seen him walk away from the office of Schola Master with the studied nonchalance of an aged surgeon-cardiologist who has just finished his final transplant, and is on his way to collect his Nobel Prize. I, however, am left to 'close up', and my day-dreamings of Tallis and Byrd, hopes of Schola parties and St Peter's Square have been sewn-up inside that great cadaver called 'history' where the proud go to die. The rightful mocking of David Bench's cackle at the end of St David's Day Grace will serve – at least – as a haunting reminder that my ridiculousness has at least saved me from the miry clay of being the Schola Jack, and Master of none.



*It seems that, in his desperation, the new Schola Master has taken to conducting with empty gin glasses.*



**JAMES FINNEGAN** is a third-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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# The Year in Pictures

ELLIOT HANSON



*Bright-eyed and bushy tailed our New Men undertook the habitual month's Italian course in San Giovanni Valdarno. From left to right we have: Antonio Bajlovic (Stockholm), Viktor Torres Airava (Helsinki), Marc Pitson (Leeds), Daniel Ebert (Copenhagen), Ryan Browne (Portsmouth) and Mathias Ledum (Oslo).*



*Rev. Piotr Wagnanski confidently sings the Gospel at the Mass of canonisation of St John Henry Newman.*



*“A priest, a rabbi and an imam walk into a bar... Stop me if you’ve heard this one...”*



*The New Men this year were subjected to a game of Family Fortunes with answers coming from the student body. Some of the top answers were “concerning”.*





*Documentary proof that even Vice-Rectors are allowed to smile. Fr John Flynn enjoying the New Men's entertainment.*



*'Donald Trump' played by Ryan Browne (Portsmouth) tinkles the ivories with the support of Marc Pitson (Leeds).*



*The New Men look remarkably satisfied with themselves on the night of the performance...*



*... as did those from the audience who got to participate...*



*... most of all Fr Rector!*



*Cardinal Nichols presided at a Mass of thanksgiving for over 2,000 years of combined service for our jubilarians. Ad multos annos!*



*The Visitors' Book, painstakingly illustrated by Edward Hauschild (Portsmouth).*



*Cardinal Ouellet presides at Mass on the Feast of the College Martyrs.*



*The relics of the College Martyrs take pride of place on the altar.*



*People were more than happy with the festive lunch in honour of the Martyrs, including Mohammed on the kitchen staff, who never fails to put a smile on the seminarians' faces.*



*The camera fails to catch the concerned look on Fr Rector's face as the representative of the Royal Family, Lady Paula Windsor, finds herself surrounded by a Norwegian and a Finn. It turns out she's half Swedish.*



*Fraternal cooperation, combined with carols and a good meal, are necessary ingredients for a successful Hollycam. The seminarians were pleased to be joined by Mgr John Allen of Salford Diocese for the heavy lifting.*



*Fraternal love is put to the test in the season of Advent, as the waiting for the coming of Our Lord (as well as Christmas holidays) becomes too much for some.*



*On a rare occasion, Liverpool seminarian James Finnegan is lost for words.*



*The VEC held several “Nights of Light” during the year, inviting members of the public to come and spend a moment in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.*



*Owing to the presence of a student from the Archdiocese of Cardiff, the Welsh flag was proudly displayed on St David’s Day.*

● LIVE Aggiornato 1 minuto fa

ATTUALITÀ

## Coronavirus ultime notizie: chiuse scuole e università fino a metà marzo. Partite a porte chiuse. Ipotesi stop a cinema, musei e teatri in tutta Italia

- Il Governo punta ad estendere il provvedimento di chiusura delle scuole a tutta Italia fino al 15 marzo
- Smart working obbligatorio per tutte le pubbliche amministrazioni
- Oms: tasso mortalità più alto influenza normale, nessuno è immune e non c'è ancora il vaccino
- Protezione civile: 2.263 casi di persone ammalate, 428 più di lunedì. I morti sono 80. Si contano anche 160 guarigioni, 11 in più rispetto a lunedì
- Pronto il piano del Governo per aumentare i posti di terapia intensiva sul territorio: +50% dei posti letto in terapia intensiva e del 100% nelle unità di pneumologia e malattie infettive.
- Positivi due accessori in Emilia-Romagna

*With this message, it became clear that College life would change drastically, and seminarians were told that they would be allowed to go back home.*





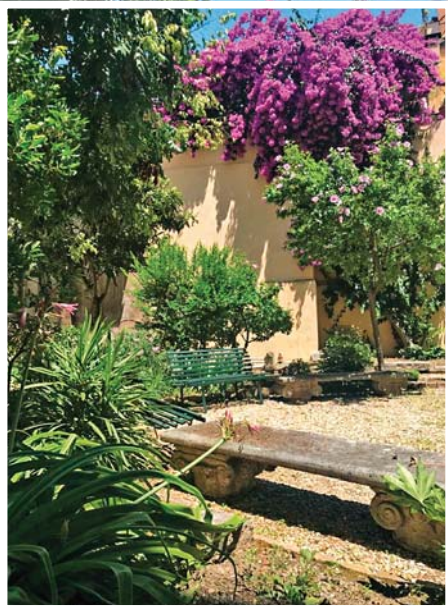
*Some did...*



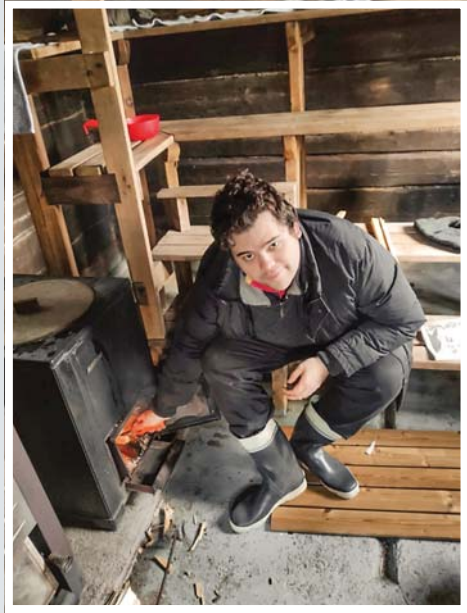
*... whereas some chose to stay, taking due precaution to stock up the bar in case there would be a full lockdown.*



*The existence of the much smaller community would be short lived. Three days after this dinner in the Common Room, all the students would be on their way back home.*



*In the students' absence, the newly planted garden is blooming, as if to point to better days to come, such as the introduction of "Virtual Spiritual Conferences".*



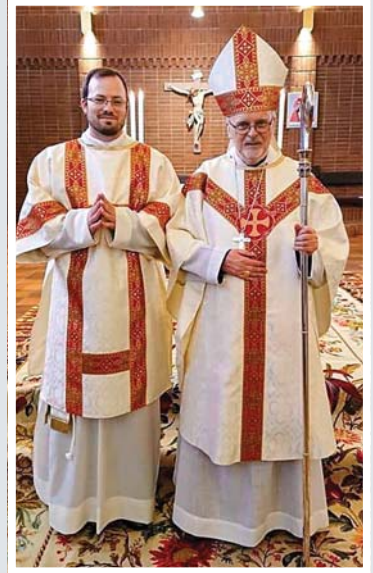
*During the Exile, many in College were thoroughly introduced to the importance of saunas in Finland by Helsinki seminarian Viktor Torres Airava. How this is in any way a suitable family activity still escapes most of the College community.*



*Meanwhile, in Norway. The leg of lamb carried by Oslo seminarian Mathias Ledum is a sure sign that Easter is around the corner.*



*Six deacons were ordained in their dioceses this summer. Top (L to R): Alan Wasowski (Łódź), Albert Lawes (Plymouth), Andrew Coy (Northampton). Bottom (L to R): Anthony Fyk (Portsmouth), David Irwin (Shrewsbury) and Joseph Rizk (Stockholm). Ad multos annos!*





*Four priests were ordained in their dioceses this summer: Alexander Balzanella (Westminster), Dominic Jenkinson (Hallam), Matthew King (Portsmouth) and Piotr Wygnanski (East Anglia). Ad multos annos!*



**ELLIOT HANSON** is a fifth-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Cardiff, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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# Farewell to Three Venerable Ladies

MGR PHILIP WHITMORE

With the departure of three much-loved ladies, who for countless people have been the “face” of the English College for the last twenty years or so, it really does seem like the end of an era: Sister Mary Joseph McManamon, Barbara Donovan and Joyce Hunter have all retired in the course of this year.

Sister Mary Joseph joined us just as the College was recovering from its last exile. Her task was to overhaul the College Library. An immense work of computerising the catalogue, giving bar codes to all the books and facilitating the process of signing out and returning books online has transformed the experience of using the Library. Her cheerful and encouraging presence in the First Library, to say nothing of the occasional chocolate biscuit, has helped many a student through challenging study crises. Latterly, Sister also served as Guest Mistress, keeping an eye on the guest rooms in the Salone, welcoming the many guests who have passed through the College over the years, setting up the sacristy for visiting groups wanting to celebrate Mass and offering them guided tours. She will be missed by many. We wish her a happy and peaceful retirement back in Massachusetts, where she spent much of her former life as a Benedictine sister.

Joyce has been the welcoming face of Palazzola for some fifteen years and it is hard to imagine the place without her. Wedding groups, Jubilarians, Old Romans, Friends, Swiss Guards, school groups, chapters of religious congregations, not to mention College students, have encountered warm Yorkshire hospitality in this enchanting site overlooking Lake Albano. As Director, she helped to establish Palazzola’s new identity after the departure of the Sisters of Mercy and the last resident chaplain, Fr Terence McSweeney. The Catholic identity of Palazzola has been maintained, largely through the frequent visits of chaplains who stay for a few weeks at a time – many of whom will be reading this issue of *The Venerabile*, so thanks to all of you too! In the meantime, reviews in TripAdvisor have been consistently good, a cookbook has been produced, providing recipes of some of the most popular menus and the whole site has had something of a facelift. Joyce’s association with the College goes back further still, as she worked as Rector’s Secretary during the 1990s. We wish her a long and happy retirement and look forward to her future visits, both to the College and to Palazzola.

It used to be said of Barbara Donovan that if you wanted to find her, the best way was to stand at the foot of the main staircase and listen. Sooner or later that familiar Irish brogue would give the game away. She could have been anywhere in the building, attending to damaged stair-rods, missing curtain-hooks, broken tiles, leaking taps, showing workmen around and monitoring their efforts, providing a “cup of tea” for groups of visitors, attending to the needs of visiting prelates or offering motherly assistance to ailing students. Her job title as Administrator hardly does justice to the range of services she provided, because she simply loved the College and the College loved her. She knew and we knew that sooner or later, she would have to retire, but we somehow dreaded it.



Sr Mary Joseph McManamon



Joyce Hunter



Barbara Donovan

The good Lord helped us to discern when the moment had come. Barbara's seven-year-old grand-daughter Arianna suffered a stroke during the New Year break in early 2020 and Barbara knew at once that she needed to give priority to supporting her daughter's family at such a difficult time. Heaven was besieged with prayers and, *Deo Gratias*, Arianna made a remarkable recovery, but ongoing care will be needed. Then came the famous health crisis of March 2020. The time had clearly come for Barbara to devote her considerable energies to her Italian family, while her larger English family would always keep a place for her in its heart.

We arranged a farewell lunch for Sister Mary Joseph just before the Christmas break on Sunday 15 December. Barbara retired during lockdown, so we have had to postpone our fond farewells. We hope very much to bring her back for a celebratory meal when the health crisis is behind us. Joyce retired during the summer. We did manage a small farewell dinner with Giuseppe and Julie Piacentini, the Vice-Rector and me, but for Joyce too we hope it will be possible for the whole community to say good-bye properly at a later stage. Thankfully Joyce and Barbara are not too far away.

So, to Sister Mary Joseph, Joyce and Barbara, the immediate family and the wider family of the College owe an enormous debt of gratitude. *Grazie, ad multos annos vivatis and arrivederci!*



**MONSIGNOR PHILIP WHITMORE** is a priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster. He has been Rector of the Venerable English College since 2013.

# The College Diary 2019-20

JOSEPH O'BRIEN

## Friday 27 September 2019

The diarist returns to Rome two days early. Struggling to find his keys, he interrupts the evening bath of Fr John Metcalfe, Pastoral Director. They exchange pleasantries and the customary comments on the weather and agree that the best College is a College bereft of students.

## Sunday 29 September

Students return for another year of study and formation. After three months' separation, the main topics of conversation are pastoral placements and the six new men – four of whom hail from the exotic and mysterious lands of Scandinavia. Much discussion about the nature of Finland as Scandinavian ensues.

## Monday 30 September

The year formally begins with the traditional 'Ben Tornati' party hosted on the roof. The party serves to welcome back old students, as well as to give the student body an opportunity to meet this year's intake of New Men. This year we have Ryan Browne of Portsmouth, Mathias Ledum of Oslo, Viktor Torres Airava of Helsinki, Marc Pitson of Leeds, Antonio Bajlovic of Stockholm, and Daniel Ebert of Copenhagen. Two priests engaging in further studies also join us: Fr Steven Billington of Leeds and Fr Don White of Rockhampton.

The New Men tell their stories from their first four weeks in Italy, spent at the Italian school in the Tuscan town of San Giovanni Valdarno, and the students wistfully recount their own stories from their own respective times there.

These discussions, however, are trumped by the day's hot topic – the upcoming canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman.

## Tuesday 1 October

The College departs to Villa Palazzola for a week of silent retreat in preparation for another year's formation, led this year by Fr Mark Sultana of the Archdiocese of Malta.

Fr James McAuley, Academic Tutor, begins his annual, week-long, in-depth study of Italian topography, courtesy of the Villa's 3D maps.

## Saturday 5 October

In the absence of Fr Rector, Fr Anthony Doe inflames the hearts of all present at grace before meals, thanking God for all his "lovely gifts".



## Monday 7 October

Like greyhounds in the slips, the Community gathers once more at 6.45am for morning liturgy on the first day of the academic year. Italian Morning Prayer and Mass add to the jubilation, as excited students look forward to another year of study in the Pontifical System.

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder, and the Diarist notices, after such a long separation from the Italian Mass setting, a certain *je ne sais quoi* in the morning's 'Sanctus'.

## Thursday 10 October

With the canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman approaching at the weekend, an exhibition is opened in the Salotto based on the soon-to-be-Saint's visits and time in Rome. Many items of interest are on show, some donated from other Roman institutions. Most striking are a draft copy of Newman's hymn 'Lead Kindly Light', written in his own hand, and a rare relic in the form of a lock of the Cardinal's hair.

Mgr Roderick Strange gives an uplifting conference on Newman's life, as a fitting preparation for a weekend devoted to the saintly man.

## Friday 11 October

Guests begin arriving in droves for the weekend's solemnities. Awash with their distinctive cassocks and birettas, the city takes on a distinctively Oratorian feel. Several of the hierarchy stay in the College for the weekend, and the bars and restaurants of Rome are filled with the English pilgrims, giving the Centro Storico an atmosphere of Little England.

## Saturday 12 October

As some students who were fortunate enough to sign up to serve tomorrow's Mass head to St Peter's Square, the announcement is made that the College is to be vacated by all on Sunday until 1.15pm, to allow for a visit by a 'Special Visitor'. Much speculation follows. The only clue given to the wondering house is the unexplained appearance in the ground floor corridor of pictures of Her Majesty the Queen and her consort, Prince Philip.

The Basilica of St Mary Major holds a Vigil of Prayer in anticipation of tomorrow's canonisation, giving thanks to God for the life and Christian witness of the soon-to-be



*St John Henry Newman takes pride of place among the new saints of the Church.*

Saint. Music from the Schola of the London Oratory School accompanies readings and testimony from various speakers, including the American woman whose miraculous healing of an illness during pregnancy allowed Newman to be declared a saint. The Diarist joins many others at marvelling at the sight of the basilica filled to capacity with English dignitaries and pilgrims, excitedly anticipating tomorrow's Mass.

### Sunday 13 October

The day of the canonisation arrives. After an evening of ironing and polishing shoes, the company of those serving Mass head for St Peter's Square. Passing through security, Joachim Teigen takes a member of the Swiss Guard by surprise after his belt sets off a metal detector. Undeterred, the party continue to the Square for the final run-through of the day's liturgy, led by Papal Master of Ceremonies, Mgr Guido Marini. The rest of the College make their way to the Square, which is bedecked with the portraits of those being canonised



*Mgr Guido Marini whips a motley crew of servers from the VEC into shape before the Mass of Canonisation.*

and filled with tens of thousands of people celebrating Holy Mother Church's newest saints. St John Henry is raised to the altars of the Church along with St Giuseppina Vannini, St Mariam Mankidiyan, St Dulce Lopes Pontes and St Margherita Bays. The culmination of several days of festivities, an atmosphere of great excitement and celebration is felt by all as the Holy Father proclaims England's newest saint to a joyful congregation of English bishops, priests and faithful. Prince Charles heads a list of dignitaries representing the Crown and State, and the much anticipated 'Special Visitor' is the Heir Apparent himself. Following the Mass, His Royal Highness pays a visit to the College for a moment's peace and quiet before moving on to a reception of dignitaries elsewhere in Rome. Some keen and enthusiastic students catch a glimpse of HRH's motorcade as it leaves the *cortile*, while for most students the only lasting reminder of the Prince is his signature left in the Visitor's Book. The Prince – having taken a whole page – is forgiven by all for his ignorance of the one line per person rule.

### Sunday 20 October

Two weeks into lectures and with the excitement of last weekend over, the house is ready for a relaxing weekend. But not so! The annual post-prandial pilgrimage takes place, dedicating our year to Our Lady. This year, the College toddles off to St Mary Major to pray the rosary before the icon *Salus Populi Romani* in the church's Blessed Sacrament Chapel, which is duly emptied of pilgrims to allow the College some privacy.

