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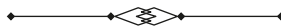
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Editorial

WILLIAM MEEHAN

Change. If there is one word that describes the past several years at the Venerable English College, it would have to be change. Last year, the changes came in the form of pandemic-related restrictions, forcing the VEC to reconsider even the most basic and fundamental activities. Although many of those restrictions disappeared this past year, life at the College did not simply return to the pre-pandemic state of “normality”, as half of the Community had never experienced a full “normal” year at the seminary prior to the beginning of the pandemic. Given this reality, coupled with the change in Rector, the 2021-22 year presented an optimal opportunity to introduce changes at the English College. We regularly found that long standing traditions and the generally accepted *modi operandi* were being questioned. In order to be retained, the purpose and fruitfulness of what was previously accepted as normative needed to be carefully demonstrated. This is not to say that the changes were undesirable – in fact, many of the new changes were welcomed by the Community with open arms. The hope is that, with ongoing communication in the years to follow, further changes will be introduced, while important traditions will be retained, and the Venerable English College will continue to be a place of prayer, of formation, and of fraternity, as it has been for so many centuries. It is truly an exciting time to be at the VEC.

Although its general structure remains the same, every year *The Venerabile* approaches the task of chronicling the life at the Venerable English College from a different angle. The previous issue of *The Venerabile* (vol. XXXVII, no. 3) sought to recount the past: the origins and vast history of the publication. This issue of *The Venerabile* considers the present. It offers insights into life at the VEC, marking the developments, while simultaneously highlighting the remarkable individuals who make up the community at this venerable institution. In the introductory essay, theologian Dr Eric Mabry adapts a talk previously presented to seminarians to describe the centrality of “having a heart like Christ” and being of quality character. The remaining articles are all written by members of the community who have the qualities for which Dr Mabry advocates. These individuals demonstrate not only their passion for theology, but also the fact that the members of the VEC are, without a doubt, men of exceptional character. The articles reflect the wide-ranging interests of the various authors, and the diversity of the community. Updates from the House and its various committees describe the vibrancy of the community and the excitement of the work being done at the College. It is clear that everyone at the Venerable English College is committed to growing in holiness and discerning the ways in which we are all being called to serve the People of God in our lives.

I cannot conclude this introduction without thanking all those who have made this issue of *The Venerabile* possible. Thank you to Mr Benjamin Sinclair, and Mr Martin

Fyles, as well as Fr John Flynn and Fr James McAuley who have given so much of their time and energy to supporting this publication in innumerable ways. The whole team is extremely grateful to the many contributors who helped to paint such a beautiful picture of life at the VEC. A further word of thanks to the Roman Association, the Friends of the *Venerabile*, and the advertisers who make the financing of this endeavour possible. Finally, thank you to the entire VEC Community, past and present, without whom *The Venerabile* would not exist.

The College has been deeply saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, just as *The Venerabile* goes to print. She has served her country and the Commonwealth with such dedication and sacrifice, and she has given a constant witness to her deep and sincere Christian faith. She will be deeply missed by so many people. May she rest in peace.

Bishop Richard Moth was in Rome at the time of her death and was able to celebrate a Requiem Mass at the College with many visitors. We are also praying for King Charles and all who mourn her at this sad time.

Despite the many changes, *The Venerabile* has always remained a constant. Its set structure and centrality to the life of the Venerable English College since 1922 have made it the ship in the midst of the storm. In May 2022, *The Venerabile* celebrated 100 years with a special Anniversary Issue of the publication. In this issue, Pope Francis extended his Apostolic Blessing to all those associated with the Venerable English College, past and present, with the prayer that “the journal will continue to unite the hearts of many to their Alma Mater, and promote that same fidelity to the See of Peter, to which the Martyrs of the *Venerabile* gave such eloquent witness.” It is the hope of this Editor, as well as all who have worked on this issue that, through *The Venerabile*, connections with and love of the Venerable English College may continue to be strengthened for years to come.



WILLIAM MEEHAN is a fifth-year seminarian for the Diocese of Hamilton, currently studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

Fac Cor nostrum secundum Cor tuum: A Thomistic Exposition of the Human Dimension of Ministerial Priesthood

ERIC A. MABRY, PH.D.

“...the Lord has sought a man after his own heart”

(1 Sam. 13:14; cf. Acts 13:22)

Introduction

God the Father, creator of the human heart, has opened a path for us into his divine heart through the open side of his Son! The *Letter to the Hebrews* refers to this as “the new and living way” (Heb. 10:20 NRSV). And as Saint Bonaventure notes, his side was pierced for us so that an entrance might be opened to us.¹ Saint Augustine refers to this opening as the “doorway of life,” from which pour the sacraments of the Church.² William of Saint-Thierry calls the heart of Jesus the “holy of holies,” the “ark of the covenant,” and marvels at the innermost depths of the mystery of the incarnation, that by the lavish grace of God, the soul of our humanity would contain the manna of divinity.³ We enjoy the grace of knowing what it is to be a man after God’s own heart because God the Son himself became a man and cultivated a human heart in perfect conformity with the heart of the Father. The incarnation teaches us that to have a truly human heart you must have the heart of Jesus Christ.

Rooted in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Saint John Paul II,⁴ I would like to recapitulate the Magisterium’s teaching about human formation by suggesting that the *telos* or purpose of human formation consists in the realisation of freedom through the attainment of virtue. The task of human formation, however, is made impossible by the presence of sin: original, personal, and social. Our ancestors have failed, we have failed, and society has failed. Although created in a state of original justice by God, nevertheless we abused our liberty, succumbing to the temptation of the evil one, and thereby severed our union with God, fractured our selfhood, and became overrun by enmity with our brothers and sisters.⁵ Human progress is a hopeless myth and human development is a vain and empty dream apart from the entrance of God into history. The Lord came to liberate us from a slavery of our own making and renovate our interior being.⁶ The incarnation of the Son of God puts humanity back on track, spiritually and historically. We once were vagabonds, drifters, but now we are pilgrims, on our way back to the Father.⁷

The love of Christ liberates us for the fulfilment of our human potential, so that together with the Spirit we may grow into the fullness of his stature (cf. Eph. 4:13) and

attain the full freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom. 8:21). As Bishop Fulton Sheen reminds us, the priest is not his own,⁸ but we should add to this insight that the priest is also not *on his own*. Priests should not succumb to the temptation that they are alone. *They are not*. Christ accompanies them always. The saints intercede for them always.

Just as Christ did not cease to be human when he ascended to his Father, so priests do not cease to be human when they are ordained to the priesthood. In this paper, therefore, I intend to offer some insights from the Angelic Doctor into what exactly it means to be human and how being a *good and authentic human* is an integral component of holy and effective priestly ministry.

As an initial foundation, I begin with a brief analysis of human priestly formation within the context of the Christology of the Second Vatican Council. I will then turn to Pope Saint John Paul II's vision for human formation in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, amplifying his insights with the reflections of Bernard Lonergan on the nature of human freedom. Having established this background for the magisterial meaning of human formation, I will then explore the ways in which I think Saint Thomas can help us to appropriate and live out the Church's vision for human formation in the life of the priest.

1. *Gaudium et Spes* and Christ as Human

The fathers gathered at the Second Vatican Council note in the opening paragraph of *Presbyterorum Ordinis* that priests are promoted by the sacred ordination and mission which they receive from the bishops “to the service of Christ the teacher, priest, and king, whose ministry they share, so that the church may be unceasingly built up here on earth into the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the holy Spirit.”⁹ Later in the same decree, the council fathers go on to affirm that the “whole mission of a priest is a dedication to the service of the new humanity, which Christ who triumphed over death brings into being in the world by his Spirit, and which draws its origin *not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God* (Jn 1:13).”¹⁰

The proper office of a priest, Thomas notes, “is to be a mediator between God and the people,” the priest is called to hand on “divine things” to the people and consequently Thomas says that the priest is referred to as a “giver of sacred things.”¹¹ Following Saint Augustine,¹² Thomas understood Christ's mediatorship (and hence also his priesthood) as something which Christ exercised in and according to his humanity.¹³ For this reason, the *Program for Priestly Formation* notes, “the foundation and center of all human formation is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh,”¹⁴ adding along with *Pastores Dabo Vobis* that “the Letter to the Hebrews clearly affirms the ‘human character’ of God's minister...”¹⁵

And while there is to be no doubt that Christ's humanity is elevated by grace to function in this special, priestly way, nevertheless, it remains the case that this unique priesthood of Christ is something that is intimately human. Consequently, priesthood, although divinely instituted, is nevertheless a *human* office because it is humans who are priests. “Angels,” Thomas notes, “are not priests.”¹⁶ In this light, it is not surprising that *Pastores Dabo Vobis* observes, “God always calls his priests from specific human and ecclesial contexts, which inevitably influence them; and to these same contexts the priest is sent for the service of Christ's Gospel.”¹⁷

This means that human nature and culture(s) are material conditions of being a priest, that is, humanity is an essential characteristic of priesthood. For this reason, I want to take a moment before turning to a closer examination of *Pastores Dabo Vobis* to look at what *Gaudium et Spes* teaches us about the humanity of Christ, since “the priest of tomorrow, no less than the priest of today, must resemble Christ.”¹⁸

Gaudium et Spes begins its instruction “on Christ the new man,” with the affirmation that the mystery of the human being is clarified by the mystery of the Word incarnate.¹⁹ And while Adam, the first man, may have a temporal priority (that of figure and shadow), nevertheless the priority of meaning (that of fulfilment and reality) is clearly with respect to Christ, the last Adam, who “by revealing the mystery of the Father and the Father’s love,” fully manifests human beings to themselves and makes open to them their highest vocation.²⁰

What is of pivotal importance here is the role that the Father’s love plays in illuminating the meaning of humanity through the incarnation, for it is the Father’s own superabundant and self-diffusive love that is the principal reason for the incarnation of his Son (cf. John 3:16; 1John 4:9).²¹ He who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15), “is the perfect human,” who has restored the divine likeness to the children of Adam.” Through the incarnation, the council fathers continue, the Son of God has in a certain way united himself with every human person: “He did work with human hands, thought with a human mind, made decisions with a human will, and loved with a human heart.”²²

Because of the work of reconciliation undertaken by Christ out of love, according to which he restored our path to the Father and imbued life and death with a new meaning,²³ the Christian person may be conformed to the image of the Son,²⁴ becoming “sons in the Son,”²⁵ through the reception of his Spirit. Whose first fruits enable us to fulfil “the new law of love.”²⁶ As Saint Paul reminds us (Rom. 8:11), the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us and in this very Spirit of Jesus we may also cry (as he did): “Abba, Father!”

The theme invoked by the Council is that of filial love between Father and Son. It is this love of Father and Son into which we are grafted by the power of the Holy Spirit. I will return to this notion of filial love later on in our discussion of the priestly spirituality of Jesus.