## Tuesday 22 October

The ceaseless sound of Alleluias and over-dramatic soliloquies from the Good Book echoing from the church herald the arrival of Tish Nicoll, the college's voice coach, for her bi-annual week in residence at College.

## Wednesday 23 October

Wednesday night Mass this evening takes the form of a Requiem Mass offered for Mgr Bryan Chestle, devoted servant of the Roman Curia, former student and friend of the College, who lived for many years in the College and sadly died last month.

## Friday 25 October

After much debate, discussion and planning, the New Men travel to the Villa for their weekend of rest and recuperation after three months of (apparently) hard work. The weekend, as always, conveniently falls just at the right time to afford them the chance to plan their upcoming New Men's Show.

## Monday 28 October

Sean Elliott returns home to College after six days in hospital, having had surgery on an infected gallbladder, following a great ordeal involving the ever-wise College physician Dr Annalisa Bilotta, several shots and a night of agonising pain.

## Friday 1 November

With All Saint's Day conveniently falling on a Friday this year, the first Free Weekend of the year is a long one. The Diarist drives with a party to Matera in the south of Italy, but not before a Solemn Mass celebrating the day's feast. Bradford Catholic Youth Choir, on pilgrimage to Rome, join the community and provide music, singing a stunning polyphonic Mass setting, making today's great feast even more prayerful.

Upon nearing Matera, Toby Duckworth alerts his travelling companions to the wonderful sight of a bear at the roadside. Piotr Wygnanski points out that this very small bear is in fact a stray dog.



*The College Schola was blessed with a day off as we were treated to the wonderful singing of the Bradford Youth Choir.*

## Sunday 3 November

This evening the College returns from various weekend breaks away. The Diarist and company, having taken the College's trusty and venerable Fiat Stilo to the southern state of Basilicata, return in inclement weather. A normally five-hour journey takes eight hours, and after almost 20 years of service the car arrives with one working windscreen wiper and feeling very much the worse-for-wear. An era ends, as she is declared not fit for service.

## Thursday 7 November

For at least the second time in as many years, the Stilo is resurrected from the dead and given an (almost) clean bill of health.

## Friday 8 November

The long-awaited New Men's Evening arrives. In preparation for the evening, members of the Entertainments Committee poll all the residents of the house, collecting data for a 'Family Fortunes' style game at dinner. During *aperitivi*, the night begins with the unveiling of this year's edition of *The Venerabile*, with students rushing to unmask the identity of last year's Diarist. James Finnegan compères the evening on fine form, although a joke about stamp-collecting is deemed second class. Several courses of English-inspired fare are broken up with rounds of the New Men trying to name the most commonly given response to a wide range of questions. Revealing and somewhat worrying answers are reported to the question "Name something a seminarian might grow in his room". After several uproarious rounds the entertainment moved downstairs to the crypt, where the New Men present the climax of several weeks of careful planning and preparation, bringing together the very best talents they can muster. The sketches and skits are probably best described as 'avant-garde', and the Scandinavian-heavy year takes the College by surprise with an eclectic and zany display. After an hour and a half, 30 Englishmen emerge from the crypt in a bemused state, unsure of what had just occurred and bewildered by cryptic acts such as 'F U N E X' and having seen Fr Rector singing along with much gaiety to the eponymous song 'Goodbye Father Rector'.



*An international group of New Men regaling the house with what we were led to believe were 'talents'.*

## Sunday 10 November

Ears still ringing and heads still spinning from the weekend's 'New Men's Show', the students head to the annual Remembrance Sunday Mass held at San Silvestro in Capite, Rome's English church, this year organised by the Beda College. Many people remark on the thought-provoking homily.

## Tuesday 12 November

Fr Steven Billington unwittingly eats meat for the first time in 20 years, having been accidentally served a lactose-free BIBOS meal, instead of the appropriate vegetarian one.

## Thursday 14 November

Fr John Metcalfe delivers his first Spiritual Conference of the year. Touching on the need for seminarians to be organised in preparing both for their studies and for their eventual

lives as priests he quips, “if you can’t remember where you’ve put your socks how are you going to remember where you put your knowledge of Sabellianism?”

### Monday 18 November

Having been otherwise indisposed for the previous two hours, College grandfather and resident socialist Martin Fyles arrives at the Angelicum just in time for the third hour of contemporary philosophy and finds himself once again denying accusations of having Communist tendencies, arriving just in time for the start of the discussion of the philosophy of Karl Marx.

### Thursday 21 November

The College welcomes for Mass and dinner the jubilarians of England and Wales – those celebrating 40, 50 and 60 years of priestly service. Elliot Hanson, MC, and the Sacristy Team are thrilled at the effort involved, having kitted out the Martyrs’ Chapel as a sacristy in order to accommodate the almost 50 priests, led by Cardinal Nichols. Elliot is overheard likening the affair to herding cats. Mass goes off successfully, culminating with the singing of the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for almost 2000 years of cumulative service in the priesthood. A slap-up dinner follows. Fr Rector gives a speech, celebrating ten years of the jubilarians visiting the College, and ten years of his joke that both students and jubilarians can look at one another and think “that’s the future”. *Digestivi* follow before the coach arrives to return the priests to the Villa, giving Dominic Jenkinson time to make his own traditional joke of trying to send the older students home with the jubilarians. This backfires when he realises that he is very much one of them. As always, the night proves a great opportunity for the students to get to know the experienced priests from across England and Wales, and a great reason for a celebration. *Ad multos annos!*



*Not looking bad for over 2,000 years of priestly service. Ad Multos Annos!*

## Saturday 23 November

The College begins its Advent recollection, this year led by Archbishop John Wilson. With a string of busy weekends throughout December, the weekend of prayer and reflection in the spirit of Advent is ironically held on the last week of Ordinary Time. Accompanied by silence and constant adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, it is a great opportunity for a moment of calm and peace before the busy schedule of December.

## Saturday 30 November

Begun last year, the College hosts its third 'Night of Light', when the street doors of the College church are opened, and all are invited in to adore the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and take some time of prayer and reflection.

## Monday 2 December

*Buona Festa!* The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent taking precedence, Martyrs' Day this year is transferred to today, giving the College a much appreciated long weekend and a respite from Italian liturgy. Cardinal Ouellet presides at Holy Mass, sparking heated discussion into the finer detail of French-Canadian pronunciation. Music-induced tears are the order of the day, from 'O English Hearts' at Mass to a wonderful rendition of 'Holy God we praise thy name' led by Enda Murphy during the evening's liturgy.



*Cardinal Ouellet celebrating the transferred Feast of the College Martyrs.*

## Friday 6 to Sunday 8 December

After lectures, the first of a group of holly-pickers depart for the traditional 'Hollycam' weekend at the Villa honouring Our Lady's Immaculate Conception and collecting abundant free Christmas decorations for the College from the surrounding forest. Not all make it to pick holly, but all manage to take part in Sunday's fine liturgy and even finer *pranzo* consisting of pasta, meat and potato pie and gravy, and crumble and custard. The Diarist leads the Villa guests in the traditional Christmas carol medley, before all retire for a much-needed post-prandial.

## Thursday 12 December

The next in a long line of December liturgies, the Advent penitential service is upon us in place of the usual Thursday evening Spiritual conference. Several priests hear confessions in various parts of the house, including Fr Doe who is on the 44 Corridor, where many have "encountered him before."

## Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 December

The familiar smell of cinnamon and cheap brandy wafting down *Via di Monserrato* signifies the upcoming Advent Entertainment. The third and final practice of the show sees Producer and Director Edward Hauschild and Theo Sharrock taking on the roles of militant dictators.

This year's meditation, composed by the Diarist and Andrew Coy, plots a path through the prophecies of the Old Testament foretelling the coming of the Saviour and Light of the World, with splendid music provided by the Schola. As always, the evening descends from the sublime to the ridiculous. The evening's second half, the Advent show, includes a reprise of the New Men's 'F U N E X' (which is still as much an enigma as in its first performance) as well as some old favourites and new sketches. Pontifical University Challenge is a particular highlight, earning rapturous applause and raucous laughter, and even an honourable mention in *The Tablet*.

## Wednesday 18 December

The last major event of the year, this evening three students are admitted as candidates in the long-awaited ceremony. Anthony Fyk, Sean Elliott and David Irwin receive candidacy from Archbishop Paul Gallagher, followed by festal supper. A reception in the Common Room celebrates the new candidates, as well as serving as a final Christmas party.

## Friday 20 December

The *cortile* is filled once more with the rumble of suitcases and sounds of excitement, as students make their way across the cobbles for the beginning of the Christmas break.

## Tuesday 7 January 2020

Having returned from Christmas break the day before, students joyfully begin lectures once more. In the evening, they are hosted by the staff in their sole annual visit to the *Salone* to peruse the year's Christmas cards and critique Fr John Metcalfe's choice of wine and canapes.

## Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 January

In the lull between the excitement of Christmas and the rigours of upcoming exams, the Community heads to the Villa once more for another weekend of being humanly developed. The Diarist fears he is coming down with something, but his fears are dismissed by an ever-stoic Pastoral Director who assures him that "necks swell up all the time."

## Monday 12 January to Sunday 19 January

The Diarist is visited by the Doctor, who, despite Fr Metcalfe's previous diagnosis of "it's fine", declares a case of mumps. He is duly quarantined in his room and isolated from the rest of the house, making only occasional trips to the upstairs terrace to stretch his legs, etc.

## Friday 17 January

The semester's lectures end for the students of the Gregorian University, while those at the Angelicum must wait another week before the beginning of their exam period. Many of the house travel to the Scots College for their annual Burns' Night.

## Thursday 23 January

Archbishop Ian Ernest, the newly appointed Director of Rome's Anglican Centre, gives a Thursday night conference as part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Archbishop talks of his experiences as a clergyman and bishop on the island of Mauritius and reminds us of the essence of ecumenism as being collaboration, dialogue and unity. Informally, the Archbishop invites the College to Mauritius. In the height of exam stress, the Diarist doubts he is the only one who would relish the opportunity.

## Friday 24 January

With the end of lectures at the Angelicum for another semester, the whole house is plunged into the frantic tranquillity of exam time.

## Saturday 1 February

Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, a native of Walsall, former missionary and Papal diplomat, and now living in retirement in Liverpool, takes possession of his church in Rome, Santa Maria in Campitelli, this evening at Solemn Vespers. Seminarians from the College assist with the serving.

## Monday 3 February

Cardinal Fitzgerald is the main celebrant at an evening Mass in the College, followed by a festal meal in the refectory. Today is also the fifty-ninth anniversary of the cardinal's priestly ordination. A double reason for a rousing rendition of *Ad multos annos*, led as usual by Fr Rector.



*Mass celebrated by  
Cardinal Fitzgerald  
in College.*



## Friday 7 February

A Free Weekend sees the house particularly quiet as students seek some relaxation after the stresses of exams. Piotr Wygnanski, Joachim Teigen, Ryan Browne and the Diarist head to Poland, along with Piotr's pride and joy, his new hat. As the group disembark their plane in Warsaw, a certain Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz is seen walking towards the terminal building wearing said hat.

## Monday 17 February

Once more unto the breach! The students return to lectures after the burden of exams. Italian Monday liturgy begins the day, after which Sean Elliott refers to the Sign of Peace as the most solemn moment of the Holy Mass.

## Thursday 20 February

Those preparing to receive ministries or candidacy in the coming year travel to Bagnoregio for their retreat. The two student cars arriving in perfect time for lunch, the third vehicle – a Roman taxi – is nowhere to be seen. A phone call to the car places them somewhere in the vicinity of Fiumicino airport. After four hours of driving, Ed Hauschild calls himself 'eminently patient', to the bemusement of many.

## Monday 24 February

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales announces Fr Jan Nowotnik as its new ecumenical officer, a post Fr Jan will take up in the autumn. *Auguri* Father!

## Tuesday 25 and Wednesday 26 February

The excitement of elections is upon us, as the *Venerabile* elects its Senior and Deputy Senior Students for another year. With a field of only three candidates and outgoing DSS Alex Balzanella in control, the whole affair seems to have as much legitimacy as a Soviet referendum. With a new and apparently fairer system involving first and second choices, Andrew Coy is elected as Senior Student. Andrew appears to have the weight of the world on his shoulders at the evening's festivities – a celebration in the crypt marking the 30<sup>th</sup> birthday of Balzanella. The following day, Anthony Fyk is announced as Andrew's Deputy.

## Thursday 27 February

After lunch, *riposi* are put on hold as a queue of expectant students forms outside the office of Fr Rector. The annual allocation of house jobs is here. With the precision



*Another defining feature of 2020 was the arrival of the Lime scooters on the European stage. They were suitably tested in Warsaw.*

one expects of a Cambridge student's algorithms, Theo Sharrock's prediction of himself being made capo choirmaster is proved dead-on. James Finnegan is raised to the hallowed ranks of Schola Master, while the Swedish revolution of Joseph Rizk's Sacristy team has its mandate renewed for another year. Trym Hellevig is made capo of the Common Room team.

### Sunday 1 March

A house meeting formally marks the handover from outgoing Senior and Deputy Senior Student to their incoming successors, as Dominic Jenkinson and Alex Balzanella gallantly make way to Andrew and Anthony. The meeting also marks the formal handover of house jobs for the rest of the community. For the benefit of his successor and the education of the house, Albert Lawes (*laundry responsabile*) gives a demonstration of the inner workings of a tumble dryer's lint catcher and water reservoir which, until this point, have been an enigma to many members of the house.

### Wednesday 4 March

*4pm.* After returning from the day's lectures as normal, rumours begin to spread of the impending closure of schools and universities by the Italian government, in light of the increasing spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, which has already been declared a crisis in northern Italy.

*6pm.* As the College prepares for its usual Wednesday night community Mass, the news breaks that earlier reports are true, and all Italian schools and universities are to be shut from tomorrow for at least ten days. An extraordinary house meeting is announced for later in the evening.

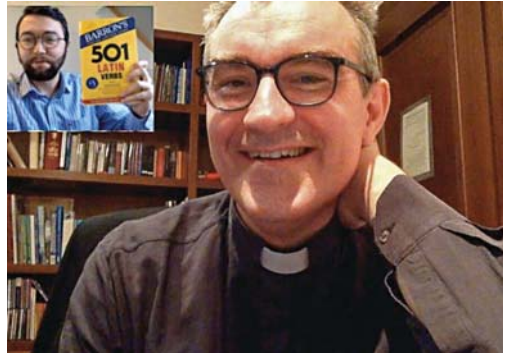
*9.30pm.* There having been a singular topic of conversation at dinner – whether or not the bar would be open as usual (affirmative) – a bizarre atmosphere of childlike excitement sweeps across the College. With a feeling somewhere between the sinking of the Titanic and the last days of the Raj, the Diarist has never seen the bar so full, and is happy to hear reports of record takings, every student wanting a beverage to either celebrate or calm the nerves for the approaching spectacle.

At 9.30pm, the arrival of the staff signals the beginning of the house meeting and, after some discussion, it is announced that the students are free to leave the College and return to England if they wish to do so, but with the encouragement to stay put for now and the proviso that, should the universities reopen, they will be expected to return to College post-haste. True to seminary form, the conversation turns into a discussion on the liturgy – more specifically on reception from the Chalice at Mass. Fr Jan Nowotnik has the final word, as newly appointed member of the Catholic Bishops' Conference.

Reactions to the announcement are mixed, and the students are left to ponder their decisions in the College bar. Some immediately book flights for the following day, while others decide to stay put in College, relishing the chance for some fairly peaceful time in Rome, free from the demands of lectures. The Diarist books a flight home for Friday.

## Thursday 5 March

After a night's heavy packing, students begin to make their way home, with the admonition "you are NOT on your holidays" ringing in dulcet Irish tones in their ears. For those making the journey home, a strict schedule of daily contact and record keeping of time spent and studies done is prescribed to make sure formation continues. Nonetheless, taxis to the airport still maintain a certain feeling of joyful freedom.



*The dulcet Irish tones were heard even more frequently by those attending Fr James' online Latin classes.*

## Tuesday 10 March

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office declares travel to anywhere in Italy inadvisable and announces that all arrivals from the country will need to isolate at home for 14 days. With this news, those who chose to remain are told the College is to close and they must make their way home. While transporting three Norwegians (Joachim, Trym and Mathias) and one Dane (Daniel) to Fiumicino airport, the Zafira driven by Fr James has a flat wheel within sight of their destination. He expressed great relief in having four Vikings on board who leapt into action and had the wheel changed in a jiffy. A shame for all those who are forced to quarantine, sympathy is felt especially for the College's two Australian priests, Fr Michael Grace and Fr Don White, who must also make the long trip back to Australia. Fr Anthony Doe and Fr John Metcalfe also return to England, while the Rector, Vice Rector and Fr James McAuley remain in Rome.



*The Vikings, here represented by Copenhagen seminarian Daniel Ebert, saved the day. There truly is a first for everything.*

The Rector begins a series of daily emails, keeping the college *in absentia* up to date with news of all kinds and providing spiritual support and insight.

## Monday 16 March

After a week's absence, and with it becoming more and more evident that the universities will not reopen soon, most lectures begin again online. While some lecturers decide simply to set essays and papers to fulfil the requirements for their courses, most opt for online lectures over video call, with a view to have oral exams either in person or online at the end of the semester. This is a remarkably quick modernisation for the Angelicum, an institution still hell-bent on requiring students to register in person for courses each year, at the university *Segreteria*.

## Wednesday 18 March

In an attempt to maintain a community spirit and keep alive College tradition, the College bar moves online, and 'Virtual Bar Night' is born. Never ones to miss a drink, contingents from Great Britain and Scandinavia are joined by bar regulars Fr Tony Currer and Fr Enda Murphy.

## Sunday 12 April

*Buona Pasqua!* The *Venerabile* experiences a very different Easter from usual, still in the throes of its Third (or possibly Fourth) Exile. With most students being resident in parishes across their various countries, and public Masses suspended in England, the Paschal Triduum is a pared-back affair. On placement at his diocesan cathedral, the Diarist longs for the splendour and beauty of the College liturgy.

## Thursday 23 April

In an unprecedented move, the Thursday Spiritual Conference makes a comeback this evening. The most recent in a long line of progressive 'moves online', the College gathers virtually for communal Vespers, followed by a spiritual conference and then smaller gatherings of House Groups. In the first week, it is evident that some have made more of an effort than others with their backdrop and presentation. Sean Elliott's conspicuous set design contrasts with a walking tour of Finland offered by Viktor Torres Airava. Father Rector gives the talk, citing *Venerabile* entries from the Second World War and drawing contrasts between the exile then



*A common reaction to the long days spent in front of a computer screen. It remains unknown whether Mathias is here reacting to his lecture, or the comeback of the Spiritual Conferences, this time online.*

and the present predicament. The mention of “absence makes the heart grow fonder” brings wry smiles to the faces of some.

### Thursday 19 May

Andrew Coy announces to the house that, after discussion with his Ordinary, he is not to return to College but will spend the remainder of his formation in his diocese. Having spent three days as Senior Student before the beginning of the COVID-19 break, his is undoubtedly the shortest stint ever made. The ever-positive Dominic Jenkinson reminds him that not all is bad: “you made the least blunders of any SS in history!”

### Friday 19 June

The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus bring to its end a tumultuous and certainly infamous year in the history of the *Venerabile*. Mass, live streamed from the College church, brings together virtually for one last time the community of 2019-20, and offers a glimpse into the possible future for College Mass – Italian restrictions mean the congregation, made up of Sandra and Emanuela from the College administration team, as well as the concelebrants, wear face coverings throughout, and Holy Communion is distributed while maintaining social distancing and hygiene. Not all hope is lost, though. A short speech from Fr Rector at the end of Mass replaces the usual ‘State of the Union’ address at the Villa. The announcement of nine New Men for next year gives hope of the College once again being reunited in the autumn term and offers a glimmer of hope in the face of the ongoing separation of COVID-19.

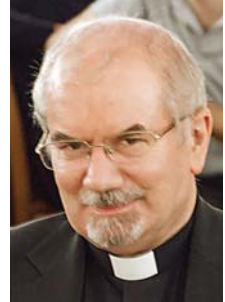


**JOSEPH O'BRIEN** is a third-year seminarian for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

# Leavers' Profiles

## Fr Anthony Doe

Fr Anthony Doe leaves the College in the summer of 2020 after a five-year term as Spiritual Director. His appointment was preceded by a retreat given to the house. From the start Fr Anthony brought a remarkable missionary dynamism to the formation process. Assessing the signs of the times facing the Church today, Fr Anthony has called us to be deeply rooted in an intimacy of prayer with the Lord, whilst entering into a dynamic missionary priesthood that seeks to enable those to whom we minister to be transformed by the love Christ has for them. Fr Anthony has also shared with us a wealth of insight from his expertise in psychotherapy, an invaluable aid for those being formed to minister to a wounded world. As Spiritual Father to the house, Fr Anthony has prepared countless retreats and reflections, whilst being available to us in a one to one capacity. He has also facilitated excellent external input to give us a rounded vision and many useful tools for ministry.



In addition to his experience and insights, Fr Anthony brought to the house something absolutely vital for the often intense experience of seminary life. With a shrug of the shoulders or a nod, he has been able to bring many a smile to our faces and burst through tension with a few well-chosen words. When going through any type of difficult moments, his support has been absolutely invaluable. An example of his wholehearted commitment to his charges was seen when he led a group over to Bagnoregio for a retreat. However, it was only upon arriving there that all realised no one in the car knew where the retreat house actually was!

I consider myself extremely blessed to have shared my time at the VEC with Fr Anthony. I had the honour of being vested by him at my Diaconate ordination and, whilst I hope he doesn't attempt his Yorkshire accent when we go out for a meal, I look forward to welcoming him out of his natural London habitat for visits up North. Fr Anthony is a priest who continually inspires me to enter more deeply into what so clearly motivates him: the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus Christ.

*Fr Dominic Jenkinson*

## Fr John Metcalfe

The hallowed walls of the Venerable English College have seen many different characters pass through. Some eccentric, others peculiar - and many forgotten. Such is life. But it is not optimistic to hope that Fr Metcalfe will be remembered long after his departure from the College this year. Arriving at the English College as a fresh-faced seminarian from Yorkshire in 1967, Fr John would have been entirely justified in harking back



to a different era, a Golden Age, in which everything was better, though 'times were tough.' To his great credit, and perhaps to our loss, he refrained from indulging in such reminiscences. Very rarely would a conversation begin with the tired prefix of 'back in my day.' For sure, we were put in our place at times. Woe betide anyone caught using the lift: 'Bah! Shame on you! The stairs aren't broken, you know!' etc. Woe betide anyone caught putting on a wash with a machine half empty. And woe betide anyone who failed to exhibit basic courtesies in conduct, speech, or table manners. Perhaps the most satisfying of Fr Metcalfe's stinging rebukes were directed towards anyone displaying puritanical tendencies. Surely, nothing could be so repulsive to a soul so generous and fun-loving. Indeed, one memorable spiritual conference given by Fr John managed to incorporate all those aspects of community life he found grievous (be sure to pronounce that correctly). However, such guidance was always welcome, and well-received by students (and, occasionally, staff). For, it was not born out of an 'I-know-best' attitude. Rather, it was a manifestation of his will for the betterment of the other, and for a deep-rooted and authentic formation to take place in the seminary.

One reason behind Fr Metcalfe's widespread popularity among the student body is precisely this broad-minded approach to formation. His great love of Italy was a lens through which he saw life at the English College. His 'slug *gitas*' became the stuff of legend. And rightly so. What better way to spend a day off than to take the train to some remote and charming town and to prop up the local economy by partaking in a splendid lunch? Of course, one really would want to take the train. Not just because it would afford the opportunity to sample the local wines, but because getting in a car with Fr John at the wheel really is a flirtation with death. Nonetheless, for those who preferred to stay closer to home, Fr John became the undisputed expert in Roman restaurant recommendations. Often discovering hidden culinary gems, he would invariably and willingly share his knowledge of such places, instead of following the seminarian trait of trying to keep them a secret.

For someone with such refined taste in food and drink, one might expect Fr John to be festively plump. Not so! For, alongside his appreciation of the *bellezza* of life, there is an undercurrent of discipline. It would be no exaggeration to say that Fr John is fitter than most of the seminarians in his care. Indeed, the clerical outfitters in Rome would be impressed to learn that Fr John remains the same size and shape as he did when entering seminary all those years ago! His love of cycling, swimming and walking have enabled this. This fitness is accompanied with a certain hardiness, as evidenced by being the only member of the community to brave the icy waters of the Tank...in December. Fr John has even been spotted in the College gym - although this was generally only ever in an emergency, when the weather prevented him from enjoying the great outdoors. There was a certain refreshing honesty with which Fr John would loudly comment upon the weight-gain of certain seminarians - often within earshot of an entire refectory. But, for any who might be left reeling by his direct style of communication, this could always be abated by experiencing a little of Fr John's generous hospitality. 'Come for a DBL' was always a very welcome invitation. And, more often than not, that hospitality could serve as a soothing tonic in a particular moment of difficulty. Indeed, sometimes all one needs is a gin and tonic - and that practical wisdom is something which characterises Fr John's

worldview. He will be remembered here at the VEC for his wisdom, his generosity, and his indefatigably cheerful outlook on life. Thank you, Fr John, for your service as Pastoral Director these past five years. Thank you for cheering us up and snapping us out of our self-pity. Rome will miss the unmistakably English gentleman, with his trademark Panama hat, and unwrinkled clerical suit, manoeuvring his way through the cobbled streets, while aggressively clearing his throat. Rome is, however, never really a city to which one says 'goodbye', and for someone so familiar with the 'Italian scene', you will be back. In the meantime, Hallam, watch out: Metcalfe's about!

*Rev. Andrew Coy*

## Rev. Andrew Coy

After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire;  
and after the fire a still small voice. (1 Kings 19:12)



Andrew's arrival at the English College could perhaps be neatly summarised by this verse of Kings. In the chorus of shouts, songs and rattle of suitcases through the *cortile* that mark the beginning of a new term, Andrew could perhaps be initially overlooked due to his quietness and humility. Yet, as time revealed, Andrew – like the still small voice Elijah heard – always had something insightful to say. His deep perceptivity and ability to listen amidst the drama of seminary life explains Andrew's immense popularity from the start among the community, his willingness to give time and kindness to others is a quality that will be much missed.

Andrew's initial quietness, however, disguised a razor-sharp wit and a dark sense of humour. He was often heard to muse whether louder members of the college had deafened themselves with the sound of their own voice, and his reactions to the chorus from the bombastic Birmingham breakfast table wouldn't have looked out of place at the Somme. Yet from the start Andrew was often drafted into choruses and choirs himself. As a gifted singer and organist, he was always eager to try challenging new pieces, write works to be performed by the Schola or even to be conscripted into the cantor group at a moment's notice. He also got involved in the lighter side of college life, producing and starring in the Advent Show, where his perfectly timed and deadpan delivery gained much applause.

Andrew's good nature was also much in demand as a college driver. Whilst not exactly the speediest, Andrew was always willing to head off on a *Gita*, whether it was lunch at an Italian lake at which he couldn't drink, driving up a mountain in the snow with only three good wheels or just to pick up gin for a college party. A downside of this was his ability to collect parking tickets and driving violations like stamps, although claims that the ZTL raised more from him than the remainder of the *Centro Storico* are probably exaggerated.

Yet perhaps this *laissez-faire* approach was a display of Andrew's half-Italian background, with his *nonna* in Trento, he was firm in his convictions that disorder and



high drama were not essential to the Italian psyche. His visits to Sicily and Campania often had the air of a gentleman explorer in some strange, foreign land rather than being at home with his fellow-countrymen. Yet Andrew did hold many Italian characteristics: a lover of good food and wine, he was always eager to find a new *Trattoria* in the area (as long as it met his quite exacting lighting requirements); a fluency in the language which allowed him to decode the most obscure gestures and a love of Italian *liquori* which tasted more like Listerine than any natural substance.

But alongside his Italian heritage, Andrew also was very much a character of the English College. A true lover of medieval and renaissance history, he was a font of knowledge about the time of the martyrs and truly took time to know and appreciate their different characters and unique stories, perhaps it was this that made him able to see the richness in others' vocations and the gifts that they would bring to the priesthood. A love of prayer is not necessarily noteworthy in a seminarian, but Andrew certainly sought to place Christ at the centre of his time in Rome, quietly taking himself off to churches around the city to pray, with *S Maria in Monticelli* a particular favourite.

When telling brothers in the College I was writing his leaver's note they each, to a man, said: "you have to mention his hair". Indeed, there are probably very few seminarians who have been known in Pontifical Universities and the Roman Curia as "the one with the hair". The notoriety of Andrew's bristle-like mane meant he was regularly having his head mauled by members of the community either for luck before an exam or just out of sheer curiosity. As with everything Andrew took this in good humour and a cheerful disposition, being glad to have been a source of amusement, something that his passion for puns did not always achieve.

Andrew returned to his Diocese of Northampton following the fourth exile from the College due to COVID-19, at which it was decided that Andrew should remain in the Diocese to minister in the Cathedral parish. The news left many in the College saddened that a good friend and confidant was not returning, but pleased that he will be able to use his virtues all the sooner in parish ministry. Undoubtedly, like the still, small voice that spoke to Elijah, Andrew's gentle and listening approach will show forth to the people to whom he ministers the beauty, truth and mercy of the Gospel.

*Fr Alexander Balzanella*

## Fr Marco Egawhary

On the morning of writing this note, I asked a mature student who has studied with Fr Marco in Rome for an impression of him. She said that, when she first saw him, she thought "what is this 15-year-old doing here?" Now Fr Marco is leaving the English College after about 15 years in higher education. He is trained in medicine, philosophy, theology and Scripture, as well as modern and ancient languages...quite an addition to any quiz team!

Those blessed to live with Fr Marco in his years at the VEC would all testify to his excellent qualities. However, the



first thing that jumps to my mind is his talent for comic acting. Not being the sort of fellow to try and dominate a room or conversation, it was a marvellous surprise to see him own the stage at the Advent Show as a NAC student rapping his way through the 90's classic "Can't Touch This." In a typical stroke of genius, Marco managed to have the room in stitches, gently wind up our American friends and convey a teaching about the importance of clerical celibacy... all via the medium of MC Hammer! Another show performance was so good that he was asked to perform it again a few years later. This time the setting was "Pontifical University Challenge." Marco brought down the house for the Ange as a cassocked Brother Juniper of the [fictional!] Congregation of Stanislaus Zumner of the Holy Tabernacle Key. At one point, Fr Richard Marsden, acting as quizmaster, asked a question about a certain philosopher, to which Marco leapt up screaming "heretic" and brought the sketch to a rousing end. The following day, as I walked around the Angelicum, I heard a priest from the region, which Fr Marco used in the sketch for his accent, recounting the scene to his sister back home with great mirth.

Off stage Fr Marco has provided all of us with a wonderful example of dedication to prayer, study and fraternity. It has been edifying to see that his commitment to work does not get in the way of joining adventures, walks, pilgrimages, meals, football matches and gelato *gitas*. He has also enabled some of us in Rome to find an excellent source of formation and friendship through the support of Opus Dei. The mature student, whom I referred to at the beginning of this piece, is now of very ill health and has kept in touch with Fr Marco through her illness. I asked her for an impression of our brother that I could put into this note. She replied simply, "that he is one of the loveliest persons in the world."

*Fr Dominic Jenkinson*

## Sean Elliott

As anybody who has ever met the man (or read past *Venerabile* diary entries) would expect, there are scores of stories and remarks that surround SEE: The Sean Elliott Experience. If they were all written here, then I suppose this year's edition of *The Venerabile* would not contain them, so I will leave folklore, and your own personal research, to enlighten you in that regard.

My first encounter with Sean – naturally – left me somewhat taken aback. I, a green first year, found myself close to suffering blunt force trauma one evening, shortly after having returned from the start-of-year retreat at Palazzola, when Sean – who had just returned from his extended placement – launched himself into the downstairs corridor through the cortile door. A figure clad in tweed, oxford shoes and flat cap, hauling a Florentine leather doctor's bag and case made haste to the supper lists and exclaimed – in RP – that he would be absent from supper as he had 'dinner plans'. By the prolonged action of the pen and furious flourishing of his wrists, I assumed – correctly – that this dinner would be several days long. I watched on, somewhat overwhelmed, and filled with regret at my



decision to wander the corridor in dirty jeans and a Liverpool Football Club jersey with a kebab in hand.

Sean remained to me an imposing, almost mythical figure for quite some time. As a cantor at Mass I was uncharacteristically nervous to sing at the direction of somebody so passionate and skilled. As a fellow seminarian I was awestruck at how he managed to maintain such a diverse crowd of people around him. As a man who drinks water from a mug – which I now know to be the most serious of transgressions – I was seriously impressed with his attention to detail, not just in his cameral surroundings, but also in his knowledge of liturgy, scripture, history and the saints, all of which and whom he was readily able to quote at length, much to my embarrassment.

Seminary life brings varied people together and, as time went on, and as Sean and I became friends, I realised that Sean is as varied as they come. Varied, but steadfast. Passionate, but not intransigent. Impressive, but not imposing. Swathes of people know Sean – as was made immediately evident to me on that first evening – but he makes himself personally available to them all. Far from simply ‘maintaining a crowd’, and anyone who knows the man will have been touched by how he listens, he is kind, shares his experiences, and cares and loves as a brother. This, on so many occasions, has been a great source of strength and encouragement to me and others, though perhaps something of a dinnertime strain on his wallet!

Sean loves his brothers and friends, but there is none – I know – that he loves more than God, His Mother and His Church. On the times when we have wanted to throw him, or ourselves, from the Church tribune during music practice, it has always been worth resisting inclinations to ‘capocide’ and, instead, to witness how beauty can manifest itself in the liturgy when there is passion behind those who are charged with its execution. With perhaps the minor exception of the *Dambusters’ Theme*, which – though played perfectly – has caused many of us to wince on more than one occasion, Sean’s choice of organ voluntaries has been a source of both inspiration and, occasionally, entertainment: from variations on a theme of Easter hymns after the Vigil to Mendelssohn’s *War March of the Priests*, one is never sure what will come next!

Sean’s sense of humour is something of a wolf in sheep’s clothing: a northern wit dressed-up in a fine English accent. Those who have been on the receiving end of his razor-sharp edge will be cut, stitched and left still wanting more. Perhaps this is because he is never slow to turn swiftly to kindness, yes, but he also never slows at inflicting his own wit on himself. When Sean had his gallbladder removed earlier this year – causing a now newly-ordained priest who shall remain nameless to say: ‘interesting thing about the gallbladder, it produces bile’ – there was quite some consternation on the streets of Rome when they saw a young man in a Loden coat hobbling down the Via di Monserrato with the help of a dusty Zimmer frame. So too were some of the brothers taken aback when we saw him installed in the Martyrs’ Chapel, as a papal legate of old, on separate damask chair, complete with prie-dieu, ere somebody knock his many stitches.