2. *Pastores Dabo Vobis* and Human Formation

The fathers gathered at the Second Vatican Council describe what we now refer to as “human formation,” in terms of the “personal”²⁷ and “human maturity.”²⁸ Consequently, they note that the discipline of seminary life is ordered toward “self-mastery,” (*ad sui dominium*) which enables seminarians “to use freedom wisely, to act spontaneously and circumspectly, and to complete a common project together with their brothers and the laity.”²⁹

Upon this conciliar foundation, John Paul II works out the notion of “affective maturity” in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*. Affective maturity is “the result of an education in true and responsible love,”³⁰ it “presupposes an awareness that love has a central role in human life.”³¹ This love is not restricted to the level of the psycho-sexual, but rather “involves the entire person, in all his or her aspects — physical, psychic, and spiritual,”³² it is an expression

of the nuptial meaning of the body not its repression or rejection. Human maturity, therefore, requires “clear and strong training in freedom.” Echoing *Optatum Totius*, JPPII notes, “freedom requires the person to be truly master of oneself, determined to fight and overcome the different forms of selfishness and individualism which threaten the life of each one, ready to open out to others, generous in dedication and service to one’s neighbor.”³³

Now to be sure, all humans are by nature free, and this is why *Gaudium et Spes* condemns slavery as an offence to human dignity,³⁴ and John Paul II declares it to be an intrinsic evil.³⁵ But humans today are not born into a just world or a just society. They are born into different conditions and circumstances, some of which are violent, oppressive, or subhuman. Every culture (because every human) faces the problem of liberation, for sin is the universal enemy of the good. Given this situation, human persons are not able to realise their full potential for freedom. Thus, while we may remain free *by nature*, effectively we are not free to do the good that we desire and were made for. Bernard Lonergan distinguishes these two senses of freedom by the terms “essential” and “effective freedom.”³⁶

I would like to suggest, therefore, that human formation within the graced context of the seminary be understood as an ongoing amplification of the sphere of effective freedom. For the “gift of God does not cancel human freedom,” but instead gives “rise to freedom, develops freedom, and demands freedom.”³⁷ Paul tells us, “for freedom Christ has set us free!” (Gal. 5:1). The love and friendship of Christ frees us for love and friendship with others. For this reason, the *Program for Priestly Formation* notes that “true friendship is an education in affective maturity.”³⁸ This means that priests have been called to extend the friendship of God with others, to do so effectively, however, they must themselves be free, living according to the law of love. Love is the ultimate measure of freedom.

Given this explication of affective maturity as the attainment of loving and responsible freedom, it is possible to conclude that human formation principally consists in the precept: *Be Responsible*. This is reiterated by the *Program of Priestly Formation*, when it states: “Candidates bear the primary responsibility for their human formation,”³⁹ and elsewhere it is noted: “As seminarians advance in their training they should be given more opportunity to exercise responsibility and freedom. At the same time, they should understand that accountability is always part of the exercise of freedom.”⁴⁰ Such responsibility in our current state, however, is ultimately impossible, apart from also being loving. For this reason, the *Program for Priestly Formation* notes that “human formation is linked to spiritual formation by the Incarnate Word and by the fact that grace builds on nature and perfects nature.”⁴¹

3. Thomas Aquinas on Being Human

Having laid a foundation in the magisterial teachings about the meaning of human formation, I would now like to advance an expansion of this basic ecclesial instruction by sketching Thomas’ understanding of what it means to be human and suggesting that this anthropological understanding lies at the heart of Thomas’ exposition of the priesthood of Christ and his notion of the ministerial priesthood.

Thomas gives three reasons as to why he concurs with the Aristotelian claim: “All humans by nature desire to know.”⁴² First, each thing naturally desires its own perfection.

Second, each thing has a natural inclination to its own operation. Third, it is desirable to each thing that it be joined to its principle or beginning, and the perfection of each thing consists in such a union. Now the proper or characteristic operation of the human species is understanding. Consequently, we have a natural inclination to understand and to know, and this suggests that our perfection or fulfilment must in some way be related to the attainment of a certain kind of understanding or knowledge.⁴³

This natural desire to know is also why we have a natural desire for God, not because we already have a conception of God, but because knowledge of a thing is fulfilled once we know its reason or cause,⁴⁴ and whenever we are presented with new data or a new experience we are going to ask *Why?* Our natural search for answers, according to Aristotle and Thomas, is a natural search for causes. By seeking out the causes of *each thing*, we become aware that we are oriented not simply to *this or that*, but to the cause of all things, the first cause. And this, we may call God.

The experience of our natural desire indicates that wonder or *admiratio* is a hallmark of human nature, the human mind, and human flourishing. Where questions, curiosity, and wonder are encouraged there learning, discovery, and ingenuity will thrive. Humans are meant to know things. And there is supposed to be excitement and joy which accompany us all along the way. In his contemplation of Christ's humanity, Thomas does not fail to notice the resplendence with which Christ manifests this supremely human quality. Not a day went by in the life of Christ, that he did not marvel at something new.⁴⁵ Thomas explains that this *admiratio* is the same as that referred to by Aristotle in the opening of his *Metaphysics*.⁴⁶ This is an admonition. If the Son of God himself sustained ongoing wonder in his humanity, then the priest should do no less. *Curiosity, although natural, must nevertheless be cultivated. Don't stop learning!*

Aristotle seems to indicate that the earliest signs of mastery of our cognitive capacities is the emergence of human craftsmanship or artistry.⁴⁷ Following Aristotle closely, Thomas recognises that there is something universal and even speculative about artistry. It is not simply experience (and certainly not luck) that produces a good artist but discipline and learning. Art is concerned with production and craft, and such production is governed by the beautiful even as prudence is governed by the good, and wisdom by the true: "Art is nothing other than right reason about works regarding things that are to be made."⁴⁸

Humans are by nature *makers*; humans are by nature *producers*. Consequently, we must develop a virtue with respect to these natural exigences. Our works of craft must be rendered good. I would like to suggest a wider application of this insight. For in affirming the universal character of art, Thomas also recognises that it plays some sort of essential role in the perfect rule of human life. That is, even governance is to be perfected with art. For while all humans insofar as they are rational, *can* rule with reason, there are, nevertheless "some with reason who rule without art; but this is an imperfect rule."⁴⁹ Priests are called to the care of souls. But this care, this solicitude, is not meant to be haphazard or accidental. It is supposed to take place with art, *priestly artistry of the heart is supposed to be beautiful, it is supposed to render hearts beautiful.*

Thomas hints in various places that the natural desire for God and the natural desire for happiness are one and the same,⁵⁰ which is illuminating because it indicates that in our intellectual as well as our affective register, we are incomplete. We were made for

something more than ourselves. Happiness is something that we seek. This pursuit, one might say, gives meaning to our lives. But should we fail either in its identification or in its attainment, then life concomitantly will become meaningless for us. We seek fulfilment. We seek the good. As a devoted (but perhaps not always textually faithful) student of Augustine, Thomas knows that there are goods that we can acquire and use (*uti*) and there are goods that we can become and enjoy (*frui*). Moral virtue occupies an interesting middle ground, insofar as they are goods which can and should be acquired, but their very attainment changes us and this change means that we delight in their exercise, which is to say virtues are supposed to result in some sort of happiness.

But why would this be the case? Acquiring virtue is hard, arduous, and sometimes unpleasant. What is it about virtue that is connected with happiness? This brings us back to the earlier principles that all things by nature desire their perfection, according to their proper operation, in alignment with their origin. Habits, Thomas tells us, are certain dispositions ordered to the nature of a thing and to its operation or end, according to which something is disposed to this in a good or bad way.⁵¹ A virtue is a *good* habit ordered to reason by which one lives rightly, but which no one can use in an evil or immoral way.⁵² Virtues, therefore, are the connection between our nature and its fulfilment. Virtues order our human operations in alignment with the principle of our being such that they occur willingly, readily, easily, and with delight. The more virtuous we are the freer we become to do the sorts of operations our nature anticipates and our end requires.

While I do not think there can be any doubt that Thomas understands an integral human life to be a morally virtuous one, nevertheless he does not place happiness in the attainment of moral virtue alone, for the simple reasons that humanity does not occupy the highest place in created being (Heb. 2:7) and that our end is not to be found in any created being much less in ourselves.⁵³ Consequently, a different sort of virtue is required for the perfection of human life, namely, wisdom. So let us consider the nature of wisdom both on the side of the subject as well as on the side of the object. Like the acquisition of other virtues, wisdom comes through the continual deployment of a *nexus* of operations.

Thomas regularly associates four operations with wisdom: (1) *consideratio*, (2) *judicium*, (3) *gubernatio* or *ordinatio*, and (4) *docere* or *instructio*.⁵⁴ These are the operations performed with regularity, ease, and delight, indicative of someone who is wise. Consideration readies/coils our minds for understanding. Assent is the judgment that what we have understood is actually the case. What we have newly learned must be integrated with previous learning and our ongoing cultivation of correspondence with reality must constitute our constitute point of departure for our care for ourselves and our care for others. The true indication of knowledge, however, is the ability to hand it on to others,⁵⁵ to teach what we know and thereby bring others into union with the truth.

Such operations yield certain characteristics and values.⁵⁶ The knowledge a wise person possesses is marked by: (1) universality, (2) difficulty, (3) precision, and (4) effective communication. In addition, (5) the wise person values such knowledge as a good in itself and not simply because it is useful or practical. Finally, such knowledge is free, that is, it is not knowledge which can be subordinated to any other sort of knowledge. It is the highest and therefore should be deployed to organise and order all other scientific and social disciplines.

But such operations and the resulting characteristics are fulfilled in the attainment of a certain sort of object, namely, the highest causes, indeed the fullness of acquired wisdom arises from the attainment of the highest cause of all existing things, and this we call God. But such acquired knowledge of God as highest cause although fulfilling, does not in fact fulfil our natural desire to know, which is to say that even in someone who has arrived at the highest cause and spends their every waking moment trying to understand and order their lives according to this Cause, there still remains that wonder, that fundamental exigence driving them to ask more questions. *Their heart is still restless.* So what's missing?

Thomas maintains that the ultimate fulfilment of human existence in happiness can only be found in the (speculative) vision of the divine essence.⁵⁷ God is the ultimate answer to all our questions; he alone is the fulfilment of all our desires. The ultimate and highest wisdom available to humanity, therefore, is not something that we can take or acquire but is a gift from God: it is something which is to be received.

So how might we best summarise *being human* for Thomas? Or to put it more directly: *How can we become more human?* I think four precepts can serve as a constant guide: (1) Be Amazed, (2) Be Productive, (3) Be Virtuous, (3) Be Wise.

4. Thomas Aquinas on the Priesthood of Christ

Thomas defines prayer as the *explicatio propriae voluntatis*,⁵⁸ the explication of our own will before God, so that he may fulfil it. As wonder manifested Christ's human intellect, so Christ's prayer manifests his human will. The Son of God has human desires and by sharing these through prayer with his Father, he teaches us to do the same. In his humanity, Thomas notes, Christ was not capable of completing all that he wished on his own. In his humanity he is dependent on the grace and gifts of the Father. If Christ called upon his Father for help in his ministry, then priests too must constantly turn to the Father in prayer. Priests must make their desires known to the God who gives good things to his children.