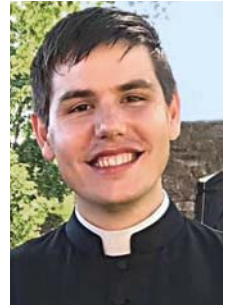
Yes, Sean has never been backward at making a ‘caricature of himself’, but may we and the people of God count ourselves blessed that his image is one not only of great wit and wonderful eccentricity, but that it is outlined with kindness and shaded with compassion. As Sean continues through life, I know that he will bless those he meets

with these virtues, and I count myself blessed to have experienced them first-hand. One of the real characters of the English College now moves on to pastures new, and those of us who have experienced his kindness, hospitality, insight and wicked humour are left to pick up the baton. Thank you, Sean, for the brotherly love which you have shown us, may God bless you now and always.

*James Finnegan*

### **Rev. Albert Lawes**

'Anyone can sing', they often say. Five years in seminary has taught me that that just isn't true. Albert, fortunately, can – and, when I first arrived at the VEC, the community were blessed with the resonant voice of this assistant choirmaster, which filled the chapel, even at the early morning hour. Rather typically of Albert, it is a talent about which he keeps quiet. The same must be said for his formidable intellect. A lover of philosophy, Albert's sharp mind serves him well in contributing to meaningful and edifying conversation. A ferocious reader, Albert is always keen to share the fruits of his intellectual discoveries with those around him and has the remarkable ability actually to remember what it is he has read. This happy marriage of a sharp mind and a retentive memory perhaps makes it inevitable that the Pontifical Universities would pose something of a challenge to him. Indeed, as soon as he entered the Greg building, Albert's usually charitable disposition seemed to dissolve, replaced by a fire of rage against the shambolic disorganisation of Italian bureaucracy and their (so-called) teaching method.



However, if I paint a picture of a terribly *serious* individual, I lead the reader astray. There is certainly a fun-loving side to Albert. This was something which was revealed to the community very early on in his time at the English College. Who could forget his very revealing performance at the New Man Show back in 2013? And who could fail to be amused by his extraordinarily large and furry slippers, which invariably made an appearance at any Common Room film night? Albert's great sense of humour has been something which has enabled him to thrive in seminary, rather than merely cope with it. Even at the ungodly hour of breakfast, the refectory would often be filled with that great guffaw which caused heads to turn and ears to twitch. And of course, although a gentleman through and through, it must be noted that he was born in Sydney. Albert's lizard-like love of the sun, as well as his laid-back temperament, certainly betray his roots 'down under'. While we feeble Anglo-Saxons sweated through our sunburnt skin, Albert would soak up the Roman summers with nauseating ease. His birthplace, as well as his roots in the South West of England also gave birth to another characteristic: a refreshingly direct style, which so often left us reeling. Anyone spouting nonsense would instantly be silenced, and anyone in the wrong readily corrected.

It is probably safe to say that Albert was always at his happiest when at Palazzola, with a bowl of steaming carbonara in front of him, and a glass full to the brim of Villa

plonk. For many of us, the Villa was always something of a safe haven, away from the pressures of the usual seminary schedule. But none more so than for Albert, for whom the calm and prayerful atmosphere seemed something of a natural habitat. Aside from the usual Palazzola pleasures of gargantuan meals and sunset cocktails, Albert was more often than not to be found in the church, breviary or rosary in hand. Indeed, this was true for the whole of Albert's seminary sojourn: each day, he would unfailingly set aside time for prayer. One of the first in the church each morning, Albert was also a devoted attendee of evening Adoration. All this is testament to how his love of community and theological study has always been rooted in that greater love: that which comes from knowing Christ. Albert's deep and contemplative spirituality will be just one of the many reasons why Plymouth will soon be blessed with a fine new priest. There is no question that Albert will be greatly missed at the VEC. A great patron of the student bar, as well as a committed member of the Schola, Albert has been a part of the VEC furniture for as long as most of us can remember. As a former editor of this distinguished journal, Albert will be well aware that leavers' notes never quite manage to capture any given character in their entirety. This inane scrawl is certainly no exception. But, suffice it so say that you will be missed, and that we are all very grateful for the part you have played in our community these past few years. As I imagine they might say 'down under': *catch you on the flippity flip!*

*Rev. Andrew Coy*

## Fr Hugh Logan

It has been a real joy to share community life with Fr Hugh over the past four years. He comes from Grenada, the "Island of Spice", a small island in the West Indies, which became an independent member of the Commonwealth in 1974. Having just over 100,000 inhabitants, I think I can safely say that Fr Hugh was for most people the first Grenadian they had ever met. He is also the first recorded priest from Petite Martinique, one of the seven islands that makes up Grenada, which I think makes him something of a celebrity too!



Fr Hugh joined us to start a licence in Scripture at the Biblicum. His dedication to study was quickly apparent: he faithfully spent many hours each day preparing for the various language tests the Biblicum threw at him. But despite the intensity of his study, Fr Hugh would always grace the community with his habitual smile and full-hearted laughter. It was also a joy to see Fr Hugh's love for his ministry expressed through his energetic, passionate and ebullient preaching. Although usually a quiet member of the community, Fr Hugh would always grab our full attention when at the presider's chair or the ambo, preaching on the scriptures with exuberance and gusto. This would reach such a zenith that at times he would even burst into song. I had the privilege of seeing this when I accompanied him to Mass with the Missionaries of Charity on the Via Casilina. On this occasion, Fr Hugh sang a short refrain from a traditional Grenadian song which added a real poignancy to the Mass, and which clearly touched the young

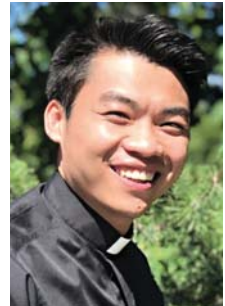
hearts of the MC novices. They were very happy to invite him back to say Mass for them during the subsequent Christmas vacation!

I have learnt many things from Fr Hugh and have much to thank him for (and not just for his introducing me to the *Poori* Indian dish). For his companionship and advice at the Biblicum, for his constant joy even in the midst of academic pressures, for his love for parish ministry and his stories of evangelisation (implementing some of Michael White's *Rebuilt* for example), and not least, for his deep serenity and prayerful response to the news of his father's death earlier this year. Hugh, we hope you will come back many times to visit Rome and England. And if you can't, I'm sure we would happily make the sacrifice of coming to Grenada! Thank you for your Christian witness and we wish you every blessing as you continue to respond generously to God's call.

*Fr Marco Egawhary*

### Fr Hai Nguyen

The story about the first time I met Fr Hai says more about this man than any flattering list of superlatives ever could. It was a beautiful August day in Oslo. I had come to visit, for the first time, the seminary there just before beginning a pastoral year in one of the city's parishes. Fr Hai, or just Hai back then, welcomed me at the bus stop as an incarnation of bliss and followed me to the seminary, where he had cooked a delicious – albeit very spicy – Vietnamese soup. When asked whether I liked spicy food, I naively said “Yes, sure!”, and with a generous, yet slightly concerned look on his face, he offered me a few extra sprinkles of red chilies for my soup. An offer I should have declined. In the days and weeks to come, he would give me an induction to life in the seminary in Oslo, in the knowledge that one day he would no longer be a seminarian, and that someone would need to know the customs and traditions of this small seminary so as to pass them on to the next generation of seminarians.



The fraternal care akin to that of an older brother would continue until the very end of his time in seminary. Add to that a pinch of Vietnamese forthrightness, such as saying “you’ve put on weight”, or “you’re too skinny”, usually followed by generous offerings of fruits and sweets, respectively. I was far from the only one to be on the receiving end of this man's generosity and kind-heartedness. Once stuck in Rome for the entirety of the summer, he gladly supplied the remaining members of staff daily with freshly cooked food, as well as what I assume was the most pleasant and easy-going company any staff member could have hoped for under such circumstances. And although I know Hai longed to go back to his beloved Norway that summer, he probably took it better than any of the rest of us would.

Indeed, the fact that he was pining for the Norwegian fjords, rather than his home country of Vietnam, says something more about this man. Fr Hai has an extraordinary ability to adapt, to accept and even lovingly embrace the situations in which Providence places him. After doing several years in junior seminary in Vietnam, he came to the

tiny Oslo seminary and commenced his Theology studies, all in Norwegian, a language he picked up impressively fast. He quickly developed a love not only for the dramatic change of seasons in this country, but also for the Norwegians and their quirky ways. In addition, he discovered in Norway a vast Vietnamese community which would become his second family. After a few years he was sent to Rome to complete his studies along with the other Norwegian seminarians, but only after doing an intensive English course in Scotland (!) to prepare him for his new existence at the English College. Judging from the way he rolls his r's to this day, the course he received in the fair land of the Scots must have had quite an impact.

It would be no exaggeration to say that his praises will be sung in this College for years to come. One would be hard pressed to find anyone who would speak an ill word of Fr Hai, with the possible exception of those who found themselves on the side of a rivalling football team, both literally, on the field, and those supporting a different team than him whilst watching a match in the Snug.

There's a surprise twist to this story. Little did I know that time he picked me up at the bus stop, that earlier that morning he had come back to Norway from the World Youth Days in Krakow, transported in an ambulance after a prolonged stay at the hospital due to serious health complications. But one just couldn't tell from looking at him. For many of us, that would be a sign of putting on a façade so as to seem stronger than we are. But in Fr Hai's case, I am convinced that the source of his calm and joy was something else entirely. The most important thing characterising Fr Hai is an unshakable, child-like faith in God and in His plan. No matter what life throws his way, Fr Hai displays an exuberant confidence in Our Lord, one which could serve as an illustration in any New Testament dictionary under the entry *faith*, and which those around him cannot fail to see and to be touched by. A faith which is far more than an intellectual assent, but rather a lived reality, nourished by his relationship with the Crucified One, and displayed in daily acts of charity.

Although I already miss having Fr Hai as part of our everyday College life, I'm thrilled to see him serve the people of God in Norway as nothing less than an icon of Christ, and I'm sure his selfless service and evangelical joy will benefit our diocese and our country for decades to come.

*Joachim Teigen*

### **Fr Jan Nowotnik**

After five long years, the Church in England and Wales is getting its favourite champagne socialist back, only now better equipped to tackle all things ecumenical. Fr Jan would be the first one to say that, in 2015, after twelve years as a parish priest, when he was offered the opportunity to venture to Rome for further study, it all came out of the blue. He was to undertake a licence in Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas and soon enough progress onto the doctoral programme. You might have seen his feature



in the 2019 issue of *The Venerabile*, in which Jan distilled his formidable Ph.D. topic on Synodality down into an accessible essay. There is, however, much more to the man than impressive academic credentials.

For one thing, the Archdiocese of Birmingham can be proud that Jan comes in a solid second place for loudest member of the Birmingham breakfast table – a now fabled entity in College. After all, laughter is a guarantee in Jan's company. He has the great gift of being able to lighten the atmosphere, as well as to engage in the serious debates that occur over seminary dining tables. This serves him well when presiding at Mass and often resulted in stimulating and balanced homilies. Perhaps this led to his backstage role, as it were, as confessor and confidant to not a few of us seminarians. I'm sure plenty of us are indebted to Jan for the generous giving of his time and energy to help those who needed it along the way. For goodness sake, the man can't even visit a bookshop without being drafted into Vatican media. Indeed, many a Papal appearance now carries the dulcet tones of Jan's online commentary. There are certainly many strings to his bow.

It hasn't always been plain sailing, however. A death in the family and a notable illness leading to an entire change of diet have no doubt left their mark (much to chef Andrea's consternation). But then again, Jan is all about leaving marks, especially in the ozone layer. He probably has more frequent flyer miles than the Vatican flag, so it's only right to offset this with vegetarianism. Other quirks that come to mind involve Jan's penchant for lanyards, housing more soap than he knows what to do with, and his somewhat late discovery of *Midsomer Murders*! So, life was never dull when visiting Jan's quarters. He shall be sorely missed. Yet the College's loss is the Bishops' Conference's gain. We wish Fr Jan all the very best as he begins this new stage of his ministry in London. Thank you for the fun, friendship and faithfulness.

David Bench

### Rev. Joseph Rizk

'A man never reveals all his cards on the first day.' This remark, made well into the first term of his second year at the VEC, perhaps best encapsulates something of the man from Sweden, whom we all may or may *not* know. It might be said that any length of time spent with Joseph can only best be seen as a slow *aggiornamento*. But perhaps an *oscuramento* would be a better descriptor, as those who listen to him are gradually taken deeper into the esoteric shadows of his mind. These inner-recesses have occasionally been offered to us in glimpses: whether it was him singing ABBA on stage in a blonde wig, his collecting of 403 wine corks from the refectory (despite being a teetotaler), or his unsolicited text messages where phrases like 'my mental suffering is enormus [*sic*]' or 'I think I should become a magician' were common.



But the true dark side of Joseph Rizk has also been seen by this community on more overt occasions, especially when the fevers of his mind and imagination have come



dangerously close to initiating brawls in the most unlikely of public settings. From his cross-examination of a kindly Shi'ite scholar in an ethics lecture, which took the class 13 minutes into their 15-minute break, leaving many gasping for coffee and cigarettes, to his setting back the clock of East-West relations by a good 700 years during a lecture in the crypt. One is never far from a diplomatic crisis with Joseph around. A personal favourite of mine was watching him take lunch, when we were joined at our table by a visiting student from the Collegio Francese. Clearly unsure as to how to approach our guest, and undoubtedly conscious of not wanting to disturb the delicate relationship that exists between our two nations, Joseph took his entire meal in silence. Naturally, though, he broke that silence at the last possible moment in an attempt to veneer himself with a semblance of normality, manifesting itself in him brandishing a fruit knife and thrusting a bowl into the Frenchman's face whilst – in Jack Nicholson's voice – asking: 'You want some *fruit*?'

It hasn't all been crises and *coltelli* though. Far from it. And his offerings to all those who've had the pleasure of meeting him have always been more abundant than underripe persimmons and partially thawed kiwis. In his utterly self-deprecating sense of humour, he has brought us joy and laughter, in his devotion and holiness, he has given his brothers a shining example, and in both, he has shown us that it is God alone who is worthy of being taken seriously, not ourselves. He has been steadfastly devoted to his brothers too, and his ability to make himself present to those who have sought his wise counsel or his patiently listening ear is an asset to him and a blessing to the Church. There will be many, myself included, who will miss the ability to turn up to his (often calorically hot) room and be fed with strange, coagulated Lebanese confections, whilst being forced into watching frightful American sitcoms and bizarre YouTube videos.

Now, whilst I have written of Joseph's devotion to the Almighty, the Church and his brothers, still one more act of devotion remains to be recorded: the apotheosis of his seminary career. 'Vox flagelli, et vox impetus rotæ', words from the Prophet Nahum, soon to be painted above the sacristy door to commemorate Joseph Rizk's reign as the most devoted (and most fierce) Head Sacristan in the history of the English College. The 'rumbling of chariot wheels' as assistant sacristans would scurry from Church to chapel, emptying drawers and blowing dust from moth-eaten chasubles – neither worn nor seen since long before the age of the maniple came to its fulfilment – as they cringed beneath the crack of his whip. Please know, dear readers, that whilst those who served beneath him as his assistants might now be hoarse from their repetitive strains of 'Va, pensiero', the rest of the College chants in great voices of thanksgiving for the Copernican revolution brought about by his fastidious attention to detail and devotion to the liturgical needs of a worshipping community.

As Joseph approached ordination to the Diaconate this year, there was a crisis brewing which was apparent to most of us...was he going to polish his shoes and iron his shirt? Joseph must be – and I say this with all fraternal affection – one of the worst dressers I have ever known. Indeed, it is a testament to his delightful personality that people were happy to be seen with him in the streets of fashion-conscious Rome. But, three-quarter trousers and orthopaedic loafers aside, what is greater testament to the man is that he has daily shown, in his understated, Nordic way, that he is a man clothed

with kindness, compassion and humility. He is a man clothed with Christ Jesus. It has been one of the greatest honours of my life, and the life of this community I'm sure, to call Joseph Rizk a friend. His gentleness, prayerfulness, bizarre sense of humour and fraternal love have made all of us who know him infinitely richer. This community is pained, I know, to wave farewell to our dear Joseph, but we will 'hold our horses high' knowing that, as we hand over so great and gracious a brother, the Church in Sweden will rejoice to receive to kindly and so good a father. *Farväl, kära Joseph!*

*James Finnegan*

## Fr Ryan Service

"Ryan! When is this incessant poetry going to end?" With these words I've often teased Ryan whilst en route to Vespers, knowing that his turn at leading the divine office would involve replacing the customary hymn with one of the optional poems at the back of Breviary. Ryan would simply reply with a wry smile, a testament to his good humour and gentle nature that never a note of protest was raised at my gentle teasing. His love of literature is apparent within the first few minutes of any conversation. Indeed, when one Angelicum professor remarked after a final philosophy exam, "After 2 years you're still a literature student at heart" Ryan, far from being insulted, wore the criticism as a badge of honour!



Ryan arrived at the VEC in 2012, having completed the Propaedeutic year in Valladolid. Prior to entering formation, he had read English at the University of Warwick then worked as a teacher, lay chaplain and finally as an administrator at Maryvale. In Spain his swift grasp of the Spanish language had served him well, so it was no surprise that he should be one of the first of our year group to master Italian (though the Birmingham accent continues to baffle locals from time to time!). He quickly immersed himself, not only in the Italian language, but also the culture. Favourite coffee bars, pizzerias and churches were quickly discovered, and many friendships were forged, both around the city and in the other seminaries and colleges. It is further testament to Ryan's warmth and easy-going nature that there was a near constant stream of classmates, friends and visitors to both the college refectory and the bar.

His first year in College was also marked with sadness as his beloved mother Anne-Marie passed away shortly after the new year. Not only did Ryan carry himself with immense dignity throughout this time but his dedication to his family, flying home to spend weekends with loved ones and to help them through their own grief, moved many of us in the College and our admiration and respect for our brother grew more and more.

Proud of belonging to Birmingham, Ryan was delighted to discover the fame of our archdiocese across the Church Universal. The words "I'm from Birmingham" almost always received the response "Ah! John Henry Newman!" from our friends from different countries. Having entered the Quo Vadis discernment group shortly after Newman's Beatification in 2010, Ryan was overjoyed to begin this final year in Rome

concelebrating Newman's Canonisation Mass at St Peter's, along with a contingent of brother priests from the diocese. A little touch of Birmingham in the Vatican!

Sadly, a little touch of Italy has taken hold of Ryan too. He has developed the unfortunate Italian taste for somewhat loud clothing and the community was subjected to several bright and colourful outfits over the years. The author did once have to intervene to prevent a tie-dyed sarape being worn to the Palazzola pool!

About halfway through his formation, Ryan took up an invitation from a former colleague to visit her Venetian apartment. Subsequently Venice became something of a second home from home for him and his free weekends were frequently spent in the city immortalised in so much of the literature that he loves.

Famously at ease in almost any situation, only once did I witness Ryan somewhat lost. We Birmingham students were invited to serve the wedding of some wealthy diocesan benefactors at Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. The late Cardinal Cormac was celebrant and the great and good of the charity world was in attendance, including HRH Prince Edward and his wife Sophie, Countess of Wessex. At a splendid reception in the Minerva Cloister, where we each discovered a terrifying taste for expensive champagne, the Prince approached us, as, amid a sea of top hats and tails we stood out somewhat in our cassocks. Whilst I fielded questions as to who we were and how we had ended up in Rome, Ryan stood by with a gentle, bemused grin on his face. Mercifully the Prince was out of earshot by the time Ryan turned to me to ask, "Who was that?"

Ryan's warmth and welcoming nature made him a natural choice to serve as both assistant and then head guest master in College, a house job which brought him considerable delight. He took an obvious pleasure in welcoming visitors to college Masses and Holy week, easily the busiest time of year for the guest master, was handled by him with ease.

He has also built a reputation as an eloquent preacher and his homilies have both communicated the Gospel in a clear and concise manner, as well as challenged the College community when he has felt it necessary. His licence studies in Social Sciences have also made appearances in his preaching, helping to solve the College mystery "What exactly is Ryan studying?"

In fact, so dedicated has Ryan been to his licence studies that, three days after our ordination, with the oil practically dripping from his hands, he embarked upon "Mission Brazil," a twinning project set up by the Archdiocese of Birmingham and our opposite numbers in Brazil, examining different means of implementing the Church's social teaching.

As Ryan leaves the College to take up his appointment as Curate at St John the Evangelist, Banbury, we can be confident that he will bring all his many gifts and talents to his new flock. His parishioners will benefit from his warm nature, his kindness and generosity. They will also be uplifted and guided by his preaching, no doubt interspersed with both Church teaching and literary references in equal measure. Just as he brought a little touch of Birmingham to Rome, he will surely bring a little of Rome to Banbury.

*Fr John Waters*

## Fr John Waters

“Mighty Waters” is a title that will accompany John throughout his life as his surname forms part of the Divine Office. Not many of us can claim to be cited in the Psalms, but Waters makes a regular appearance much to the amusement of the VEC community at prayer. As someone who has a great sense of humour and is always up for a laugh, John takes such teasing in his stride. I think it’s safe to say he preferred this biblically inspired title to the “John Waters really loves trains” ditty, which unfortunately followed John from his time on the Propaedeutic year in Valladolid to his arrival at the English College, Rome. It’s fair to say that he was not exactly chuffed — get it? — about that!



John, though, really does love trains and on a typical Saturday morning you’d often spot him in Bar Peru next to the College with an Americano and some suspicious looking spiritual reading, which was a convenient cover for his steamy locomotive magazine. John’s love for steam was confirmed when I visited him in his first College room on the 44 Corridor and I was amazed to discover a fully functioning railway track. I did wonder how he’d actually manage his studies with both the College and Trenitalia timetable to manage.

Although John was committed to the other Birmingham diocesan group members, he was quick to make lasting friendships in the city with classmates and other people living and working in Rome. The College bar owes a lot of debt to John’s business as he would invite many visitors to the VEC over the years, always encouraging people to come to the College for the public Masses — and not just the annual contingency of American female students in Rome.

I was always impressed with the way John delivered tours of the College. His ability to remember curious stories, dates, and wax lyrical with details from history is a gift that he has had since his previous line of interest at the University of Hull where he obtained a degree in War and Security Studies and his time at the Imperial War Museum in London. It is testament to John’s friendly nature and his commitment to making time for those friendships that he became a best man for someone with whom he studied in Rome.

Even though John has a degree in War and Security Studies perhaps he missed the module on diplomacy. We all know that John has a flair for acting. He is Coventry’s own Hugh Grant. Having been involved in amateur dramatics in his hometown, he kept up his love for all things theatrical at university and even adopted the role as director for shows in Rome. However, things became particularly dicey when the Mighty Waters greeted the British Ambassador to the Holy See in his costume for the Advent show. This might have been just about acceptable if he had been dressed in a costume for one of the many other sketches he performed over the years at the VEC, but the poor Ambassador didn’t know where to look when he was greeted by John dressed as a gorilla. The Rector swiftly intervened to maintain full diplomatic relations.

John was always eager to develop the social life of the community and he was a

central figure behind the Saint George's Day celebrations. I'm not sure whether that was because of a particularly strong personal devotion to Saint George or due to a serious craving of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding (now served to the House on the Solemnity). Keen to keep up 'all things English', John played an important role working in the English section at Vatican Radio, proving that there is as much pastoral work to do behind a microphone as there is anywhere else. Pastoral work in the city has always been something that John undertook with military precision, but I remember vividly when he was out-militarised by a helper at the Missionaries of Charity who would clean the wash room meticulously in the way he was trained in the army, asking us to step aside. Somewhat reluctantly but respectfully, John did this and was happy to share his own memories of the army reserves with this old veteran.

A key turning point in his vocational discernment was the mission placement in Bolivia with Fr Francis Murphy. Together they managed to survive the cuisine, the cold showers, and altitude sickness (they were in *El Alto* after all) and were kindly hosted by the Bishop Eugenio Scarpellini who sadly died this July. Both have since celebrated Mass for the Bishop.

I have managed to get this far without mentioning two words: Canon Law. John showed sheer determination over the three years of the Licentiate in Canon Law and would often be seen with Latin tomes on his library desk. Sometimes he even opened them! I jest. John was happy to undertake further studies and always spoke of wanting to serve the local Church in the Archdiocese of Birmingham. To John, that was the whole point of studying and formation — to use what we have learned here in practice through parish ministry. As someone who has a sure grasp of Canon Law, but also is pastorally focussed, John will be an asset as Assistant Priest to the parish communities of St Dunstan and St Jude's, Kings Heath in Birmingham. I hope that, amid all the festivities for the Solemnity of St George at the VEC in the future, some kind student will raise a toast to the Mighty Waters.

*Fr Ryan Service*

# The Roman Association

## The Council

**Chair:** Fr Paul Daly (2020)

**Secretary:** Fr Aaron Spinelli (until 2022)

**Treasurer:** Mr Damien McGrath (until 2022)

**Trustees:** Mgr Seán Healy, Canon Michael Cooley, Fr Paul Keane, Mr Damien McGrath, 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:

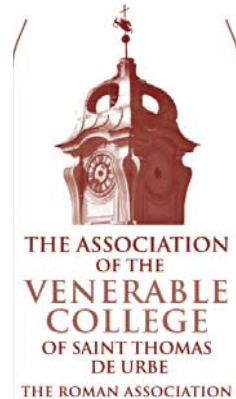
**Until 2020:** Michael Cooley, Kevin Firth, Gerard Murray

**Until 2021:** Philip Andrews, John Fegan, Mark Harold

**Until 2022:** Patrick Mileham, Mervyn Tower, Mark Woods

## Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas de Urbe

**Trustees:** Canon Michael Cooley, Mgr Provost Seán Healy, Fr Paul Keane, Mr Damien McGrath, Fr Aaron Spinelli



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y Mor, 8 Caroline Road, Llandudno,  
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# Rector's Report to the Roman Association 2019-20

The Roman Association AGM could not take place in April 2020 as planned, owing to the health crisis. For the record, there follows a report which might in other circumstances have been made at that meeting, duly updated to bring it to the end of the academic year.

We began the year with a varied intake: between them, our two first-year seminarians and our four transferring from elsewhere came from five different countries! This meant that we had 25 seminarians this year.

The first-year seminarians were Ryan Browne (Portsmouth) and Mathias Ledum (Oslo). Transferring from the seminary in Uppsala, Sweden, were Antonio Bajlovic (Stockholm) and Viktor Torres Airava (Helsinki). Daniel Ebert (Copenhagen) had spent some years at Oscott previously and was just completing a pastoral year in Denmark, while our other Englishman, Marc Pitson (Leeds), was transferring to the diocese from the English Province of the Dominicans.

We had a record number of student priests this year – ten at any one time. Hugh Logan (St George's in Grenada), Jan Nowotnik (Birmingham) and Michael Grace (Brisbane) were joined by newly-ordained Hai Nguyen (Oslo) as well as the “Birmingham Three” – Marco Egawhary, Ryan Service and John Waters. The two Maltese priests – Peter Ellul and Aayrton Muscat – brought the number to nine, while the tenth, who joined us in

October, was Steven Billington (Leeds), an *alumnus* of the college, returning for a two-year licence in spiritual theology.

Fr Hai left us in February, having completed his licence – but at almost exactly the same time, a priest from Rockhampton, Australia, came out to join us. Fr Don White had spent many years in ministry and was now about to start further studies at the behest of his bishop. He was just finding his feet when, less than six weeks after his arrival, the College was evacuated and he returned to Australia!

Deacon Matthew King (Portsmouth) was due to be ordained to the priesthood in April 2020, while three other deacons were due to become priests in July 2020 – Alexander Balzanella (Westminster), Dominic Jenkinson (Hallam) and Piotr Wagnanski (East Anglia). The ordinations did indeed take place, although not in quite the way we had imagined.

At the end of the *villeggiatura* this year, four were due to be ordained deacon at Palazzola – Andrew Coy (Northampton), Anthony Fyk (Portsmouth), David Irwin (Shrewsbury) and Albert Lawes (Plymouth). Although the *villeggiatura* did not take place, the ordinations did – not at Palazzola, though, but in the respective cathedrals.

We began the year with eight seminarians in 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Theology at the Gregorian University and two in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Theology. At the Angelicum we had



six seminarians in 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Philosophy, five in 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Theology, and one in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle Theology. At Santa Croce we had one seminarian in 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Philosophy, one in 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle theology and one in 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle theology.

The year began with a six-day preached retreat at Palazzola, led by Fr Mark Sultana (Malta). In preparation for Advent we had a day of recollection led by Archbishop John Wilson. 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. Those seminarians preparing for ministries or orders had an opportunity for a further retreat in late February with their year-group.

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, Fr Matthew Pittam and Fr Barry O'Sullivan, in addition to Fr Gerard Byrne.

The weekly pastoral classes during term-time include *Homiletics*, *RCIA*, *the Ministries of Lector and Acolyte* and *Preparation for Diaconal Ministry*. These are led by the resident members of staff with occasional outside input. In these classes we emphasise the pastoral skills that are needed in our particular English and Welsh context.

For their weekly pastoral assignments in Rome, some seminarians

give tours of the *Scavi* under St Peter's, some assist with the English-language news desk at the Vatican, some visit the elderly in care homes, 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. 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.

Last summer, Andrew Coy went on a missionary placement to Jerusalem to work at St Rachel Centre – a summer camp for the children of immigrants and refugees, David Irwin worked in deprived areas of Wisconsin, USA, Albert Lawes did placements with the Army and with the Apostleship of the Sea, while Sean Elliott (Leeds) was assigned to the Navy.

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.

The Roman Association generously offered two bursaries for new students beginning at the College in September 2020. These were awarded to two new Portsmouth students: Ryan Hawkes and Jack Ryan.

As part of our continuing plans to build an endowment for the development of our Heritage Collections, we owe a further debt of gratitude to our long-standing benefactors Urs and Francesca Schwarzenbach, who hosted a fund-raising dinner at their Berkshire home on 20 September 2019. This was to have

been followed by a second fund-raising dinner at New College, Oxford in June 2020, but alas, the second dinner had to be postponed.

Early in March, the year was dramatically cut short by the burgeoning health crisis (cf pp. 7-11). The students had all been evacuated by 10 March, and it proved impossible to bring them back before the end of the academic year. We had to make the utterly unprecedented switch to distance formation – not impossible, but far from ideal. Our pilgrimage to the Holy Land, due to take place in September 2020, was postponed by 12 months. We look forward to being joined once again by Canon Mervyn Tower and Pam Coote for our third pilgrimage to the lands of the Bible in September 2021.

In the meantime, one area of College life that could continue with only a minimum of interruption after the March evacuation was that of “building works.” Many changes have taken place in the College over this past year.

The Garden has had a major overhaul, thanks to a landscape designer who helped us make the best use of our small but beautiful space. It was a shame that so few were here to enjoy it in spring and summer! Beside the Garden, the swimming pool (“tank”) has had a new pump installed, the plaques and statues around it have been cleaned and the paving has been deep-cleaned for the first time in many years. Meanwhile we plan to have the “Broomhead” column restored. More about that in next year’s report.

There are two new boilers, which have allowed us to upgrade the heating system and the hot water – believe it or not, this can now be controlled from an “app”! There is some new gym equipment

and the generosity of the Roman Association in funding the gym is now recorded through a plaque on the wall.

Those driving in through the entrance at no. 43 will find a new mechanism for the electronic gate and designated car parking spaces in the *cortile*. It has been possible to rationalise the allocation of parking spaces and to ensure that the College receives all the rent that is due for parking.

The fire alarms have been upgraded and the wifi security enhanced. The cellar area has been improved with new lighting and much clearing out of surplus items, while the more valuable items of furniture have been carefully restored.

The administration offices above the portineria have been restructured, the archway at no. 48 (entrance for some tenants, kitchen suppliers and visitors to our Archives) has been cleaned and restored, while the emergency exit at the end of the Heard Corridor has been thoroughly cleaned (it had attracted a degree of unwanted attention from the pigeon population!).

There is a new face about the College, Bruno Facchini, who cheerfully and efficiently carries out routine maintenance throughout the building from day to day. He has never been short of work since he joined us in May. Thanks to him and an excellent team of builders, under the expert guidance of the Vice-Rector, the College is looking smart and welcoming.

On behalf of everyone at the College, I’d like to thank the Old Romans for their continuing support and their prayers, as well as their generous contributions to the work of the College. It is greatly appreciated.

*Mgr Philip Whitmore*

# News from Old Romans

## Arundel and Brighton

As we all continue to live through these extra-ordinary times, I can report that there were some moves in 2019 but not so many movements in 2020 – so far!

Mgr Bryan Chestle went to the House of the Father on 4 September 2019. His Requiem was celebrated at Arundel Cathedral by Bishop Richard Moth and was concelebrated by many Old Romans with several archbishops and bishops in attendance. Bryan was buried at the cemetery in Arundel.

Canon Tony Churchill continues as parish priest of Ashstead, Surrey and is Episcopal Vicar for Ecumenical Affairs. Emeritus Bishop Kieran Conry lives 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.

Canon Rob Esdaile remains parish priest of Thames Ditton. Kevin Dring is at Womersley as Pastoral Director. Jonathan How is now parish priest of Godalming. Tony Milner continues as parish priest of Dorking. Stephen Hardaker continues in Oxted and Terry Martin is on the South Coast at Worthing. Stephen Dingley is parish priest of Effingham.

In Surrey, Simon Hall continues as assistant priest at Woking. Canon David Parmiter moves to Arundel Cathedral

as Dean. Andrew Pinsent continues at the Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford University. Bruno Witchalls has moved to Eastbourne. Aaron Spinelli is parish priest of Horsham and West Grinstead. Andrew Moss is in the USA. Tristan Cranfield continues as assistant priest at Our Lady of Ransom, Eastbourne. Mark Woods is parish deacon at St Michael's, Worthing.

*Fr Aaron Spinelli*

## Birmingham

I write this on the Feast of St John Henry Newman. Today two Old Romans, Canon David Evans (1978) and Canon Stephen Wright (2000), are being ordained as Auxiliary Bishops for our diocese. David will look after the Centre area of the diocese, namely Birmingham and Worcestershire. Stephen will take care of the North, namely Staffordshire, Wolverhampton and the Black Country. May the Lord bless them and make them fruitful in their ministry among us. Bishop David Mc Gough (1970) has retired from his care of the North. We wish him a happy and healthy retirement. Timothy Menezes (1995) is now Cathedral Dean at St Chad's and Richard Walker (2000) has taken over as Vicar General.

Patrick Kilgarriff (1966 - former Rector) is retired at St George's, Worcester. John O'Brien (1984) is in retirement in Nuneaton. Danny Mc Hugh (1967) is retired and living in Solihull. He is Coordinator of ethnic chaplaincies in

the diocese. Tony Wilcox (1964) is in retirement in Henley-on-Thames.