Although Thomas has much to say about the *conversatio Christi* ("the manner of Christ's life"), three interconnected features are especially worth of note: (1) Christ's earthly ministry was contemplative as well as active,⁵⁹ (2) public rather than private,⁶⁰ and (3) supremely rather than occasionally didactic.⁶¹ Action without contemplation is like pouring a bucket of water on a forest fire. The action and intention are both good, maybe even praiseworthy, but without forethought and guidance, the would-be firefighter will be consumed by the flames. Christ insists that he preaches only what has been given him by the Father (John 12:49; cf. 8:42). His preaching is always the fruit of his time with the Father, that is, his preaching is animated by his filial prayer life. But this great treasure, Christ does not hide or seek to possess for himself. As a divine good, it is fundamentally and essentially shareable, and so in all that he does, he is a public witness to the divine invitation to be sons and daughters of God the Father.

Through his public life he invites all to share in his unique filial relationship. Which is to say that his earthly ministry is to teach us what it means to be children of God. The whole of his life is ordered to bringing us into this new and unprecedented relationship

with the God of all creation. Why does Jesus insist that no one on earth is to be called “father” (Matt. 23:9)? Because all earthly fatherhood, including the spiritual fatherhood which the priest is called to embrace is supposed to be an icon not an idol. If a priest unduly delights in his new title, then he is a pharisee and a hypocrite. The priest is supposed to be a witness to true fatherhood not an impediment. The priest must learn from Jesus how to be a son, and then just like Jesus, people will see the Father when they see the priest (John 14:8). Because in the priest, they can see the life of Jesus.

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* reminds us that “every high priest chosen from among mortals is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb. 5:1). Jesus enjoys such mediatorship in an unprecedented and absolutely *sui generis* way, for there is “one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim. 2:5). If the priest wants to truly share in this mediatorship, then he must be prepared to do as Jesus did. What would a parish be like, if every single person knew in their heart of hearts that their priest would die for them, die for their spouse, die for their children? This is the mediatorship of Jesus, to offer oneself as a sacrifice. The priest too must bear others’ sins, the priest too must sigh and lament (Heb. 5:8) over the sins of God’s people. Does the priest know his people’s sufferings? Does the priest know their pains? Can the priest say to them: *Take my yoke upon you?* This priest must ask himself each day: *Am I a liberator or an oppressor?* True mediators are liberators. Oppressors are on the side of the Evil one.

In his lectures on the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, Thomas notes four characteristics of priestly office, which Christ fulfils in a supereminent way: (1) rank, (2) purpose, (3) position, and (4) act.⁶² The priestly rank of the new covenant was entrusted not to angels but to humans: God willed that humans have someone like themselves to whom they could run. But the height of this priestly rank is not simply meant to be one of juridical excellence, but an excellence of love. Thomas reminds us of the words of Jesus to Peter: “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15). The purpose of priesthood is not for God’s good but for our good. The priest is at the service of others, not himself. *The priest who seeks his own good, Thomas warns, is not a pastor but a mercenary.*

All these characteristics, however, must be animated by piety and mercy. Indeed, this is a function of being a mediator, for just as through the devotion of prayer, Thomas notes, we ought “to touch God,” so through mercy and compassion we ought to touch the other extreme, namely, the human person.⁶³ I want to dwell for a moment on Thomas’ notion of piety, for it is not the saccharine and flippant word we use today. For Thomas, the gift of piety enables us to supernaturally relate to God as Father.⁶⁴ Here again, if the priest does not have a relation of sonship with the Father, then the priest will not be able to be a spiritual father to others. The priest must do everything in his power to protect, guard, nurture, and develop his filial relationship, his *pietas*, with God. From this epicentre will come every effective ministry and every effective pastoral action.

5. Thomas Aquinas on the Ministerial Priesthood

Thomas’ notion of being a minister is tied to his analogous understanding of the sacraments and the humanity of Christ as instrumental causes. An instrumental cause is a cause

the operates under the causality of a higher cause.⁶⁵ For example, a scalpel in the hand of a surgeon or a chisel in the hand of a carpenter. When we apply this notion to the incarnation, we have an analogy (albeit limited) for understanding how God employs the humanity of Jesus to save us.⁶⁶ The humanity of Christ is personally united to the Son of God so that in it and through it he may bring about our redemption through the works of his life, death, and resurrection.⁶⁷

In the sacraments, we have a slightly different appropriation of the analogy of instrumental cause, for unlike the humanity of Christ which is a *conjoined* instrument, the sacraments are “separated” instruments of salvation.⁶⁸ Furthermore, in the case of the sacraments, Thomas refuses to reduce the notion of sacrament to either sign or cause.⁶⁹ So his preferred example for how the sacraments “contain” grace is not a tool or utensil but the way in which the outer, spoken or written word (*vox*) contains and expresses the meaning of an inner word (*verbum cordis*) or concept.⁷⁰ This is the sort of instrumentality Thomas thinks is the best analogy for understanding what is going on in the sacraments. The structure of the sacraments supernaturally perfects the structure of the natural world: the visible reveals the invisible (cf. Rom. 1:18-20), but the sacraments do more because the revelation is not just didactic or pedagogical but transformational, we are ourselves made participants in the act of the revelation of the mysteries of God. In Baptism, we are not simply *instructed* about the death and resurrection of Christ *we are baptised into the death and resurrection* of Christ, so that those who die with him may rise with him into the newness of life (Rom. 6:3).

Thomas’ notion of ministry is rooted in his understanding of the human authority of Christ in the incarnation, which consists in the perfect union of the fullness of Christ’s received grace and what he merits according to this grace through his passion, death, and resurrection. The power of justifying which Christ enjoys in his human nature is unique to his humanity alone.⁷¹ But according to the grace of headship, Christ can appoint “heads” of the people of God who can participate in Christ’s mission of sanctification through exterior (and pastoral) governance.⁷²

Thomas notes that the priest of the new law operates in the person of Christ.⁷³ This is a frequent affirmation of the Second Vatican Council as well,⁷⁴ but the notion of operating *in persona Christi* is one that has been obscured. It is often distorted into a slogan instead of accepted as a mission. So I would like to draw out some implications for clarifying the meaning of *in persona Christi* based on what has been established regarding ministerial causality.

The first meaning is a false meaning. This *simulacrum* of authentic priestly office occurs when the priest substitutes an *is* for the *in*. Even in the incarnation, where Christ assumes a human nature to his person,⁷⁵ the distinction between humanity and divinity remains intact. There is a union not an amalgamation or mixture. So too in priestly ministry *the priest has been entrusted* with the authority of Christ, just as the Centurion’s servant *the priest should know what it means to be under authority*. But if the priest confuses Christ’s authority with his own (even for an instant), then he will have succumbed to a most egregious form of priestly idolatry: the priest will have sought to pillage Christ’s own seat of authority and in doing so will have become like Satan, seeking an equality which is not his to possess and grasping after a power which is not his to wield.⁷⁶ The priest,

therefore must remember his Baptism, uttering a definitive *No!* to Satan and all his empty promises.

The second meaning of *in persona Christi* is the true meaning. The priest is a minister and instrument, and he can only ever act *in* the Person of Christ. The priest is not the only-begotten Son of God himself, the priest is a creature, but the Word is the everlasting creator; the priest, however, by God's lavish and generous gift is an *adopted* son and subsequently an *appointed* priest. So within this instrumental or organic notion of *in persona Christi*, I would like to note four possible variations of meaning.

First, there is Christ's presence in the poor: *What you have done to the least of these my brothers, you have done unto me* (Matt. 24).

Second, there is that Christological and priestly authority which we all receive at our Baptism, the fulfilment of the Pauline saying: "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). This, I would suggest, is the widest and most general (but still a genuine and legitimate) sense of *in persona Christi*. As the body of Christ, we both undertake and undergo actions that can be explained in no other way than as in the person of Christ.

Third, there is that unique mode of *in persona Christi*, which is restricted to Ordained Priestly Ministry,⁷⁷ which is particularly resplendent in the sacrament of reconciliation (*Ego te absolvo*) on the one hand and the Eucharist on the other (*Hoc est enim Corpus Meum*). Finally, there is the unique authority of the bishop, which may also be characterised as *in persona Christi*, and thereby enjoys its own unique set of prerogatives.⁷⁸

In regard to the Eucharistic dimension of priestly *in persona Christi*, Thomas presents a powerful paradox of how extraordinary power is only ever authentically wielded through radical humility. Thomas seems to suggest that the priest acts *in persona Christi* only through the saying of the Eucharistic words of consecration, that is, "recitatively."⁷⁹ And while there can be absolutely no doubt that Thomas understands priestly character as the power to consecrate, this is not what he emphasises in his presentation of the Eucharistic meaning of *in persona Christi*. Instead, what he seems to want to indicate is that in the Eucharistic celebration the person of the priest is to be totally *transparent*. The congregation should not see Father so-and-so up there, but *Christus solus*.

This analysis of the various possible meanings of *in persona Christi* present the candidate for priestly ministry with a choice on the day of ordination and every day thereafter. The priest must choose death or life, cursing or blessing (Josh. 24:15), idolatry or ministry. Will the priest seek to usurp the seat of Christ, to be a blasphemer, an idolater? Or will the priest choose the seat of humility, the office of ministry, the mission of service? Will the priest be a tare that Christ must cut down (Matt. 13:24), a lampstand that Christ has to remove (Rev. 2:5)? Or will the priest be a mighty instrument in the Lord's hand, a collaborator and friend, a light on the hill?

Conclusion: Human Priests, Holy Priests

The time of seminary formation must be used wisely. It is a time that is meant to shape and hone the humanity of each candidate, so that when it is placed into the full service of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, it may be a sharp and ready instrument for the salvation of

souls: *The priest must be holy!* For he serves a holy people, convoked by the Holy and ever-living God, who is an all-consuming fire (Heb. 12:29; Deut. 9:3). Divine justice is not slack and divine mercy is all-encompassing.

The priest must remember that the first offering he offers is himself. May it be ever worthy and ever pleasing unto God as he stands before his people, offering the sacrifice of the Lord until he comes again.

The priest must remember that he will not only be answerable *to* his congregation but *for* his congregation. On that final day, when the Lord asks: *Where are my sheep?* The priest must be able to say, *Lord, see, you gave me 10, and I found 100 more. Lord, you gave me 100 and I found 1,000. Lord, see, you gave me 1,000, and I found you 10,000.* The priest must never cease to wonder at the grace which has missioned him for the care of souls, for he must craft them into the heart of Jesus, even as the priest himself continues to grow in virtue, wisdom, and grace — into the fullness of the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:13), into a man after God’s own heart: “Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matt. 6:33).