David Doran (2013) is at St Peter's, Bloxwich. Christopher Miller (2008) is at St Thomas More's, Sheldon, Birmingham. Paul Moss (2005) is working in the Vatican. David Gnosill (2003) is at Corpus Christi, Coventry. Joseph McLoughlin (2002) is at St Peter and Paul's, Pype Hayes. He also serves St Mary and St John's, Gravelly Hill, Birmingham and is Judicial Vicar. Patrick Mileham (2002) is at St Mary's, Warwick. Robert Murphy (2001) is serving at the Apostolic Nunciature in New Delhi.

Gerardo Fabrizio (1993) has moved from Our Lady of the Wayside, Shirley to be Pastoral Director at St Mary's, Oscott. Mark Crisp (1991) is very busy in Wolverhampton as Parish Priest at St Peter and Paul's and sharing pastoral care for St Michael's, Penn and St Bernadette's, Wombourne. Patrick Broun (1989) is at Our Lady and St Hugh, Witney, Oxfordshire.

Harry Curtis (1984) has recently moved to Our Lady, Help of Christians, Cowley, Oxford, formerly a Salesian Parish. Bruce Harbert (1979) has retired and resides at Charlbury, Oxfordshire. Mervyn Tower (1978) continues at Corpus Christi, Headington, Oxford. John Osman (1975) is at St Birinus, Dorchester on Thames. Gerard Murray (1974) is based at Sacred Heart, Bilton and looks after English Martyrs, Hillmorton, both in Rugby.

Our three new Romans (all 2019) are back in the diocese and enjoying their first appointments we hope: Marco Egawhary at Holy Trinity, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Ryan Service at St John's, Banbury and John Waters at St Dunstan's, Kings Heath, Birmingham. We welcome Jan

Nowotnik (1998) back from studies in Rome. He will be working in ecumenism for the Bishops' Conference.

*Fr Gerard Murray*

## Clifton

There is only one change from last year. Canon Tony Harding, five years on now from the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination, is still our Diocesan Archivist. 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. Alex, now Anselm Alexander, Redman is one of two parish clergy at Glastonbury, also serving Wells. Parishes across the Diocese are still being supplied, coronavirus permitting, from Mendip as necessary by Bishop (Emeritus of Portsmouth) Crispian Hollis, and your correspondent.

*Canon Thomas Atthill*

## Hallam

Peter Kirkham has moved - I might say 'metaphorically'. That is, he has retired, but remains at Saint Joseph's, Worksop, where the house has grown around him. John Ryan remains at Saint Bede's, Rotherham, and Mark McManus at Saint Joseph's, Handsworth. Adrian Tomlinson continues at the Annunciation, Chesterfield, where he now presides over an accumulation of parishes under the title of Our Lady, Queen of Peace. Craig Fitzpatrick resides under that title (and under A.T.) at the Holy Family, Chesterfield and is chancellor and

*officialis*. Tom Clarke, Anthony Towey and Kevan Grady flourish.

Your correspondent has left the eternal city for the Derbyshire Dales as rector of Hathersage and parish priest of Bamford, so he has not actually got back to Yorkshire.

*Fr John Metcalfe*

## Leeds

Changes from 2019 are indicated in **bold** type.

- 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 Città del Vaticano, Italy
- 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, Chaplain to the Carmelite Monastery, Wetherby and Vicar for Religious, residing in Harrogate**
- 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 (Further Studies), Venerable English College, Via di Monserrato, 45, 00186 Rome, Italy**

- Very Rev. Canon Matthew Habron (Cathedral Dean), Cathedral House, Great George Street, Leeds LS2 8BE
- **Rev. Dennis Cassidy, Parish of St John Mary Vianney, Immaculate Heart of Mary Presbytery, 294 Harrogate Road, Leeds LS17 6LE**
- **Rev. Michael Doody (Pastoral Director), Venerable English College, Via di Monserrato, 45, 00186 Rome, Italy**
- 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, Queen's Road, Ingrow, Keighley BD21 1AT**
- Rev. Sean Crawley (Bishop's Secretary), Cathedral House, Great George Street, Leeds LS2 8BE
- **Rev. Elliott Wright, St Robert's Presbytery, Robert Street, Harrogate HG1 1HP**
- **Rev. Benjamin Hilton, Cathedral House, Great George Street, Leeds LS2 8BE**

*Canon Matthew Habron*

## Liverpool

Our numbers continue to dwindle, for various reasons, and we have all seen much less of each other this year, because the Covid-19 pandemic has kept us at home, or at least caused us to travel less. Fr Brian Newns has retired from his long labours in Ashton-in-Makerfield.

Gerald Anders is in Tarleton on the Ribble estuary and serves one of our truly rural parishes in Mawdesley. Peter Fleetwood ignored advice to 'shield' and battled through the pandemic as one of the chaplains in Aintree Hospital, but is writing this in Tórshavn, the capital of the Faroe Islands, where he is the new parish administrator, having been loaned by Archbishop McMahon to the Diocese of Copenhagen. John Furnival is still at Sts Peter & Paul in Crosby. Archbishop Paul Gallagher is often in the news on account of his job heading the Holy See's diplomatic endeavours. He also deservedly won high praise for the part he played in a television documentary entitled "Inside the Vatican". Philip Gillespie is Rector at the Pontifical Beda College, which stayed open through the year, because of the number of students from Africa and Asia. Archbishop Patrick Kelly is in a happy little community of retired priests in Southport, but that doesn't keep him from participating in all sorts of debates by e-mail, mentioning Lonergan and Abbot Vonier almost every time!

Peter McGrail oversees philosophy and theology at Hope University. John McLoughlin took advantage of St Stephen's in Orford being closed to clean some beautiful Stations of the Cross he had acquired – it's worth watching his YouTube videos of this operation. Francis Marsden is still happy, as far as I know,

in Chorley. Brian Murphy, canon lawyer extraordinaire, is now a Chaplain of His Holiness and lives in the White House - the one next to John Furnival's church, that is. Kevan O'Brien is now in charge at Holy Cross in St Helens. Michael O'Dowd is still in Eccleston, near Leyland. John Poland is busy with projects linked to safeguarding, but his day job is secretary to Archbishop McMahon.

David Potter is still in Stockbridge Village at St Albert's. Aidan Prescott is our chancellor and parish priest at St Clare's, a few hundred yards away from his office. Andrew Robinson is on the academic and formation staff at Oscott. Paul Rowan is deputy head at Beaulieu School in Jersey and provides Mass for the school community. Tony Slingo leads the HeartStone Community (an amalgamation of the parishes of Sacred Heart in Ainsdale & St John Stone in Woodvale). Of the various other Old Romans in the area, I have seen only Paul Crowe and Tony Murphy in the past year. Both have had health challenges, but both were well when I met them. Elsewhere in this issue of *The Venerabile* is an obituary of Mgr Peter Cookson.

*Mgr 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 Luċija, Malta)
- Fr Stefan Bonanno (Director of the diocesan Media Centre)
- Rev. Dr Mark Sultana (Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of

Malta and Spiritual Director of the Archbishop's Seminary)

- 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)
- Rev. Canon Brendan M. Gatt (Judicial Vicar)
- Rev. Dr Kevin Schembri (Lecturer in Canon Law and Defender of the Bond at the Metropolitan Tribunal)
- Rev. 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)
- Rev. Canon Dr Nicholas Doublet (Diocesan Archivist)

It is also with great pleasure that we note that the Maltese connection to the VEC is being further strengthened through the presence of two Maltese student priests residing at the College, and the recent addition of Father Konrad Grech SJ as Spiritual Director to the VEC community.

*Canon Brendan Mark Gatt*

## Middlesbrough

There has not been a great deal of change in a most peculiar year!

Mgr David Hogan has left his role as dean of the Northern Deanery, but continues as PP of St Bernadette's, Nunthorpe. Fr

William Massie is PP of Our Lady of Lourdes and St Peter Chanel, Hull and is also University Chaplain and Vocations Director. He is assisted by Fr Peter Taylor. Canon Stephen Maughan is still PP of the Sacred Heart, Middlesbrough and Chancellor and *Officialis*. Fr Richard Marsden has been appointed as assistant priest at St Joseph and St Francis Xavier, Richmond. I have been appointed Dean of the Northern Deanery to replace Mgr Hogan and continue as Parish Priest of St Therese of Lisieux, Ingleby Barwick.

The response from all during the pandemic has been generous and varied (depending on technical knowhow in parishes). Live-streams, Facebook, emailed homilies, telephone communications have kept us in touch with our people in very stretching times. But we soldier on, bringing the Mass and the Faith to the people in the tradition of our Martyrs. *St Ralph Sherwin and Companions, Pray for us.*

*Canon Alan Sheridan*

## Northampton

Last year I reported that our two senior Old Romans – Canon John Koenig and Fr Paul Hardy – were, despite spells of ill health, continuing in their parishes. Soon after writing those words both decided to seek retirement which they are now blissfully enjoying in Kettering and Milton Keynes respectively. Even after the arrival of a new bishop, Mgr Seán Healy continues in his role as Vicar General. He is also parish priest of St Teresa's, Beaconsfield and St Dunstan's, Bourne End. Mgr Kevin McGinnell is still labouring away at Holy Ghost, Luton and Episcopal Vicar for Education and Formation. Fr David Barrett has moved

to Our Lady Help of Christians and St Lawrence in Olney, Buckinghamshire. A welcome addition to the ranks of the *Venerabilini* in the Diocese is the Reverend Andrew Coy, ordained deacon at the Cathedral during the lockdown and now ministering in the same parish. His priestly ordination is set, God willing, for the early part of 2021. Hopefully, he can write next year's report!

*Mgr Seán Healy*

## Portsmouth

For all of us, I am sure that 2020 has been a very challenging year due to the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic, affecting every aspect of life, including our faith and how we are allowed to practise it. In the Diocese of Portsmouth, like elsewhere, many parishes have introduced live streaming of Masses, which has proved a great comfort to many. Many of our churches have reopened now with safe but limited seating and the attendance at these Masses has been encouraging.

Bishop Philip Egan (1984) has been using the time after the strict lockdown for visiting the priests to give encouragement and respond to any needs. On 5 July, he also ordained Fr Matthew King to the priesthood and current VEC student, Anthony Fyk to the diaconate.

Only a few new appointments have been announced regarding Old Romans: Fr Bruce Barnes (1997) has moved to Our Lady Queen of Apostles, Bishop's Waltham and has become the Chaplain to the Heads and Principals of Catholic Schools in the Diocese. Fr Benjamin Theobald (2013) has moved to Holy Family, Southampton and has become the Priest-Chaplain to Southampton University. Fr Matthew King (2020)



has been appointed Assistant Priest in Jersey, and Canon Alan Griffiths (1974) is retiring. Other Old Romans continue in their current appointments.

*Fr Phillip Pennington Harris*

## Southwark

Not the easiest of years, and one which saw the archdiocese lose several Old Romans. Archbishop Michael Bowen died in October 2019 at St Peter's Residence, Vauxhall, some sixteen years after his retirement as ordinary. Archbishop Peter Smith died in March after a short illness – his inability to enjoy retirement in Whitstable for more than a matter of months after decades of faithful service proving a source of sadness to many. His funeral liturgy, conducted by Archbishop John Wilson under lockdown conditions at St George's Cathedral on 30 March, was to prove one of many affected by the pandemic. Two other Old Romans have died since the last issue: Fr Tom Creagh-Fuller, whose arrival at Corpus Christi, Brixton Hill in September 2019 was shortly followed by a terminal diagnosis and his death in early November, and Fr Charles Briggs (St Mary's, Chislehurst) who died in late August, only weeks after learning of his cancer. *Requiescant in pace.* Following the customary episcopal retirement at 75, Bishop John Hine has now – at 82 – retired as parish priest of St Andrew's, Tenterden. May his be an enjoyable second retirement! Bishop Paul Hendricks continues to have responsibility for the South West pastoral area of Southwark (making him a point of reference for your correspondent, who remains in post as assistant at St John the Baptist, Purley). Beyond the confines of the archdiocese, Bishop Nicholas

Hudson's labours in the vineyard north of the Thames have not ceased, both as auxiliary bishop of Westminster and overseeing the work of the Agency for Evangelisation, Youth, and Justice and Peace. Meanwhile Bishop Paul Mason, Ordinary of the Bishopric of the Forces, has in his role as Lead Bishop for Healthcare and Mental Health sought to steer hospital chaplains and other clergy through the many challenges of our present situation with detailed guidance. Fr Tim Finigan, after a spell of serious illness in late 2018 and a time of recuperation in Bournemouth, resigned his parish when well enough to make decisions and gratefully accepted the status of being semi-retired. On the first day of lockdown in March 2020, he moved to a house in Lewisham owned by the parish of St Saviour's (where Fr David Howell remains as assistant). Fr Tim's health has improved enough for him to contemplate more writing, speaking, and supplying – especially for parish priests who have the traditional Latin Mass as part of their parish schedule and consequently find it difficult to get cover. Further to the west, Fr Stephen Langridge (St Elizabeth of Portugal, Richmond upon Thames) has been accredited as a coach for the Divine Renovation Network, and is helping a number of parishes and dioceses in the English- and Spanish-speaking worlds as they try to bring about a renewal of parish life by implementing the Divine Renovation principles. Over in Fr Stephen's former stomping ground of Balham, Fr Richard Whinder continues to enjoy life as parish priest of Holy Ghost. His neighbour Fr Marcus Holden (St Bede's, Clapham Park), whose work with Evangelium, St Anthony's Communications, Maryvale,

and the Catholic Truth Society all point to his commitment to propagating the Catholic faith, has this year been appointed Episcopal Vicar for Catechesis and Evangelisation.

Fr Matthew O’Gorman, who arrived at Corpus Christi, Brixton Hill as assistant to Fr Tom Creagh-Fuller, soon found himself thrust into the role of parish administrator after the latter’s death. Matthew’s enterprise and skill in establishing a sophisticated online presence from scratch – with high-definition streaming to boot – set a gold standard for electronic ministry in lockdown. In his capacity as a member of the Ongoing Formation Committee, he continues to have a remit for the newly ordained. Fr Philip Andrews – until recently assistant at St George’s Cathedral – has made the short trek to Archbishop’s House to take up residence as the newly-appointed Private Secretary to Archbishop Wilson. We wish him well in this role, confident that his efforts in His Grace’s service will be unstinting and that his penthouse suite will prove a place of *convivium*.

A year of tumult has not been without its constants, and many Southwark Old Romans remain in the same positions that last year’s report found them. Canon Michael Cooley is still hard at work as chaplain at St Peter’s Residence, Vauxhall, while the following continue to care for their parishes: Canon Leo Mooney (St Dunstan’s, Southborough); Canon Michael O’Dea (Our Lady of Pity and St Simon Stock, Putney); Canon Martin Edwards (St Mary Magdalen, Wandsworth East Hill); Mgr Tim Galligan (St Vincent de Paul, South Battersea); Fr David Gummett (St Mary of the Crays, Crayford); Fr Stephen Boyle (St Anselm’s, Dartford); Fr Simon Peat

(St Winefride’s, Wimbledon); Fr Victor Vella (Holy Innocents’, Orpington). Fr David Stanley, still active in pastoral organisations, enjoys retirement, while Fr Paul Connelly remains unwell and resident in the parish of St Anselm’s, Tooting Bec.

As International Pastoral Director of Grief to Grace, Fr Dominic Allain’s work to provide spiritual and psychological healing for those who have suffered abuse continues to bring light to situations of great darkness. Also working to relieve suffering is Luke de Pulford, who recently founded the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China with Iain Duncan Smith and has been made a fellow of Hong Kong Watch, all while netting himself a well-deserved *Benemerenti*. Steven Greenwood, who once stood on stage with your correspondent to perform a truly execrable New Man Show musical number titled – imaginatively enough – “Southwark Men”, is reported to be flourishing in the married state while enjoying employ in Her Majesty’s Civil Service.

*Fr Francis Murphy*

## 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
- **Alexander Balzanella, Newly ordained — further studies at the *Venerabile***

- 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 the Cathedral Chapter
- Dominic Byrne, PP, St Theodore of Canterbury, Hampton-on-Thames
- **Antony Conlon, R.I.P. — 19th April 2020**
- 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 Allen Hall seminary**
- Pat Egan, Retired — Ann Arbor, Michigan
- Michael Garnett, Santa Apolonia, Cajamarca, Peru
- **Daniel Humphreys, PP, Our Lady of Mt Carmel & St George, Enfield**
- **Stewart Keeley, PP, St Sebastian & St Pancras, Kingsbury Green (incardinated from Lancaster)**
- Roger Kirinich, Retired — living in Clifton diocese
- Mark Langham, Chaplain to the University of Cambridge
- Robert LeTellier, Further Studies, Cambridge
- **Hugh Mackenzie, Assistant priest, Westminster Cathedral**
- **Eddie Matthews, R.I.P. — 1st April 2020**
- **Paul McDermott, PP, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Fulham**
- Paul McPartlan, Professor, Catholic University of America, Washington DC
- Shaun Middleton, PP, St Mary's, Cadogan Street, Chelsea
- Philip Miller, PP, St Augustine, Hoddesdon, and co-ordinator of Ethnic Chaplains
- 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 seminary
- Brian O'Mahony, PP, St Matthew, Northwood, and lecturing at Allen Hall
- Jim Overton, Retired — resident in Somers Town

- Terence Phipps, PP, Immaculate Conception & St Joseph, Hertford
- **Antonio Pineda, Assistant Priest, St Joseph & English Martyrs, Bishops Stortford**
- 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, Retired October 2020 — living in Sunbury**
- Mark Vickers, PP, Holy Ghost & St Stephen, Shepherds Bush
- Chris Vipers, PP, St Mary, Moorfields & St Joseph, Bunhill Row, and Director of Agency for Evangelization
- Frank Wahle, Retired — resident at Baker Street
- Stephen Wang, Senior University Chaplain, and Vocations Director, in the Diocese of Westminster
- Philip Whitmore, Rector of the *Venerabile*
- Ben Woodley, Assistant Priest at Our Lady, St John's Wood

*Fr Philip Miller*

# Obituaries

## Archbishop Michael Bowen

23 April 1930 – 17 October 2019

I first met Michael Bowen on the steps of Archbishop's House next to Saint George's Cathedral, Southwark, on 9 September 1955. We had both collected the money for our journey to Rome, Michael returning after Philosophers' Holiday and myself going there for the first time. The train fare was £20, but I am practically certain that Michael travelled by air, quite unusual at the time. Within the very varied College community there was something distinguished about Michael Bowen – born in Gibraltar, Downside, The Irish Guards, Cambridge, the wine trade – not that he was in any way aloof, but he did have a certain *aura*.