Finally, the priest must remember that the “gift of God does not cancel human freedom,” but instead gives “rise to freedom, develops freedom, and demands freedom.”⁸⁰ The priest should never forget his humanity: Christ *did not* and the priest *must not*. The priest, therefore, should remember to pray always and without ceasing: *Iesu, mitis et humilis Corde, / Fac cor nostrum secundum cor tuum.*



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ENDNOTES

- ¹ Bonaventure, *Vitis Mystica*, 3.5 (ed. Quaracchi, 8: 164a).
- ² Augustine, *Tract. in Ioh.*, tr. 120, c. 2 (CCSL 36: 661.6-9).
- ³ William of Saint-Thierry, *De Contemplando Deo*, c. 3 (SC 61: 64).
- ⁴ Vatican II, *Optatum Totius*, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Alberigo et al., trans. Norman P. Tanner (London: Sheed and Ward and DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990), §11 (2: 953); Pope John Paul II, *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (15 March 1992), §43b (AAS 84: 732).
- ⁵ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §13a (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1076).
- ⁶ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §13b (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1076).
- ⁷ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), §170 (AAS 105.12: 1091).
- ⁸ Fulton Sheen, *The Priest is Not His Own* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004 [Original: McGraw-Hill, 1963]).
- ⁹ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, §1 (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1043). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of the documents of Vatican II are taken from Norman Tanner’s edition.
- ¹⁰ Vatican II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, §16b (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1062).
- ¹¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, vols. 4-12 of the *Opera Omnia Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*, ed. Leonina Commissio (Romae: Typographia Polyglotta S.C. de Propoganda de Fide, 1888-1906), IIIa, q. 22, a. 1c (11: 256a). Unless otherwise noted, all translations of Latin Medieval and Patristic authors are my own.
- ¹² Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 9.15 (CCSL 47: 263).
- ¹³ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 26, a. 2c (ed. Leonina, 11: 286b).
- ¹⁴ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program for Priestly Formation*, 5th ed. (DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2006), §74.
- ¹⁵ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §5b (AAS 84: 663).
- ¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Lectura super Epistolam ad Hebraeos*, ed. P. Raphael Cai (Turin/Rome: Marietti, 1953), c. 5, lect. 1, n. 241 (389b).
- ¹⁷ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §5c (AAS 84: 663). Unless otherwise noted, all English translations of Papal Documents are taken from the English editions posted on the website of the Holy See.

- ¹⁸ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §5e (AAS 84: 664).
- ¹⁹ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22a (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1081).
- ²⁰ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22a (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1081).
- ²¹ See also, Origen, *Hom. in Ezek.*, 6.6 (SC 352: 230); Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus*, 4.7 (PL 40: 314); Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 1, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 11: 7a).
- ²² Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22b (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1081-82). Translations my own.
- ²³ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22c (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1082).
- ²⁴ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22d (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1082).
- ²⁵ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22f (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1083).
- ²⁶ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §22d (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1082).
- ²⁷ Vatican II, *Optatum Totius*, §11b (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 953).
- ²⁸ Vatican II, *Optatum Totius*, §11a (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 953).
- ²⁹ Vatican II, *Optatum Totius*, §11b: "...libertate sapienter uti, sponte naviterque agere et cum confratribus et laicis sociam praestare operam assuescant" (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 954). Translation my own.
- ³⁰ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §43e (AAS 84: 733).
- ³¹ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §44a (AAS 84: 733-34).
- ³² JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §44a (AAS 84: 734).
- ³³ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §44e (AAS 84: 735).
- ³⁴ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §27 (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 1085).
- ³⁵ JPII, *Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), §80 (AAS 85: 1198).
- ³⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, 5th ed., vol. 3 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 18.3: 643.
- ³⁷ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §2 (AAS 84: 659).
- ³⁸ USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation*, §92.
- ³⁹ USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation*, §87.
- ⁴⁰ USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation*, §101.
- ⁴¹ USCCB, *Program for Priestly Formation*, §82.
- ⁴² Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, ed. W. Jaeger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 1.1: 980a21.
- ⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio Metaphysicorum Aristotelis in Duodecim Libros*, ed. M.-R. Cathala and Raymond Spiazzi (Turin/Rome: Marietti, 1964), lib. 1, lect. 1, nn. 2-4.
- ⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.3: 983a25.
- ⁴⁵ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 14, a. 8c (ed. Leonina, 11: 194b).
- ⁴⁶ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 5, a. 4c (ed. Leonina, 11: 91b).
- ⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.1: 981b15.
- ⁴⁸ Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 57, a. 3c (ed. Leonina, 6: 366a).
- ⁴⁹ Thomas, *Exp. in Meta.*, lib. 1, lect. 1, n. 16.
- ⁵⁰ See for example, Thomas, *ST Ia*, q. 2, a. 1, ad 1 (ed. Leonina, 4: 28a); cf. *SCG* 1.11.5 (ed. Leonina, 13: 25b).
- ⁵¹ Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 49, a. 4c (ed. Leonina, 6: 315a).
- ⁵² Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 55, a. 4 (ed. Leonina, 6: 353a); cf. Augustine, *On Free Will*, 2.19.
- ⁵³ Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 2, a. 7c (ed. Leonina, 6: 23b).
- ⁵⁴ Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 66, a. 5c (ed. Leonina, 6: 436a); cf. *SCG* 1.1 (ed. Leonina, 13: 3a).
- ⁵⁵ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.1: 981b8.
- ⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1.2: 982a5.
- ⁵⁷ Thomas, *ST IaIIae*, q. 3, a. 8c (ed. Leonina, 6: 35b).
- ⁵⁸ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 21, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 11: 251a).
- ⁵⁹ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 40, a. 1, ad 2 (ed. Leonina, 11: 398a).
- ⁶⁰ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 40, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 11: 397b).
- ⁶¹ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 7, a. 7c (ed. Leonina, 11: 114a).
- ⁶² Thomas, *Lect. in Heb.*, c. 4, lect. 1, n. 241.
- ⁶³ Thomas, *Lect. in Heb.*, c. 4, lect. 1, n. 246.
- ⁶⁴ Thomas, *ST IIaIIae*, q. 121, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 9: 472a).
- ⁶⁵ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 62, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 12: 19b).
- ⁶⁶ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 7, a. 1, ad 3 (ed. Leonina, 11: 107b); cf. IIIa, q. 19, a. 1, ad 2 (11: 241a); IIIa, q. 2, a. 6, ad 4 (11: 37b); IIIa, q. 18, a. 1, ad 2 (11: 231b); IIIa, q. 19, a. 1c (11: 240a); IIIa, q. 25, a. 5c (11: 282a).
- ⁶⁷ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 62, a. 5, ad 1 (ed. Leonina, 12: 27b).
- ⁶⁸ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 62, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 12: 27a).
- ⁶⁹ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 60, a. 1, ad 1 (ed. Leonina, 12: 4b); IIIa, q. 61, a. 1, ad 1 (ed. Leonina, 12: 14b).
- ⁷⁰ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 62, a. 4, ad 1 (ed. Leonina, 12: 25b).
- ⁷¹ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 8, a. 6c (ed. Leonina, 11: 134a).
- ⁷² Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 8, a. 6c (ed. Leonina, 11: 134b).
- ⁷³ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 22, a. 4c (ed. Leonina, 11: 260b).
- ⁷⁴ See for example, Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, §10 (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 857) & §28 (2: 872).
- ⁷⁵ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 2, a. 2c (ed. Leonina, 11: 25a); cf. Ia, q. 20, a. 4, ad 2 (4: 256a).
- ⁷⁶ This is a common motif in twelfth century exegesis of Philipians 2. See for example, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones in Adventu*, 1.2 (ed. Leclercq, 4: 162); Gilbert of Poitiers, *Commentarius in Epistolas Sancti Pauli*, in *Ep. ad Phil.*, c. 2 (Lisbon, Biblioteca Nacional *Fundo Alcobaca* XCVII/178, f. 82rb); Peter Lombard, *Coll. in Ep. ad Phil.*, c. 2 (PL 192: 233C).
- ⁷⁷ Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, §10 (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 857).
- ⁷⁸ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 82, a. 1, ad 4 (ed. Leonina, 12: 261a); cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, §§26-28 (ed. Alberigo/Tanner, 2: 870-872).
- ⁷⁹ Thomas, *ST IIIa*, q. 78, a. 1c (ed. Leonina, 12: 205b).
- ⁸⁰ JPII, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, §2 (AAS 84: 659).

A revitalised dialogue between the sacred and the profane

Re-visiting the Church's response to secularisation in light of post-pandemic secular culture

RYAN CHRISTOPHER BROWNE

At the commencement of his State Visit to the United Kingdom, Pope Benedict XVI highlighted: “The United Kingdom strives to be a modern and multicultural society. In this challenging enterprise, may it always maintain its respect for those traditional values and cultural expressions that more aggressive forms of secularism no longer value or even tolerate.”¹ The Pope’s message is now clearly prophetic. During the pandemic we saw the excesses of secular society, such as the dramatic rise of “cancel culture”, which seeks to eliminate from social discourse, those ideas which do not conform to secular values. However, the positive aspects of secular society were also clearly visible, such as social initiatives to help the house-bound and infirm during lockdowns. It is in light of this post-pandemic environment that we ought to reassess the Church’s response to secularism. In this paper I assert that a pessimistic reading of secular society has developed in the Church. In ecclesial discussions, there are tendencies to afford negative connotations to the secular, thereby dichotomising the relationship between the sacred and the secular. There is clear evidence of this in the Catholic press. For example, at the beginning of the Pope’s 2010 State Visit, John Allen of the *National Catholic Reporter* claimed that the Pope chose to visit the UK, because it was an important front in the “war” against the dictatorship of relativism and secularism.² This is an over-simplification of Benedict XVI’s theological method. Note how Benedict XVI didn’t refer to a war between traditional values and secular expressions in the UK, but called the scenario a “challenging enterprise.” When the Church takes a strong stance against secularism, dialogue with the secular becomes very difficult, perhaps even impossible. It is in reference to this problem that I will explore a deeper understanding of how we might approach secular society in our ecclesial discussions, so as to demonstrate how we may improve dialogue between the sacred and the secular.

The pandemic has demonstrated the extremes of society. On the one hand, it provided an environment in which human kindness flourished. We find examples of this kindness from those individuals who protected national health services, to those in communities who assisted the elderly, the sick and the dying. These stories, the famous and the inconspicuous, are blessings of the pandemic. Additionally, the technological innovations of human endeavour have demonstrated their immense utility. During the

last two years, face-to-face encounters were severely restricted. Consequently, people relied on the internet to maintain social contact. A Pew survey found that in the United States, 90% of respondents claimed that the internet had been essential to them throughout the pandemic.³ Social media has been crucial for sustaining social contact, thus enhancing mental health.

On the other hand, the greater usage of social media offers new challenges to society. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen the development of “cancel culture.” This is a social phenomenon that has accelerated in recent years, whereby individuals are held publicly accountable for their personal views, and are consequently removed from further social discourse. This extreme level of accountability affects contemporary figures, but it also impacts deceased individuals. In an address to the Holy See’s diplomatic corps, Pope Francis described cancel culture as, “cancelling all sense of identity, with the risk of silencing positions that defend a respectful and balanced understanding of various sensibilities. A kind of dangerous ‘one-track thinking’ is taking shape, one constrained to deny history or, worse yet, to rewrite it in terms of present-day categories”.⁴ There have been clear examples of this. Note the cases of vandalism towards statues of iconic historical figures, such as of the Scouts founder Robert Baden-Powell in Dorset.⁵ It is problematic to eliminate aspects of our heritage, simply because the beliefs of an individual do not conform to modern standards. There must be a greater awareness of our heritage, so that we can appreciate the great strides society has made. This ideology of cancel culture is, arguably, what Benedict XVI described in his Holyroodhouse speech: an aggressive form of secularism. Such a culture is intolerant and seeks to silence that which does not conform to itself. This is the form of secularism which Christians must challenge.

However, in prophetically challenging the excesses of secularism, there must be an attentive attitude, so as not to over-simplify the secular. In the Church in recent years, there have been signs of this over-simplification. There have been negative connotations afforded to the secular, painting all forms of it with the same brush. Historically, the Church has been influential in social discourse, but as a human institution in the west it is now facing demise, and even outright rejection in some circumstances. To be sure, it is regrettable that people are drifting away from God, but western society is moving away from its Christian heritage. Culture is remoulding itself. This is something of which we must be aware. In recognising this sociological shift, we must avoid the temptation to over-simplify the relationship between the sacred and the secular.

This development of secular culture has a complex history. The Catholic social philosopher, Professor Charles Taylor, recognises that in medieval times there were “two spheres of life, with their proper activities and offices, corresponding to two ‘cities’ which coexist in history, the City of God, and the earthly city”.⁶ Continuing, he argues that a process of “Reform” has occurred since medieval times, a reform that “alters the terms of this coexistence” between the Church and secular society and “in the end it comes close to wiping out the duality altogether”.⁷ The relationship between the Church and the secular state has changed. Ultimately, the relationship between the sacred and the secular is not as extremely polarised as it has historically been. There is a sharing between the two of what is true and good, where both offer various methods for generating a flourishing society.

Professor Taylor provided a good example of this sociological shift in a 2017 lecture. He argued that in society there is a vast array of “seekers.” According to him, seekers are “people that have a sense that there is something missing in their lives, a deeper sense that they want to follow, or give to it. But this can take a whole lot of different forms. Some people say, ‘I’m spiritual but not religious.’ Some people adopt one or another church.”⁸ This is the landscape of secular society. Are we to totally disregard this interior searching and separate it from the sacred? The search for the sacred, transcendence and truth is the natural component of man. It is gifted by God, so that we may return to God; the source of life and truth. To define “seekers” as separate, or worse, polarised to the Church, is to place these very gifts of God Himself outside of His own mystical body.

As I highlighted at the beginning of this paper, to reduce the relationship between the sacred and the secular to a simple dichotomy is deeply problematic. This approach leads to a destructive relationship between the Church and secular society. It is essential now to recognise that secularism is far more complex. It’s no longer viable to distinguish the relationship between the Church and secular society as two exclusive camps that share nothing in common. Indeed, Benedict XVI saw the Church and secular society as two confreres, which could feed and nurture one another. He asserted that both Church and secular society must have the “willingness to learn from each other.” He continues, that we must recognise “self-limitation on both sides”.⁹ Whilst the Church must be radical in its proclamation of the Gospel, the Church must not retreat to an alternate pole, avoiding correction when it falls short of truth, justice and goodness. Essentially, “It is important that both great components of Western culture learn to *listen* and to accept a genuine relatedness to these other cultures, too”.¹⁰ Benedict XVI’s approach is therefore not about enhancing division, bringing about a discordant piece of music, akin to expressionist atonality; rather, a desire for “polyphonic relatedness”, that works in strong harmony and complementarity.¹¹

This revitalised understanding of the relationship between the sacred and the secular could be criticised for being impractical for real-life scenarios. I cannot deny that this is a possibility, because there may be times when compromise is not an option. However, I think these are real concerns that we must consider as the Church faces greater challenges in post-pandemic secular culture. The knee-jerk reaction to criticism is to respond in a way that can intensify the already-gaping-chasm between the Church and secular society, by becoming even more anti-secular. The challenge is to discover the fine-tuned “polyphonic” balance.¹² A useful example is employed by Bishop Barron, who compares the Church to an animal navigating through its own environment, battling and assimilating for survival. Using this image, Barron argues, “To be alive is to be in this subtle space of both resisting and assimilating. There’s the Church. It’s a living body.”¹³ Although we must resist when convictions conflict with the Gospel, we need to embrace areas of society, which may not at first enter our sense of religious space.

I take a similar line to that of the Orthodox systematic theologian, Professor Brandon Gallaher. He argues that we must attempt “to see how the light of Christ which illumines all might be working in a space of modern society that at first looks simply Godless, dark, and chaotic, so that the mission of the church [...] is not lost to view”.¹⁴ Although Professor Gallaher writes in reference to the anti-secular approach of the Orthodox Church, he

cautions the Church about approaches that simply condemn and do not dialogue with the secular. It is in the breakdown of dialogue where the chasm between the sacred and the secular increases. This is where Pope Francis' own theological approach to secularism compliments the work of Benedict XVI. In his Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes how in our dialogue, we must beware of simply having "parallel monologues".¹⁵ We need an approach that "respect[s] the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns".¹⁶ Dialogue is the daily challenge offered to Christians. This is what may bring about a more harmonious relationship between the Church and secular society.

To conclude, the Church must set out to courageously dialogue with secular society. God calls all Christians to sanctify all things, whether it be in Christian communities, or in what may seem Godless. Consequently, each Christian has a creative role, so as to construct the Kingdom of God here and now. Addressing priests, Benedict XVI implores that they "learn the humanity of Jesus anew, to strive to have a human eye and a human heart so as to awaken them in others, too".¹⁷ God dwelt in the secular, so as to draw it back to Himself. Therefore, priests can only sanctify by intimately knowing Christ in his humanity, as well as His divinity. To reject that which Christ came to redeem is a doomed mission. As such, Professor Gallaher proposes a question: "instead of rejecting the secular, might not one baptize it, humanize it, and sanctify it?"¹⁸ This baptising of the secular is not a clerical mission, but a baptismal duty. This baptismal duty ensures that the baptismal waters do not become stagnant; rather it permits the living waters of baptism to overflow into society and culture. Taking this image further, Hans Urs von Balthasar, co-founder of the theological review *Communio*, implores that we "find the glory of God's suffering and dying love everywhere and, preferentially, in that which is far from God and opposed to God".¹⁹ This sets out a bold responsibility for Christians today. A responsibility of creativity to set out to draw all things back to God. The Church's mission is to make God's Kingdom present in society (religious and non-religious), but we ought also to humbly accept correction from secular society, when it is required. Therefore, as western culture enters a new phase after the pandemic, I think we need to be ever bolder in our outreach to the secular. Inspired by the theological approaches of popes Benedict XVI and Francis, it is necessary to look afresh at the relationship between the sacred and the secular. To see them not as two polarised positions, but as two visions, accompanied with strengths and weaknesses. Two visions which can complement one another to produce a flourishing society that can mirror the Kingdom of God.



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ENDNOTES

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- ² John Allen, “Benedict battles the ‘dictatorship of relativism’”, 2010.
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- ⁴ Pope Francis, “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See,” 10 January 2022.
- ⁵ Steve Daniels, “Robert Baden-Powell statue to be removed in Poole”, 11 June 2020.
- ⁶ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2007), 265.
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- ⁸ Charles Taylor, “Secularism and Religious and Spiritual Forms of Belonging”, 2017.
- ⁹ Joseph Ratzinger, *Western Culture: Today and Tomorrow* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2019), 100.
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- ¹¹ Ibid.
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- ¹⁷ Joseph Ratzinger, *Teaching and Learning the Love of God: Being a Priest Today* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017), 182.
- ¹⁸ Brandon Gallaher, “A Tale of Two Speeches: Secularism and Primacy in Contemporary Roman Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy”, in *Primacy of the Church, The Office of Primate and the Authority of the Councils*, vol 2 (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2016), 834.
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Inspiration for the Mission Today: Wisdom From Two 16th Century English Jesuits

REV. FR TOBY DUCKWORTH, STB

Introduction

Professor Stephen Bullivant, in his recent book *Mass Exodus*, paints a saddening scene of Catholicism in England. Catholics currently account for approximately 9% of the UK population and we're not growing. Rather, "almost two out of every five British cradle Catholics [now] claim to have no religion, [and] these *leavers from Catholicism* outnumber [new] converts to Catholicism by a ratio of ten to one."¹ In short, while we have a steeply rising number of those *disassociating* themselves from the Catholic faith, we also have only a tiny fraction of that number entering the fold — we're contracting! Communities of the faithful vary, but many are heavily depleted and aging, the Covid-19 pandemic looks as if it has washed-out a further number, and priests are left more isolated, tired, and straddling the responsibilities previously done by many. We pray, of course, that this contraction of Catholicism in England, may be a metaphorical pruning back of the rose bush, one that will soon spring up into new life. Indeed, there remains a significant number of committed priests, religious, and lay faithful — a critical mass of sorts — that are determined to change the tide in the mission of evangelisation, or re-evangelisation, of England, those who can still hear the Lord proclaiming to them: "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Aside from endless hours of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, priests are understandably turning to newly formulated programs such as *Divine Renovation*, *Rebuilt*, and *Forming Intentional Disciples* for much needed insights. These are truly inspiring, but they are no quick fix, or pre-packaged solution, to all our problems. This paper, as such, begins with the premise that another place we might turn for inspiration is the history books. Indeed, should we not also learn from the successes and failures of the many centuries of the Church's mission carried out all over the world before us? Obviously, such lessons from the many centuries of the Church's mission cannot be offered here, but at the very least, let this paper be an impetus for readers to consider the "history of the mission" as an important place to find inspiration for the mission today.

With this premise in mind, we turn to two different Jesuit Missions of the sixteenth century, and specifically to two English Jesuit missionaries — Saint Edmund Campion in England and Thomas Stephens in India. These men who first knew each other at Oxford, in time, would both join the Society of Jesus, and would be sent out to minister in two very different mission lands. Here, we seek to catch a glimpse of these men and their respective missions, but above all, to dwell on the elements of their example as missionaries that might be useful to us who labour in the Lord's vineyard today.

1. Edmund Campion

Campion underwent something of an intellectual conversion to Catholicism at Oxford, one comparable to that of Newman. The more he *read* the Doctors and Fathers of the Church, “the further he seemed from the Anglican church.”² Campion continued an intellectual life at Oxford for as long as it was safe for him to do so (until September 1570), then continued a similar way of life in Ireland (until March 1572), before eventually fleeing to Douai, not as a candidate for Orders, but as a catholic refugee who doubled as a Professor of Rhetoric. The way of life there, with “daily mass, weekly confession, and fasting,” gave him much life, and soon in “the hushed moment of the Mass, he realised the need for more than civility and scholarship. He saw himself as a new-born, a formless soul that could come to maturity only by some long and specially sheltered growth,” growth which he perceived “could not be done at Douai.”³ So, in early 1573, Campion left for Rome alone, on foot like a poor pilgrim, and shortly after arriving, was accepted into the Society of Jesus, and was sent to Prague for the novitiate. The Society of Jesus recognised his intellectual gifts, and he continued the scholarly life, working as a Professor of Rhetoric in Prague (from 1574), alongside a fruitful local ministry of preaching, visiting the sick, and hearing confessions (once ordained in September 1578). In many ways, Campion “was leading the old life which he knew and loved [...] but more tenderly perhaps, and without trace of vanity.”⁴ As a Jesuit, Campion was able to pursue the scholarly life, no longer for his own glory and renown, but for the greater glory of God and in service of his people. This mission, though it suited Campion like a glove, was short lived, ending when he received the summons for the mission to England.