During the *villeggiatura* of 1956, the Gilbert and Sullivan opera was *The Gondoliers*. I sometimes wonder whether, in later years as President and Vice-President of the Bishops' Conference, Michael Bowen and Cormac Murphy O'Connor recalled their duets as Marco and Giuseppe. Later that year there was a photo of the Southwark students, including Leo Mooney, his classmate, and John Hine, for several years his Vicar General and later his auxiliary bishop.

Being Senior Student, Michael Bowen was ordained in Rome during the summer of 1958 when I was on Philosophers' Holiday. The next year, as he packed up his belongings, he kindly gave me his army boots. Our paths did not cross again for some twelve years, by which time he was Coadjutor Bishop in the recently formed Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. Six years later, by now bishop of the diocese, he handed over the reins to Cormac – Marco to Giuseppe or was it the other way round? – and became my archbishop.

My eldest sister died in 1978. In my breviary, at the invitatory prayer, I keep a picture of a smiling Pope John Paul I. On the back there is a note: *Mike, I send my sincere sympathy on the death of your sister. I shall say a Mass for her and remember you and the family too. Dev.mo, + Michael.*

In the spring of 1980 Michael wrote to me at Newman College, Birmingham, pointing out kindly but firmly that I had reached a turning point: either to be an academic for life, or to join the parish ministry for which I was ordained – delaying further would make it very difficult to adjust. I replied that, although I agreed, it would not be convenient that year because of staffing details. That was no problem for him, but in this exchange, I detected a person of firm decision, but one who was willing to make reasonable adjustments. And so it was that in the autumn of 1981 I became a curate for the first time in nineteen years of priesthood – again with a carefully chosen and helpful parish priest.

Two years later Michael telephoned. He explained in detail that there was an inner-city parish which, for various reasons, was very run-down in every respect.

No doubt anticipating some reluctance on my part, he had prepared his trump card: *“Mike, I know you like taking holidays in the Alps and sleeping under the stars. You can do that in Melior Street. The roof has fallen in.”* I suggested that all the necessary work could not be completed in six months and he said he was thinking of five years.

The official obituaries of Archbishop Bowen – all easily available on the internet – enumerate the enormous work he did within his own diocese and for the wider community of the Church, both in this country and abroad. Any contact I had was limited to the Mass of Christ and the Council of Priests, apart from the celebration of Confirmation on one or two occasions and the consecration of the church after the re-ordering of the sanctuary. There was, however, one occasion which revealed to me the same determined judgement with a degree of flexibility which I had experienced myself and which I imagine coloured all his dealings. Ronan Magner, another of the Southwark students in that 1956 photo, died in May 2001, and Michael Bowen was very insistent that I should preach at his Requiem Mass in Saint George’s Cathedral. When I pointed out that I had other commitments that day, he changed the date of the funeral.

After leaving Archbishop’s House in 2003, Michael Bowen went to live in a private flat near Blackheath where he looked after himself and very seldom appeared in public, so it came as something of a surprise when he wrote to me in the summer of 2018. On his Diamond Jubilee, which was not celebrated with any special public display, he had received a letter from a well-wisher whom he could not identify but mistook as me. In fact, he had misread the letter. It was easy to see that it came from someone who had been in the year above him in the College. It gave me the opportunity, however, to thank him for having asked me to be parish priest at London Bridge, from where I had moved after thirty-four years in the company of an amazing parish community – over half my priestly life. Of course it would not have been right for me to say it in so many words, but I reflected that, although I had not stepped into his shoes (only his army boots), he had indeed led me along the right path – a Good Shepherd indeed, a truly pastoral bishop.

He became frailer and was looking after himself alone in his upstairs flat. Before he had to be persuaded to move, circumstances took over. He was diagnosed with cancer and had to attend a hospital in West London for chemotherapy. So it was that at the end of January 2019 he came to stay with the Little Sisters of the Poor in Vauxhall, where Archbishop Peter Smith had asked me to be chaplain. His medical condition prevented him from concelebrating in the chapel and one of the Sisters took him Communion in his room during Mass. Every now and again, however, he would ask for me to do so after Mass, with that same gentle insistence he had always shown in every circumstance. It was on those occasions that we would chat for an hour or more, reminiscing. He would remember with interest and affection students who had been at the College with us. He would comment very honestly and in good humour about events in his life: how he had been asked to teach at the Beda and how ill-suited he was to the task, and how he had been amused and embarrassed when he was the youngest archbishop and took precedence over several older bishops whom he had earlier regarded in awe. He took special delight in narrating in great detail

one event in his student days which had earned him a place in *Chi lo sa?* – how he had outwitted a particularly large fish in Lake Albano by the devious stratagem of swimming underneath it and harpooning it from below, and how he had given it to the nuns who had then cooked it for him to share at supper.

Michael Bowen died peacefully in the early hours of Thursday 17 October 2019. When the undertaker arrived to take away his body, it was only right that I should be there in the room for a final prayer and greeting. His funeral Mass was celebrated in Saint George's Cathedral, Southwark on Monday 4 November, and he is buried in the crypt behind the high altar. The atmosphere of the ceremony expressed the style of the man – gentle, smiling, pastoral and self-effacing. As one of the older masters of ceremonies of the cathedral, a local man, remarked to me with great affection: "We did him proud, Father." Indeed, they did.

*Canon Michael Cooley*

### **Fr Charles Briggs**

9 June 1959 – 25 August 2020

A devotee of Blessed Pius IX, Fr Charles Briggs was proud of the pictures of him that were given pride of place in his presbytery at St Mary's, Chislehurst and would insist on the "Blessed" and an exaggerated bow of the head, if ever anyone mentioned *Pio Nono* without those marks of reverence. He was an expert in the Jansenists, and visitors were sometimes disconcerted to discover that Antoine Arnauld and *La Mère Angélique* also featured on the walls of his sitting room, among other luminaries from Port Royal. It was typical of his sense of mischief that he never allowed you to be entirely certain whether he was joking or not in his enthusiasm.

He was glad to keep up his historical work in the archives of the Archdiocese of Southwark, and continued to read widely, especially but by no means exclusively in 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century ecclesiastical politics. He loved the opera, enjoying the friendship of Archbishop Kevin McDonald on frequent visits to Covent Garden and other venues in London. In the last year of his life, he acquired an Amazon Echo and soon learned to issue the instruction, "Alexa: play Nellie Melba!"

His parish was one where, in addition to the modern rite, a sung Extraordinary Form Latin Mass was celebrated every Sunday. He was a friendly and engaging mentor, both to the families who found St Mary's a haven for the traditional Mass, and to the many young adults whose vocations he fostered. A wicked sense of humour and sometimes affected cynicism gave way to erudite, but accessible and practical preaching when he was in the pulpit. He was also known as a sympathetic, kindly, and popular confessor for laity and clergy.

Charles Briggs was born on 9 June 1959 and his life came to be marked by chronic disability, most notably the epilepsy which he bore with a courage that sometimes appeared even reckless. Ordained in 1986, he determined not to let his condition interfere with his priestly ministry or his interest in travel. He was a curate in Tunbridge Wells, West Croydon, and Lewisham, and tried his vocation at the

London Oratory for a short while. He was then appointed as Parish Priest of St Mary's, Chislehurst which he served for the last twenty years of his life.

In the last few years, his mobility became increasingly limited, but he steadfastly refused to make use of a wheelchair. In a cruel final blow, he was diagnosed with cancer of the jaw with a prognosis, that turned out to be accurate, that he had only a matter of weeks to live. He immediately arranged a final short break to one of his favourite haunts, the Grand Hotel in Eastbourne, including the *de rigueur* trip to Beachy Head. No longer able to return to the presbytery, he spent the last weeks of his life at the Coloma Court nursing home in Hayes. Shortly after having been transferred to St Christopher's Hospice, Sydenham, he died in the early hours of 25 August 2020, fortified by all the rites of Holy Mother Church.

Charles always spoke of his time in Rome with enthusiastic and fond nostalgia. His fixed weekly *gita* to Ostia Antica, his friendship with the Pius XII expert, Fr Pierre Blet, the Monserra, and Billy Steele's spiritual conferences were among the memories that he recounted to others with joy. His presbytery was a place where priests and other old friends from the *Venerabile* always found a warm welcome and a chance for good conversation over a glass of *grappa*; but, as he would firmly insist, it was never *Grappa Julia*. May he rest in peace.

*Fr Tim Finigan*

## **Fr Antony Conlon**

14 July 1949 – 19 April 2020

Westminster Diocese was fortunate that Antony Conlon made his home in London. Born in Dublin on 14 July 1949, after leaving school he went to live in Liverpool before coming to London in his teenage years. Westminster Cathedral became his spiritual home and his vocation to the priesthood developed, in part at least, due to his involvement as an altar server. After training at the Royal English College of St Alban, Valladolid, and Allen Hall Seminary, he was ordained to the priesthood on 26 May 1979 in Westminster Cathedral by Cardinal Basil Hume.

Fr Antony's first appointment was to Our Lady of the Rosary, Marylebone as Assistant Priest where he served from 1979 to 1983. He then went to Our Lady of Hal, Camden Town as Assistant Priest until 1985. From 1985 to 1988, he pursued further studies in Rome in Church History and resided at the Venerable English College. On his return from Rome, Fr Antony was appointed Assistant Priest at St Mary's, Cadogan Street in Chelsea where he served from 1988 to 1991. He was then appointed Parish Priest at St Joseph's, Bunhill Row, a church much in need of restoration. Fr Antony lost no time in attending to the fabric and decoration of the church, making it attractive to parishioners and attracting greater numbers to the church.

In 2001 Fr Antony was appointed Chaplain to The Oratory Schools Association in south Oxfordshire, founded by St John Henry Cardinal Newman and comprising the Oratory School and the Oratory Preparatory School. He enjoyed the thirteen years spent there, described by friends as perhaps the happiest years of his life. He involved himself with all aspects of school life – academic, sport, music, drama and



especially the faith life of the school. He engaged with the students, parents, staff and governors. The daily round of Masses, prayer, teaching, listening and counselling gave him much satisfaction in his role of assisting the growth and development of the students, especially in their relationships with the Lord, the Church and with each other. While at the Oratory School, he prepared several members of the school community of students, parents and teachers for baptism, reception into the Church and Confirmation. Although busy – or perhaps because he liked to keep busy – Fr Antony undertook research for a doctoral thesis on the Counter Reformation in England, supervised by London University, and was awarded a PhD in 2013.

With the consent of the Archbishop of Birmingham, in 2014 Fr Antony was appointed Parish Priest of Our Lady and St John, Goring-on-Thames. He was conscious of some health issues but he remained busy, with sixteen villages in the parish. The parishioners' spiritual needs benefitted from his pastoral zeal. He saw the need for a new parish hall, and other needs, and he gave his time and energy to this until the effects of his illness necessitated moving to a hospice for end of life care.

Throughout his adult life, Fr Antony was involved with The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, founded in Jerusalem in the 11th century. The Order's motto is *Tuitio fidei et obsequium pauperum*, Defence of the faith and assistance to the poor, both of these were close to Fr Antony's heart. He became a member in 1971 and was appointed a Chaplain to the Order in 1980. He was appointed Principal Chaplain of the Grand Priory of England at its restoration in 1993, serving in this role for 27 years until his death.

Fr Antony had a deep appreciation for the Church's history and tradition. The tradition of prayer, liturgy, apostolic ministry in the service of the people of God motivated him. He had his preferences concerning the way in which the Church's liturgy is celebrated, and he took great care in the celebration of Mass with deep devotion to the Eucharist evident. He had a strong interest in, and indeed preference for, the Extraordinary Form of the Mass. He was called on by the Latin Mass Society on many occasions, serving as their National Chaplain until 2009.

Fr Antony became ill and received treatment from January 2019. He was optimistic about this, but later in the year he received news that his condition was terminal. In the last months of his life his courage and prayerful acceptance of his situation was an inspiration to many people. He spoke of his readiness to go to God, and of his gratitude for the life he had lived. He died peacefully at the Sue Ryder Hospice in Reading on 19 April. His funeral was arranged in accordance with protocols necessary due to the coronavirus pandemic. May he rest in peace and rise in glory.

*Mgr Martin Hayes*

### **Mgr Provost Peter Michael Cookson**

16 July 1939 – 8 November 2019

It's hard to know where to begin with Peter Cookson, an amazing man and a fine priest. I gladly acknowledge help in compiling this obituary from the Liverpool

Archdiocesan Chancellor, Aidan Prescott, and from Claire Hanlon, Peter's Personal Assistant at the Metropolitan Cathedral.

Peter went from St Edward's College in Liverpool to study philosophy at Ushaw, and switched to the *Venerabile* for theology, with further studies in Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian and Scripture at the Biblical Institute. The idea was to spend a year in Jerusalem, as many Biblicum students do, but Peter chose to study under Rudolf Schnackenburg at Würzburg.

He taught Scripture at Ushaw from 1969, and in 1977 became President there and taught for only one more year. Everyone I have asked remembers him as a very good teacher. I first met him in the mid-1970s in Via di Monserrato with an Ushaw student. He led me astray by buying me a beer in the "bar next door". His conversation was snappy and funny, making him instantly likeable. Later on, I went to teach at Ushaw, and mentioning his name always brought a smile from the domestic staff, all of whom remembered him as a friend and as someone who was happier wearing a boiler suit than the usual seminary garb. He had a great talent for re-starting clocks that hadn't worked for years, and by the end of his time at Ushaw, he was an accomplished tractor-driver.

He had a sabbatical year after finishing as President and took over at St Mary's in Chorley in 1985. His main achievement there was to oversee the building of a smart new presbytery and a sheltered housing project. Four years later he became Administrator at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King in Liverpool. He was highly respected as a preacher and in liturgical celebrations, but he had huge headaches with the building. As he said, "virtually every surface needed to be replaced or restored". He did some of this work, and many of us saw him in his blue boiler-suit up a ladder as often as we saw him wearing vestments. The biggest headache was the leaking roof in the lantern, which took years to fix. Peter's right hand in his years at the Cathedral was Claire Hanlon, who still has the advertisement she answered: "I am looking for a new Personal Assistant. It is a strange and hybrid post, combining a multitude of functions and requiring considerable diplomatic skills not only to cope with my foibles, but with the multitude of enquiries and demands". Claire took the bull by the horns and learnt from Peter "how much impact even the smallest acts of kindness could mean to people who made enquiries on the phone, or at the door of Cathedral House". She tells a story about a man Peter had helped when the man was in the depths of despair, who returned years later when Peter was too ill to see him, but he showed Claire his degree certificate, and brought back the money Peter had lent him.

He worked like the clocks he fixed, with his daily dish of pasta at 1pm and his siesta from 2 to 3. Apart from that he had time for everyone and, as Claire puts it, "was able to make everyone he met feel valued and worthwhile, and he saw the good in everyone... [he was] the wisest, kindest, most compassionate person I have had the privilege to know". It was a cruel blow when illness for a while took away his voice, but he was able to spend the rest of his days at the Cathedral as a valued and respected part of the team. May he rest in peace.

*Mgr Peter Fleetwood*

## Fr Tomás (Tom) Creagh-Fuller

16 April 1950 – 5 November 2019

Tomás Creagh-Fuller came to the College in 1996, having already been ordained a Permanent Deacon in 1993 for the Archdiocese of Southwark. An accomplished musician, conductor and lecturer, he had been a popular Head of Music at Salesian College, Battersea. He sat lightly with all of these achievements, which one more often discovered by accident, usually via a third party, and just very occasionally from Tom himself.

Tom's determination and application when in formation for the priesthood at the VEC was legendary. Despite health problems, which had left him with serious visual impairment, he persevered and even flourished. The cost to him would have been enormous, but Tom would never ever refer to it. It would have been vulgar to refer to the cost of anything for that matter, as far as Tom was concerned.

When his health stabilised, and Tom was ordained priest, his trademarks were his magnifying glass, which always seemed to go to the wine list first in a restaurant, and his large-print text folder, which enabled him to celebrate Mass, the other sacraments, and also to officiate at various liturgical celebrations.

Tom was ordained to the priesthood at the age of fifty on 15 July 2000 at St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham. His first priestly appointment was to St Bartholomew, Norbury, where he spent three years. Tom's further service in priesthood found him in Beckenham Hill (five years), Forest Hill (almost eleven years), and then very briefly Brixton Hill.

He quickly developed an interest in Interfaith relations. It was also in Norbury that his interest in Marriage & Family Life and the On-going Formation of Priests began to emerge. These latter interests were recognised in formal diocesan appointments by Archbishop Michael Bowen. Rightly, Tom did not see these two interests as unrelated, but rather complementary. From marriage and family life come priests to serve God's people, and the ministry of priests builds up marriage and family life. Tom had particular care for the recently ordained and recently arrived priests, and he also wisely extended this care to those in formation for the priesthood in our seminaries at home and abroad, so that the seminarians were introduced to the importance of on-going formation from the earliest of stages. Several generations of VEC seminarians have him to thank for the annual delivery just before Christmas of chocolates from Fortnum & Mason.