Campion was sent to England with two other Jesuits, Fr Robert Persons (the superior) and Ralph Emerson (a lay brother). The mission began in the era when it was considered “*high treason* to [...] absolve or reconcile any of the Queens subjects, or to be absolved or reconciled” to the Catholic faith.⁵ Thus, “Masses were said in secret, the vessels were kept behind sliding panels, and the priests were smuggled in and out of doors through concealed passages.”⁶ Campion and Persons, were there, at least in part, to help the diocesan or “seminary priests” in providing Catholics with access to the Sacraments. They travelled from house to house hearing confessions, preaching, and offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass. They also attempted to find ways in which to preach and teach the truth of the Catholic faith (e.g., through printed books like Campion’s *Decem Rationes*) in ways that would *attract* people to return to it out of good conscience.

1.1 Preach From The Heart

While many may know that Edmund Campion was a martyr of the Reformation, few perhaps know that he “was renowned in his time as a *preacher*,” one whose abilities “to move his audiences to tears was remembered by his contemporaries in the North [...] for eighty years.”⁷ What was it that made him such a good preacher? Three things. For sure, Campion’s studies in rhetoric and theology helped; the fact that he knew both the contents of the faith *and* how to communicate it effectively. But it was more than this, it was also that his faith had moved *from his head to his heart*, that he allowed himself space to process and to be moved by the contents of this faith in prayer (evident from his time

in Douai and beyond) during a period of intense formation. It was time with the Lord in prayer that meant that the faith Campion shared, was “no dry logical necessity to be expounded,” but rather something that truly “gave [him] daily life,” life that he wanted for others.⁸ What made him such a good preacher was that his “sermons were a tightly woven fabric of logic and passion, reason *and affection*.”⁹ As Catholics, we know well the danger of faith that is limited to the level of mere sentiment, but we’re perhaps not so good at recognising the fact that without allowing that faith to move our *hearts* (as well as our heads), few will be moved by what we have to share. There are many dimensions of our humanity, and faith is supposed to move and shape *all* of them, every part of us. It is right for us to speak rationally (for our faith, and above all, Jesus Christ whom we proclaim is the Truth), but it is also important that we imitate something of Campion’s “intimate and emotional character,”¹⁰ that from time to time our great love for Christ and for his Gospel might cause us to be passionate, or even to shed a genuine tear in the pulpit. We are not talking about drama, but about preaching honestly from the heart, testifying in the manner of our speech to how the Gospel has stirred us to live and share the Christian life.

Campion, having “a vivid sense both of human frailty and divine mercy” desired the *conversion* of his listeners, “[his] constant concern was the divine *invitation*,” and he preached regularly of “the Blessed Virgin’s exemplary *response*” to it.¹¹ Campion’s preaching and teaching was always fine oration, rational, and affective all at the same time, seeking to *attract* the hearts and minds of those listening to *freely* embrace the Lord afresh. The example of Campion, the preacher, is great instruction for us preachers today. We must know how to communicate, know the faith, and speak it with conviction, from the heart.

1.2 Team Ministry

There is much wisdom in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus, which insist that whenever possible, “one person is not to be sent on a mission all by himself, but rather with at least with one other,” with someone who has “different ministerial gifts and personality traits” which can “complement those of the other.”¹² The idea being that the Jesuits “can then be of assistance to one another” and together be of “more benefit to those to whom they are sent.”¹³ The English Jesuit Mission is a perfect example of this being carried out in practice. Campion was sent to England, not alone, but rather alongside Robert Persons and Ralph Emerson. Together they were a team, and within this team there were different personalities, charisms, and gifts. For instance, “it was Campion’s special gift to throw his whole soul and all his inspiring enthusiasm into every letter, speech, or sermon,” but “it was Person’s special gift to make plans, to provide means, and to arrange for all contingences.” Persons “had talents better suited for administration and management.”¹⁴ Campion knew this, and although Persons was Campion’s junior in both age and religious life, “Campion had asked not to be made superior.”¹⁵ In doing so, Campion demonstrates three key things: (1) a *self-knowledge* of his own strengths and weaknesses, (2) a *recognition of others* and the usefulness of their gifts, and (3) a *humility* in allowing a younger brother to be his superior. All three of these resurface throughout Campion’s ministry in England, another obvious example being found shortly before his capture. Then, Campion knowing his own zeal to preach was greater than his concern for safety, “put himself under obedience of the lay-brother Ralph Emerson,” allowing him to decide whether the risks were too great for Campion to preach or not.¹⁶

These traits of Campion are without a doubt useful to us who labour on the English Mission today. As priests we need to know ourselves, particularly our own strengths and weaknesses, and to have the humility to ask for help from others particularly in those weaknesses. Some may have a gift for administration, others for one-to-one spiritual counsel, others for catechesis or for working with the young or the elderly. But none of us should expect ourselves to be a perfect all things to all people. We need help from others. Yes, it is commonplace for us priests to be appointed to a parish on our own, but we need to assemble a *team* of people around us to assist us in our ministry. While by virtue of our ordination, we may have “the *office* of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher, [...] the *function* of [these] charisms [...] are also] proper to [some of] the baptised.”¹⁷ The priest, as such, may “bear the responsibility for ensuring all these functions are being carried out” but by no means do all that work himself unaided. On the contrary, the role of parish priests is to have an eye on the whole, to be “bottle openers who will ‘uncork’ the grace that has been poured out on every baptised person,” to recognise the God-given charisms of the faithful, and to encourage them to exercise them, to play their part in the Church’s local mission.¹⁸ Perhaps like Campion, we might find someone to take over the burden of administration. Or do we need others to help with the catechesis, youth group, or visiting the sick?

2. Thomas Stephens

After his studies at Oxford, Thomas Stephens “attached himself to Thomas Pounce, [...] a lay-apostle and leader of the Catholic gentry,” where for at least two years they both attempted “to preserve the ancient faith of the realm” as laymen.¹⁹ This proved difficult, them being “arrested as suspected spies” on at least one occasion.²⁰ As the risks grew, Pounce and Stephens made a pact to head to Rome and to seek entry into the Society of Jesus. Pounce was arrested before that was possible, but Stephens did make it to Rome, and was admitted into the Society of Jesus on 20 October 1575.²¹ Stephens was formed in the Roman Novitiate and studied philosophy at the *Collegio Romano* (now the Pontifical Gregorian University). In 1579, still a young scholastic studying philosophy, Stephens was “given leave by the General to join the mission of Portuguese East India.”²²

Before the arrival of the Portuguese, South-East India was home to a largely Hindu population and a small number of so-called “Saint Thomas Christians.” But even the Christianity of the Saint Thomas Christians seemed foreign to the Portuguese, it being full of “its own institutions” and “many indigenous elements,” which the Portuguese went on to suppress, striving for the “total Latinization of its ecclesiastical structures.”²³ The Portuguese brought to India *European* Christianity, a Christianity that quickly “became associated with colonial powers, authoritative force, and the imposing of Western cultures.”²⁴ Becoming a Christian through Baptism “meant the rejection of one’s former culture and the adoption of a Portuguese name.”²⁵ The Portuguese were unfriendly towards both the Saint Thomas Christians *and* the Hindus, and by 1583 they had “destroyed all the Hindu temples” in Salsette.²⁶ This caused an uprising of the Hindu population which led to “the martyrdom of several renowned Jesuits.”²⁷ Father Thomas Stephens, the then rector of the large Christian community in Rachol, considered this “a watershed moment”

which would forever change the methodology of him and his brother Jesuits in South-East India. Stephens “adopted an entirely novel approach [...] marked by care and apostolic zeal, [...] his sole aim [being] to convey the message of Christ to the people, not in a mood of hostility and egoism, but in harmony and [in a spirit of] dialogue.”²⁸ This change proved incredibly fruitful, Salsette changing from a population of approximately 8,000 Christians on Stephen’s arrival (c. 10% of the population), to “a wholly Christian land” by the time of his death.²⁹ Something of his approach clearly worked, and so it would be remiss of us not to learn some lessons from it.

2.1 Initial And Ongoing Study

Stephens did not have the luxury of an unbroken classical formation, of a series of consecutive hidden years in which to study the arts, philosophy, and theology. On the contrary, even before finishing his philosophy studies at the *Collegio Romano*, he was sent to India on mission. This is because the Society of Jesus understands mission, not as beginning after taking vows, or at one’s ordination to the priesthood, but as beginning when one enters the novitiate.³⁰ Everything that is then done as a Jesuit, whether that be preaching in a foreign land or doing one’s studies, is done for the mission, to better help souls.

Anyway, shortly after arriving in India, Stephens received what could be described as a mere “crash course in theology,” and even that was interrupted by a time of serious illness!³¹ After a few short *months*, he was ordained a priest. Thank God, Stephens, did not go out thinking he was God’s gift to the people of Salsette, overconfidently believing he knew all that would be needed. On the contrary, though “energetic, vivacious and brimful of optimism,” he was also *humble* and totally aware of the need to keep growing — he constantly used his “keen and observant mind” and ensured that he “continually added to his store of knowledge [profiting] by every experience.”³² How easy, one hears, it is to finish an STB (or STL), and then to get so emersed in the daily grind of parish life, that one rarely (or never) picks up another theology book again. Stephens is a good example for us of one who values pre- *and* post-ordination studies, in whatever form they are offered, and who lived the noble attitude of *continual learning in the midst of the busyness of ministry*.

2.2 Study and Engage Culture

Stephens, did not only study his theology on the go, but also the *language and culture* of the people to whom he was sent to minister. He laboured away, meticulously learning both “Konkani, the language of the common man,” and “Marathi, the language of literature and of the cultured.”³³ These better equipped him for ministry in Salsette. What he learnt from the painstaking process of language learning he also used to help others, later on composing “a grammar of the Konkani language for his fellow missionaries.”³⁴ This grammar “proved invaluable” for the missionaries, helping to prepare many to hear confessions, preach, and even to write books in the vernacular.³⁵ While diocesan priests are unlikely to be sent off to foreign lands which require language learning, there are still plenty of modes of communication for us to learn, such as the use of the internet, live-streaming, social media, etc. These are tools which do help us to communicate the Gospel

(even if they cannot provide access to the Sacraments *per se*). Perhaps, we like Stephens can invest some time into learning how to communicate effectively to people in the 21st century, and then help disseminate that information to other priests, so that they and their people, can benefit from these modes of communication also.