Tom died on 5 November 2019 at the age of 69. His funeral was held in the same church in Beckenham in which he had been ordained deacon and priest. May he rest in peace.

*Adapted from the homily delivered by Mgr Gerry Ewing at Fr Tomás' funeral Mass.*

## Mother Abbess Maria Tekla Famiglietti

23 December 1936 – 3 March 2020

Mother Abbess Maria Tekla Famiglietti will go down in the annals of the College as one of the most illustrious and well-known neighbours of this venerable institution. She was the head, or Abbess General, of the Order of the Most Holy Saviour (or the Nuns

of St Bridget) for 37 years from 1979 to 2016. She was born in Sturno, very close to Naples in 1936. Together with her cousin Elisa and several friends, at the tender age of 14 she decided to join the Order of St Bridget, which had been refounded by St Maria Elisabetta Hesselblad in 1911. Her beginnings in the Order were quite humble. She was sent to Lugano, Switzerland and I remember her saying that she was a very good cook and oversaw the kitchen in what was and still is one of the more important ministries of the Order, the ministry of hospitality. She took a liking to Switzerland and in the 24 years she spent there she showed such extraordinary leadership that she rose in the appreciation both of her superiors and of her fellow sisters. Later, she would also become a Swiss national.

The humble but impressive beginnings in Switzerland, and the contacts she made there, brought her to Rome as Superior General, or Mother Abbess, at a time when St John Paul II was Pope. The founding and support of the Convent in Gdansk, Poland, was furthered by Mother Tekla as a means also of supporting the Polish Church and Polish society in a time of desperate need. She made friends with all sorts of people, humble and not so humble, and she had an extraordinary charisma to enthuse people to her cause. She became a very good friend of St John Paul II. When he died in 2005, she was one of the few admitted to his deathbed. The nuns still hold a valuable collection of memorabilia of the Holy Pope, including a full cassock and so many other gifts that he gave Mother Tekla, in recognition of her constant support and for the ministry that the nuns exercised in so many countries. She was providential in bringing the Order of St Bridget to new countries, including the Philippines and Cuba. She also opened many houses in India, in the Baltic States, in the Scandinavian countries and in so many other parts of the world.

She was always a very good neighbour of the English College. When Mgr (later Cardinal) Cormac Murphy-O'Connor was Rector of the Venerable English College, she persuaded him to give a bit of the College property to the nuns. Those of us who go into what is now the guest refectory of the Casa Santa Brigida would do well to remember that that had been for centuries College property. In fact, the College property continues above the guest refectory.

Madre Tekla, as she was fondly called, also had a good relationship with the College because she continued the tradition of a priest from the College celebrating Holy Mass for the nuns daily. The College was also invited to provide ministry for the Evening Benediction at the Church of St Bridget on Piazza Farnese. When I started celebrating Mass there each day in 1996, I found out that my predecessor was Mgr Bryan Chestle, who had been chaplain for the nuns for many years. Mgr Chestle used to say Mass at 07:20 in the small chapel dedicated to St Richard Reynolds, which the nuns called Cappella San Riccardo. I would say Mass at 07:30 and give a short homily. In 1999, when Mgr Philip Whitmore arrived in Rome to work in the Holy See, I had the great joy and pleasure to invite him to concelebrate with me. The two of us then would meet at the breakfast table and listen to the more recent stories of Mgr Chestle and we would also get, more often than not, a greeting from Mother Abbess. We joined the nuns for the festive meals celebrating the more important dates of the Order and we benefited from the traditional hospitality of the nuns.

Mother Tekla was a great friend of so many priests, bishops, cardinals and popes. She was a true Neapolitan lady and she was quite direct in her speech, but also shrewd and polished in her own way. She was generous with whatever the Lord provided her, and she was an extraordinary leader. The nuns had great difficulty replacing her, election after election, and they managed to persuade the Holy See to keep her as the leader of the Order for so many years until her declining health dictated that they should choose her successor. She was accompanied to the end by her cousin Madre Elisa Famiglietti, who had joined her on more than one adventurous trip visiting and founding convents around the world. She will also be remembered for her friendship with Fidel Castro, that helped secure a bit more of religious freedom for the Catholic Church in Cuba. She was a lover of good music and good food. She shared this love with the guests of Casa Santa Brigida and of the many other centres of hospitality, which have always maintained an ecumenical flavour.

As we pray for the eternal repose of Mother Tekla, we also pray for vocations to the religious life. We thank the Lord for having given us the opportunity to meet people who love the Lord and dedicate their lives to the Church as Mother Tekla did in such an extraordinary way.

*His Grace Charles Scicluna, Archbishop of Malta*

### **Archbishop Peter Smith**

21 October 1943 – 6 March 2020

Peter David Gregory Smith was the tenth Archbishop of Southwark, from 2010 until his retirement in 2019. He had previously served as Bishop of East Anglia from 1995 to 2001, and as Archbishop of Cardiff from 2001 to 2010.

Peter was born in Battersea, in southwest London, on 21 October 1943. He completed his secondary education at Clapham College, which had been founded by the Xaverian Brothers in 1897. Though the college itself closed in the 1980s, the *Old Xaverians* association remained strong and Peter attended several of their social events over the years. He studied law at Exeter University and gained his degree (LLB) in 1966. He went on to study for the priesthood at St John's Seminary, Womersley and was ordained priest on 5 July 1972.

His first appointment was as assistant priest at St Francis, Stockwell from 1972 to 1974, after which he was sent to study for a Doctorate in Canon Law (JCD) at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas ('Angelicum'). Though his time at the *Venerabile* was relatively short, he became reacquainted with the College on several occasions in recent years. Particularly after he became Vice-President of our Bishops' Conference, he had to make frequent visits to Rome, for meetings with the Dicasteries of the Holy See. Considerably more enjoyable, however, were the biennial meetings at Palazzola, for one of the Bishops' Conference retreats or in-service weeks. Peter always liked a garden, and sunny weather suited him very well — not forgetting the opportunity to have a smoke on the terrace and a gin and tonic after supper!

After obtaining his doctorate, he returned to England, teaching Canon Law at St John's Seminary from 1977 to 1984. His experience of teaching and formation was very

positive, but he always wanted to return to parish ministry. He was appointed Parish Administrator of Thornton Heath parish in 1984. Years later, people of the parish still had fond memories of his time there, short though it was — for he was called back to St John's the following year, to take up the post of Rector. He remained at Wonersh for ten more years, until he was appointed Bishop of East Anglia.

As Rector, he followed the traditional Catholic principle that 'grace builds upon nature'. Our human qualities and abilities aren't enough on their own, but they are important, because God uses them as the foundation of what he wants to do with us, as we try to follow his call. That means we need to be aware of issues of personality, psychology and what later became known as 'human formation', as well as attending to our spiritual growth and our life of prayer. He put this into practice for himself and the staff, as well as for the students. On one occasion, during some group-work with the staff team, the facilitator invited reflection on the most fulfilling aspect of working as formation staff. It turned out that the answer had been the same for all: seeing the students grow and flourish, personally, spiritually and in their sense of vocation, during their time in the seminary.

Already during his time as Rector, Peter had shown a flair for engaging with the media, presenting the Church's teaching in a compassionate and pastorally sensitive way. He always came across as very relaxed — though one suspected that his earlier legal training also helped him to notice possible traps set by crafty interviewers! At the same time, there was a fundamental sincerity and honesty that came through, so that his was never merely a 'clever' performance. His gift for tackling difficult moral and legal questions was put to good use as Chairman from 1998 to 2019 of the Department of Christian Responsibility and Citizenship at the Bishops' Conference. Other responsibilities have included being Chairman of the Catholic Truth Society (from 1993 to 2007) and Chairman of the Central Religious Advisory Committee of the BBC and ITC (from 2001 to 2004). He was appointed Sub-Prelate and Chaplain of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in 2002 and was awarded Honorary Fellowships at St Edmund's College, Cambridge (1997), the University of Wales, Lampeter (2004) and Cardiff University (2006).

Peter had been very much looking forward to a quiet retirement, to a bungalow in Whitstable which offered possibilities for coastal walks and for enjoying a garden (which Archbishop's House, Southwark, conspicuously lacked). There was great sadness amongst his many friends and colleagues, that he had such a short time for this retirement which, after so many years, he had very definitely earned. It was some consolation that his final illness, following a diagnosis of cancer, was quite short — no more than a few weeks.

When speaking at clergy funerals, he would often quote the words of Jesus, 'Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord.' When he introduced a diocesan medal, to recognise the service of those who were not eligible for a Papal award, he chose the words, 'Well done, faithful servant'. It seems a fitting epitaph for Peter too.

*Bishop Paul Hendricks*

# Report of the Friends of the *Venerabile*

MICHAEL LANG

As I sit down to write this report, I look back over the last year with a sense of disbelief at the happenings, both personal and national, which have had such an effect on both the world and upon myself.

In December 2019, as I prepared to travel up to the city of Bath in order to join the South Western group of the Roman Association in celebrating the College Martyrs' Feast Day, I suddenly felt a pain across the back of my left hand. Teresa, looking after me as usual, called the ambulance and thirty minutes later I was in Torbay hospital where a stent was fitted. I had suffered a heart attack. Four days later, I was out of hospital and feeling fit and well. I missed the Martyrs' Day celebrations, but I would like to thank the Roman Association for the prayers and Masses which were offered for my recovery.

As I recovered, we began to hear rumours of a pandemic building in China and subsequently early in the New Year its breakout in Northern Italy. Italy was the first country in Europe to suffer. The Universities closed, as did the College, and the seminarians were sent back to their home dioceses, leaving just three members of staff to look after the College premises. Through the wonders of modern technology, the seminarians were able to continue their studies using

distance-learning techniques. Palazzola was also closed and, as a result, the visit to Rome of the Friends of the *Venerabile*, planned for May 2020, was postponed until 2021.

The "self-isolation" situation caused many people to visit the Friends' website, but sadly this was mainly in order to leave spam. I have regular contact form reports on my email from people wishing a) to add facts to the website, b) to increase the vision of our website, c) to improve the website and d) wanting to sell personal protective equipment (PPE).

On the positive side, the closure to the public of churches meant that there are a large number of "streamed" Masses and so during lockdown I have had the opportunity to "travel" to Mass in a variety of locations – from Buckfast, to Salisbury, to Brighton, to Haverfordwest (Wales), to Dublin (Ireland), to Toronto (Canada), and to Washington DC, Oakland, Los Angeles and Dallas (USA) – and I must not forget Rome, where at 06.00 (UK time) one could join the Holy Father for his daily Mass from Casa Santa Marta or view a recording of the Mass at any time during the day. However, to me an interesting fact is that large numbers of people are tuning into these broadcasts. It is claimed that 140,000 people tuned into the Good Friday service from Buckfast, whilst over

6,000 people tuned into the Easter Mass from Leeds Cathedral. If this is indeed true, then it is yet another instance of the way in which God brings good out of every potential evil for those who are faithful to Him.

Sadly, due to the social distancing regulations, we were unable to attend the priestly and diaconate ordinations, but we were able to get close-up views of these celebrations thanks to “streaming”.

It is difficult at this time to see how good can be brought out of a pandemic – and yet...look how the people who were at each other’s throats over Brexit are running errands for each other, giving donations to make up charities’ loss of income, sponsoring extraordinary fund-raising efforts by old and young, celebrating together the devotion to duty of the front-line workers who have kept the country going...the list goes on and on. If we cannot shop, fund-raise, or exercise, we can at least pray to that wonderful God of ours, of whom our latest English Saint John Newman reminds us that “He knows what He is about”.

Now we hear the good news that Palazzola has reopened and was the venue for a Diamond Jubilee celebration (congratulations to Peter and Joyce) and that more recently the seminarians have returned to the Via di Monserrato – but life is best defined as the “new normal” with many restrictions. We pray that life will soon return to normal, that international travel will resume and that the Friends will be able to celebrate the 101<sup>st</sup> year at Palazzola during April 2021.

Finally, may I remind you all about a new Friends’ initiative in raising funds by collecting used stamps? So far, I have received two packets of stamps from the College (both of which contained Vatican stamps which are exceptionally valuable). I will be sending these off to the dealer later in the year.



**MICHAEL LANG**  
is Chairman of  
the Friends of the  
*Venerabile*.

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# Friends of the Venerabile

(The Venerabile 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 a College car and have contributed to the cost of the College pilgrimage, which had to be postponed to 2021.

### For further information

Please visit our website: [www.friendsoftheenglishcollegerome.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheenglishcollegerome.org.uk)

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# House List 2019-20

## Staff

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

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle (Year III)

NOWOTNIK Jan (Birmingham)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle (Year IV)

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

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle (Year III)

EGAWHARY Marco (Birmingham)  
NGUYEN Hai (Oslo)  
SERVICE Ryan (Birmingham)  
WATERS John (Birmingham)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle (Year II)

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

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle (Year I)

BALZANELLA Alexander (Westminster)  
BILLINGTON Steven (Leeds)  
FYK Anthony (Portsmouth)  
JENKINSON Dominic (Hallam)  
WYGNANSKI Piotr (East Anglia)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Theology (Year III)

COY Andrew (Northampton)  
ELLIOTT Sean (Leeds)  
IRWIN David (Shrewsbury)  
LAWES Albert (Plymouth)

RIZK Joseph (Stockholm)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Theology (Year II)

DUCKWORTH Toby (Birmingham)  
EBERT Daniel (Copenhagen)  
HANSON Elliot (Cardiff)  
PITSON Marc (Leeds)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Theology (Year I)

BAJLOVIC Antonio (Stockholm)  
HAUSCHILD Edward (Portsmouth)  
HELLEVIG Trym (Oslo)  
SHARROCK Theodore (Salford)  
TEIGEN Joachim (Oslo)

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Philosophy (Year II)

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

## 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle Philosophy (Year I)

BROWNE Ryan (Portsmouth)  
LEDUM Mathias (Oslo)  
TORRES AIRAVA Viktor (Helsinki)

## Other

WHITE Donald (Rockhampton)

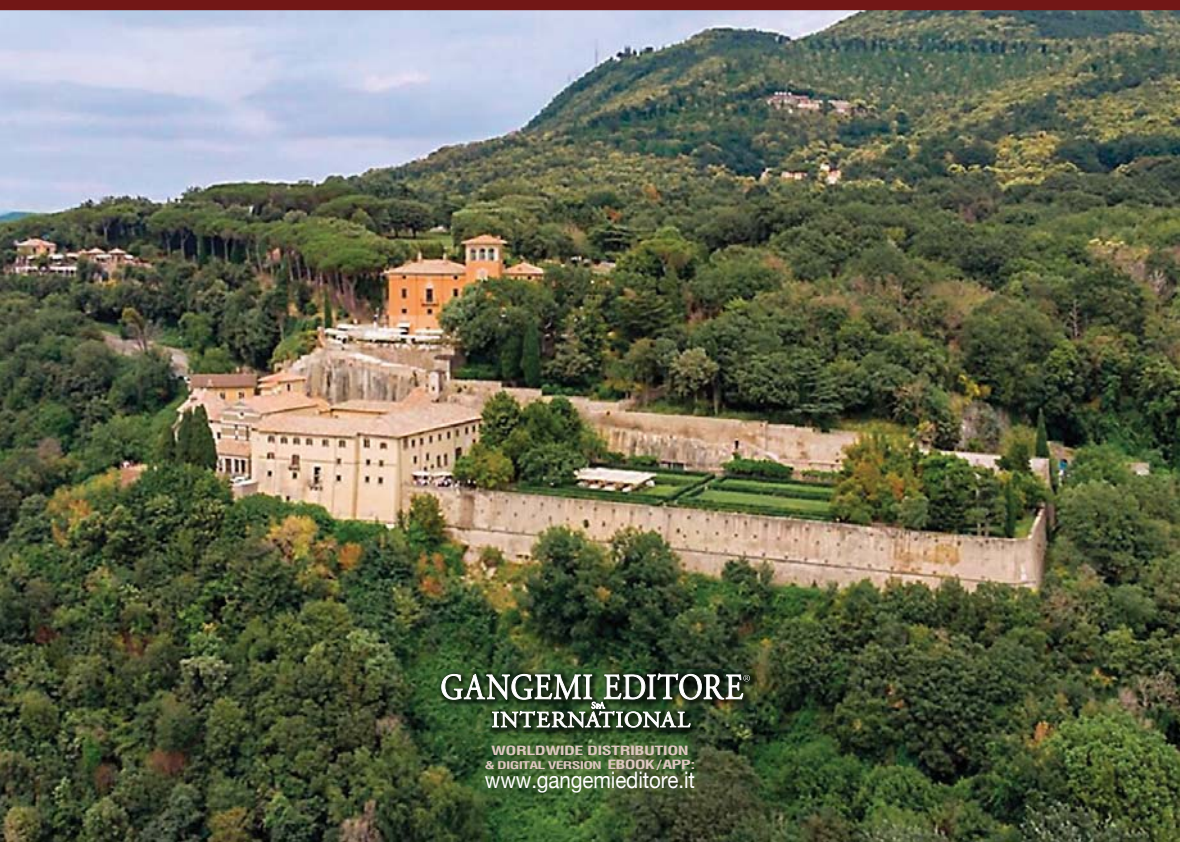
E&W Seminarians	18
Other Seminarians	7
<b>Total seminarians</b>	<b>25</b>
Student Priests	11
<b>Total students</b>	<b>36</b>



# THE VENERABLE ENGLISH COLLEGE



R O M E



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