Knowledge of the local languages allowed Stephens to get to know the local culture, including that of the great Hindu Purānas. These rousing poems recounted “the origin of the world, [...] the origin of mankind, and the exploits of kings and heroes.”³⁶ They addressed the existential questions of the heart. Stephens came to understand “what a fascination the singing of these poems exercised over the Hindu mind, and was inspired to compose a *Christian Purāna* as a counter attraction.”³⁷ This Purāna told the great story of “man’s deliverance by Christ from the bondage of Satan,” and “accentuated the basic Christian message of love.”³⁸ In it, Stephens cleverly and faithfully “presented the most traditional post-Tridentine theology of his time, [...changing] not the Christian doctrine, but rather *the medium of its communication*.”³⁹ This was “not an attempt to diminish in any way the primacy and authority of Biblical Revelation,” but rather an attempt to communicate the Gospel in another literary form, familiar to the locals, for use outside the liturgy.⁴⁰ Indeed, “educated Christians yearned for [...] sacred literature rooted in their own culture, customs and ways of life.”⁴¹ This *Kristapurāna*, considered “a literary masterpiece,” has sustained the faith, hope, and joy of the Konkani Christians for centuries. It has “unfailingly consecrated every family gathering,” and it is still “chanted in churches, homes, and even at work in the fields.”⁴² Stephens here achieved a feat of inculturation, one “compared to Thomas Aquinas’ incorporation of Aristotle’s philosophical method into Christianity,”⁴³ and has also “proved that imparting the teachings of Christ to the Indian people did not in any way need imply depriving them of their culture, customs, or traditional way of life.”⁴⁴

The example of Thomas Stephens leaves us with some self-reflection questions: Are we learning our culture, and the culture of the modern day, considering how to make the Gospel present there? Are we using the different mediums of communication available to us, to sustain the faith, hope, and joy of Catholics outside of the liturgy? Perhaps your art, music, Facebook page, podcast, or app, will help bring thousands to the faith like Stephens’ *Kristapurāna*? Rather than being overly afraid of modern-day English culture, let us consider the ways in which we can faithfully and creatively penetrate it with the Gospel afresh.

3. Conclusion

Saint Edmund Campion and Thomas Stephens are English missionaries *par excellence*, with much to teach us who labour in the vineyard of the Lord today. Moved by their example, let us imitate their humility, their dedication to ongoing study, to prayer, to sharing the message of the Gospel rationally, affectively, and creatively, and to working as a team with others no matter how isolated we may seem to be. This paper is no call to reinvent the wheel, but rather a call to do these simple things well now, just as these men did in the sixteenth century. Our holiness, and the salvation of the masses, are not dependant on how hard we try or the “wonder program” we follow, but on fidelity to the

Lord and doing these little things well for him and for his people. These are a few tips that arise from reading about just two missionary men from the sixteenth century, but just think how many more tips you could discover if you picked up another missionary extraordinaire of another time and place to get to know. Keep being inspired by the history of the mission!



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- ⁸ Evelyn Waugh, *Edmund Campion*, 65.
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- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 22.
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The influence of Rome on the early Church in Northumbria

CANON DAVID GRANT

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It will not be new knowledge to most of the readers of this magazine that the Church in Anglo Saxon England and in Northumbria in particular saw itself to be in special relationship with Rome.

Indeed, the slaves seen in the marketplace by St Gregory in the famous story from the *Liber Beatae Gregorii papae* by an anonymous member of the Whitby monastic community during the abbacy of Aelflaed (c. 680–714) were from Northumbria, specifically Deira, the boundaries of which roughly correspond to those of modern county of Yorkshire. It is this source that Bede used in his *History* written in 731. However, it was from the northern province of Northumbria known as Bernica that the three most famous devotees of all things Roman came, namely Biscop Baducing (later known as Benedict Biscop), Wilfrid, and Coelfrith.

In 653 Biscop visited Rome for the first time together with Wilfrid. When Wilfrid and Biscop arrived in Lyons they were given hospitality by the Archbishop. Eddius Stepheus, Wilfrid's biographer refers to the Archbishop as Dalfinus. He is mistaken, as the Archbishop was called Annemundus and his brother Dalfinus was in effect the mayor or effective ruler. Wilfrid, for whatever reason decided to stay longer than anticipated in Gaul but Biscop had made up his mind to press on. Eddius Stephanus describes it thus; "Here his austere guide separated from him, just as Barnabas took leave of Paul on account of John whose surname was Mark." Was it the pull of a more sophisticated culture that drew these young English noblemen to Rome as it was to do with the British aristocrats of later centuries making the grand tour collecting art and experiences, or was it a desire for something deeply spiritual?

Professor Eamonn O Carragain quotes Bede's history when, even on his deathbed, Biscop took delight in speaking again and again, always about the keeping of monastic rules that he had learned and taught, always about the ecclesiastical observances which he had seen throughout all cities he had visited and especially the ones of Rome, about the holy places which he remembered having visited as a young man. He goes on to say:

"Behind Benedict's enthusiasm for what he had seen on his travels there was a theology of the unity of Christ's body in all its members, in heaven and on earth. Both Benedict Biscop and Bede must have been profoundly familiar with the Roman Canon of the Mass. As the Common Preface of the Mass in the old Gelasian sacramentary (c. 670) puts it, if the congregation can think

to address the Father Almighty, this is only because it participates with the angels in Christ's own prayer to His Father;
It is truly right and just, fitting and leading to salvation that at all times in all places to give thanks to thee Lord, Holy Father, almighty and eternal God; through Christ our Lord through whom the angels praise thy majesty, the dominations worship it, the powers are in awe; the Heavens and the Powers of the heavens and the blessed Seraphim join together in celebrating their joy. With these, we pray thee, join our own voices also etc.”

Communion of course is central to our understanding of the Mass then as now. Communion with the Liturgy of Heaven in the life of the Trinity and Communion with all those who constitute the Body of Christ. In the *Communicantes* and *Memoriam venerantes* prayers we have lists of the Apostles and those Saints especially venerated by the Roman Church. The coordination shows that venerating the memory of the Saints and being in communion with them are activities which imply each other. Our Lady, of course, has a place apart and separate from the other names.

Professor O Carragain goes on to say: “Benedict Biscop sought and found in Rome a way of replacing the human loyalties of Northumbrian secular society with equally human links to the Apostles and Martyrs, who already participated in the heavenly liturgy celebrated at Mass.” He was to find in Rome those Churches and Shrines which gave him a tangible link with those Saints with whom he was already in communion spiritually.

Between his first pilgrimage to Rome and the foundation of the monastery at Wearmouth he spent at least two years on the monastic island of Lerins where a form of the Rule of St Benedict had been adopted. After formation in the monastic life (where he had taken the name Benedict) he made his third pilgrimage to Rome and was tasked by Pope Vitalian to assist Theodore of Tarsus (602–690) both on the journey back to England and to help him settle in as Archbishop of Canterbury. Benedict's language skills, contacts and obvious charm must have been invaluable for Theodore, and when they reached Kent he appointed Benedict Abbot of the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul (later to be known as St Augustine's Abbey in honour of its founder). As Benedict and Wilfrid had first become acquainted with Roman Church practices in Canterbury prior to crossing the Channel for the first time he must have been familiar with that monastery founded by St Augustine.

In 674 the monastery at Wearmouth was founded on land provided by King Ecgfrith of Northumbria and Biscop became its first abbot. He then made his fifth pilgrimage to Rome from where he brought back relics, books and church furnishing as he had on his previous visits but this time he also brought back John, abbot of St Martin's one of the two monastic communities who served St Peter's Basilica in Rome, to teach the Northumbrian monks how to sing the chants of the Mass and Divine Office in the Roman fashion. Biscop's skills of persuasion must have been formidable! Evidently the writing down of music had not yet been developed at that time. Abbot John could have only taught Biscop's monks chants which they would memorise and hand on to the next generation, for as noted by St Isidore of Seville (+636) unless

sounds are preserved in the memory they vanish as they cannot be written down. What would Abbot John have seen when he reached distant Northumbria? We know from Bede's *History of the Abbots* that Biscop had brought stonemasons from Gaul who had the skills to build for him a church in the manner of the Romans which he had always loved "*cementarios qui lapideam sibi ecclesiam iuxta Romanorum quem semper amabat morem facerent*". The fact that the stonemasons came from Gaul is significant as we know from St Bede's history that sadly Abbot John never made it back to Rome and that he was buried at the Abbey of St Martin in Tours, which had a close relationship with his own community of St Martin attached to St Peter's Basilica. Professor O Carragain points out that St Peter's alone of the Roman basilicas at that time followed the practice of Tours in celebrating the Feast of the Annunciation. It had been seen as an anomaly to break into Lent to celebrate the Incarnation, but the Prayer over the Offerings used in St Peter's make an explicit link between the Lord's Incarnation and the Paschal mystery: *Accepta tibi sit Domine quaesumus haec oblatio plebis Tuae, quam Tibi offerimus hodie ob Incarnationem simul et Passionem Redemptoris nostril Iesu Christi, Te supplices deprecantes ut placates accipias.*

So, Benedict Biscop and his contemporaries loved the Roman style not just out of aesthetic preference but because *Romanitas* was a constant reminder of being in communion with the Roman church and all which that implied.

Turning to Wilfrid, we learn that when he got to Rome after being detained in Lyons he went first to the oratory of St Andrew where; "He humbly knelt before the altar above which the four Gospels had been placed, and besought the Apostle, in the name of the Lord God for whom he suffered, that the Lord, by his intercession, would grant him a ready mind to both read and teach the words of the Gospels among the nations" (Eddius Stephanus).

Wilfrid's biographer does not tell us if this oratory of St Andrew was that now called St Gregory's on the Caelian Hill or the one of the rotunda tombs built on the spine of Caligula's race track which had been repurposed by Pope Symmachus (498–515) in honour of St Andrew. Wilfrid's church at Hexham was to be dedicated to St Andrew. Wilfrid would also have visited the annular crypt at the shrine of St Peter which had been built by St Gregory the Great. This was a form of crypt which became almost the norm throughout the rest of the city and beyond. True the crypts built by Wilfrid which survive in Hexham and Ripon do not take this form but there is clear evidence of the fact that it was copied elsewhere. Eadmer (1060–1126) the historian says that such a crypt was to be found in Canterbury and that it specifically copied the crypt of St Peter's in Rome. The fine Anglo Saxon church of All Saints at Brixworth, although later than Wilfrid's building, clearly had an annular crypt, and of course Wilfrid's crypts had a separate entrance and exit to keep the flow of pilgrims moving. The churches which Wilfrid and those who shared his goals built in Northumbria and elsewhere must have seemed to the people who experienced them to be the very embodiment of the transcendent. The solidity of stone, the rich colours of the decorations and vestments, glass, Gospel books of vibrancy and variety of design, the Latin chants, incense, and the very Liturgy itself can only have engaged the hearts and minds of a people unused to such things in a way which for us in our highly

sensitized world is nearly impossible to grasp. The whole experience was then elevated further by being able to come into contact with the relics of the Saints brought back from Rome. Eddius Stephanus tells us in his biography of Wilfrid that these were carefully listed. There would have been probably fragments of bone and most often *branda*, pieces of cloth that had been in contact with the relics and even oil from the lamps of the shrines in Rome.

Reused Roman masonry can be seen in the crypts of Hexham and Ripon. Other examples have been found in excavations attempting to discover more about the churches which stood on top of them. Clearly it is common sense to reuse available material, to be found close to the sites where one is building, at Ripon probably the Roman town at nearby Aldborough and Hexham is a relatively short distance from the Roman settlement of Corbridge and Hadrian's Wall. But there was more to this reusing of Roman material than simple utility.

Wilfrid, on his first visit, would have been astounded by the Pantheon; indeed, we still are today. The Eastern Emperor Phocas had given it to Pope Boniface IV and, in 609, it was the first pagan temple in Rome to become a church. This was something which had been profane now been sanctified by being consecrated by the celebration of the Liturgy and the veneration of the Saints. Throughout Rome, there are many signs of such repurposing. One notable example is the Basilica of Cosmos & Damian in the Roman Forum. This might have been a library built by Vespasian (reigned 69–79) and the Basilica's vestibule has been identified as being originally the temple of "Jupiter Stator" an adjacent much earlier building from the 3rd Century B.C.

St Lawrence outside the Walls, which undoubtedly was also visited by Wilfrid, Biscop and their companions, has no less than twenty-four reused columns surrounding what would have been the nave of the Basilica in their time. Amongst the reused pagan door jambs and friezes are two beautiful capitals decorated with martial reliefs of Roman armour and weapons.

The early Anglo-Saxon visitors to Rome would have soon become aware of the Roman practice of celebrating the Liturgy in significant "Station" Churches on the great festivals of the Lord and the martyrs venerated in those churches. In Rome it would be possible for them to take part in these Station liturgies and when they got home altars were erected to those saints they had honoured in the city.

Thus, on the same day as the great festivals were kept in the different basilicas in Rome, they could be replicated as far as possible by a procession and a celebration of the Mass in the different chapels at the altars in those English monasteries dedicated to the same saints. Again, the communion with the Church in Rome and the Church in Heaven was emphasised and made real. The fraternity with the Apostles and Martyrs whose names are mentioned in the Canon of the Mass was brought to mind in the most solemn and significant way possible.

A fairly full stational list was copied from the archetype into the Burchard Gospels, [St Burchard was an English missionary who became the first Bishop of Wurzburg (741–751)] in an Anglo Saxon hand c700, at the top of each page where each Gospel lection began. The surviving material is edited by John Chapman, "Notes on the Early History of the Vulgate Gospels" (Oxford 1908), pp. 51–65. Chapman also helpfully arranges

the Burchard stational list according to the liturgical year, pp. 121–9. The archetype is probably to be dated to the 650's, i.e. to the period of Benedict Biscop's first visit to Rome, as it contains no mention of the Marian Feasts which came into Roman use in the third quarter of the seventh century, nor of later Roman developments; see Chapman, pp. 127–8. O Carragain.

The third significant Northumbrian I want to look at is Coelfrith to whom can be ascribed the survival of the monasteries of Wearmouth/Jarrow in its greatest crisis before the Viking raid of 794.

The three main sources of information about him are an anonymous life by a monk, probably of Jarrow written in the 8th Century, and of course St Bede's History of the English Church & People and the rather short biography in *his Lives' of the Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow*.

It would seem that he entered the monastic life during the abbacy of his brother Cynefrith at the monastery of Gilling in North Yorkshire. Sadly, we do not know if this was Gilling East near Ampleforth or Gilling West near Richmond but he moved on to the monastery founded by St Wilfrid at Ripon. Interestingly it was at Ripon that we first hear of the Rule of St Benedict, or elements of it, being followed in England. It was St Gregory the Great, the spiritual father of the English, who first gives us an account of St Benedict's achievements in his *Dialogues*, a work with which our Northumbrians would have been aware. On his deathbed Benedict Biscop advised his monks:

“Take the greatest care, brothers never to appoint a man as father over you because of his birth; and always appoint from among yourselves, never from outside the monastery. According to the rule of the great St Benedict, our founder, and according to the decretals of privileges of this house, you are to meet as a body and take common counsel to discover who has proved himself the fittest and most worthy by the probity of his life and the wisdom of his teaching to carry out the duties of this office.” (Bede; *Lives of the Abbots of Wearmouth & Jarrow*)

It would seem that, because of various unspecified problems at Ripon when Biscop invited Coelfrith to join him at Wearmouth, he accepted the offer. They became firm friends, and when the sister monastery of Jarrow was founded Coelfrith was appointed Abbot. He was to accompany Biscop on his last pilgrimage to Rome. Eosterwine was appointed abbot and Bede tells us he remained as abbot until his death in 686. After the brief incumbency of Abbot Sigfrid at Wearmouth and the death of Biscop, Coelfrith became the head of both houses.

The greatest crisis came with the plague which was to carry away all the community except for Coelfrith and the young Bede. With amazing fortitude, they kept the usual round of the monastic life, critical of course to preserve the chants which had been taught by Abbot John from Rome. Bede tell us that, after suspending the use of some of the chants for only one week, Coelfrith restarted using them, he instinctively knew that if not used they would have been lost. Only after the plague had passed were they able to rebuild with new recruits the community as intended by its founder as Bede tells

us: “with the help of the boy [Bede himself] with great effort he carried out his resolve until a sufficient number of associates in the Divine Service could be taught by himself or recruited from other places”.

The final chapter of Coelfrith’s life opens with his determination to go on pilgrimage to Rome for the last time. The author of the anonymous life tells us that as well as increasing the libraries of Wearmouth and Jarrow he caused three great pandects to be written, in other words three large complete bibles, one of which still survives and is the oldest complete Latin bible in existence. Its dimensions are 49cms high, 34cms in breadth and 18cms thick and weighs 34kgs. It consists of 1,030 folios (2,060 pages) and it is estimated that the skins of around 1,550 calves would have been needed for the parchment. The fact that three were produced and were so costly in materials and time gives an indication of the wealth of Wearmouth/Jarrow at the time.

We don’t know for certain if this third bible had been specifically made for the Pope, who at the end of Coelfrith’s life was Gregory II. We neither know exactly when it was produced, although it was probably between 690–715.

I would like to think that Coelfrith, with the full support of his community, wanted to present to the Pope a gift which they would see as being commensurate with all that Northumbria had received from Rome. The most precious gift was of course the Faith through the agency of Saints Gregory the Great, Augustine and Paulinus. This was followed by the reality of the Communion with the saints of the Roman church who by association had become the heavenly intercessors of the English church too.

Romanitas is not just the technological and artistic flourishing which is so evident in the society of Benedict Biscop, Wilfrid, Coelfrith and Bede but also the way in which they saw themselves as being part of the universal Church. Coelfrith did not see Rome again, as in 716 he died at Langres in Gaul, and was buried in the monastery there. He was 74 years old. His bible found its way to the *Abbazia di San Salvatore* at Monte Amiata in Tuscany, but it cannot have gone there directly as Coelfrith died in 716, and the abbey wasn’t founded until 745, and of course there is a considerable distance between Langres and Monte Amiata. However, the bible was there for several centuries until 1786 when it came into the possession of the Laurentian Library in Florence, and so is referred to as the *Codex Amiatinus*. In 2018 it returned briefly to England being part of an exhibition at the British Library entitled *Anglo Saxon Kingdoms; Art, Word, War*. A full-sized replica is exhibited at the museum close to St Paul’s Church in Jarrow Hall.

During my three months sabbatical at the English College, I tried to visit as many of the Churches in the City which were probably visited by Biscop, Wilfrid and Coelfrith. Most of those visited by them have changed considerably of course over the centuries but I like to think that the Pantheon, San Clemente, Santa Sabina, Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Santa Maria Antiqua, San Stefano Rotondo, Ss Cosmas & Damiano, San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Sant’Agnese fuori le Mura, and the nearby mausoleum of Santa Constanza would all still be largely recognisable to them.

Some readers are probably saying to themselves “but he has left out such and such a church”. I admit it and would urge you to buy or borrow *The Churches and Catacombs of early Christian Rome. Comprehensive Guide* by Matilda Webb 2001 (reprinted 2010) Sussex Academic Press.

A final note. Readers are probably aware of Monsignor John O'Connor 1870–1952 who was an Irish alumnus of the VEC. A very good biography of him was published in 2010 *The Elusive Father Brown; The Life of Mgr John O'Connor by Julia Smith*. As well as receiving G.K. Chesterton and other luminaries into the Church he had a round church built in Heaton, a suburb of Bradford in 1935. That was unusual in itself in the 1930s but I think its dedication is unique in England Our Lady & the First Martyrs of Rome. What inspired him? Santa Maria ad Martyres (the Pantheon) and/or San Stefano Rotondo, with its graphic paintings of the torments of the first martyrs of Rome painted by Niccolo Circignani. 1517/24–1596. Circignani also painted frescoes in the Church of the English College of course. Too much of a coincidence?



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A Living Tradition of Music

JONATHAN HENRY

The Venerable English College, like almost all seminary communities, has its own living musical tradition which expresses our identity, encompassing something of the history of the house and something of the 21st Century life of the Church. To give one example, just as the early seminarians would sing the *Te Deum* whenever news arrived of a new College martyr (if the legend is to be believed), so now our community stands before the Martyrs' Painting on their Solemnity each year and does likewise. These customs play a small but meaningful role in formation because they convey a relationship between our own experience of the Church and the bigger picture of the universal Church throughout history. This article briefly outlines the recent historical narratives informing today's musical expression in the College.

Our musical expression at present is particularly influenced by two major historical developments, the first of which is the liturgical reforms following the Second Vatican Council. Pope Paul VI's changes to the texts of Mass and the Divine Office in and around 1970, as well as the new emphasis on the use of vernacular languages in the liturgy, rendered much of the music used by the community unusable. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is very little music in the Archives from before the Council: a handwritten organ accompaniment booklet for Compline according to the Gregorian Chant settings survives, complete with myriads of tunes for the *Te Lucis Ante Terminum* assigned for different feasts. Previous editions of *The Venerabile* seem to suggest that the *Liber Usualis* was indeed the usual book: the Diary of 1953 reports that one seminarian was unable to sing at Mass, having "inadvertently picked



Hand-written accompaniments for Pre-Conciliar Compline, probably written in the 1960s.

up his Code of Canon Law” instead of it, while in 1929 each member of the community was generously donated a new edition of the *Liber*, “beautifully bound, with ‘Collegium Anglorum’ and a corresponding number stamped thereon”.¹ With the whole Latin-rite Church literally singing from the same hymnbook, there was no need for the homemade resources we now know and love. Each seminarian would simply bring their copy of the *Liber Usualis*, while professional accompaniment books would have been published for the organists.

SUNDAY VESPERS

I have not kept a week-by-week record of Sunday Vespers, as they are usually fairly straight forward. Consequently there are gaps in my memory of who did what and when. However, I intend here to give an overall impression of how Sunday Vespers have gone this year, to give as full a list as I can of Cantors, and to give a few practical details about Vespers which are a little unusual (eg. Ascension).

At the beginning of my term of office I decided that my chief aim for the year was to revise the per annum setting of Sunday Vespers and to try to encourage a lighter, quicker style of singing of the psalms. Therefore, over the Summer break I went through the Vespers book and wrote new settings for just under half the psalms - sometimes retaining existing antiphons. I also wrote a new setting of the organ canticle; this has proved a little difficult to sing, and at first presented problems, but it now seems to have taken off. I also commissioned four new Magnificat settings for Sunday Vespers from Mike O'Connor, Philip Egan, Joseph Callaghan and Patrick Coleman. At first I had intended to put these in the Vespers booklet itself, but finally decided to make a special book for Magnificats, into which not only these new settings, but also the Anglican Magnificats could be placed. This is a more flexible solution, and also will be better than having numerous pieces of paper everywhere. At the time of writing the Anglican chants have yet to be put into the book, but I hope to reprint them for it in the near future. The new Magnificat settings are intended to be without organ so that they can be used at the Villa. The one by Patrick (n. 3) is a copy of Anglican chant; the other three are rather more unusual, particularly the Notre Dame Magnificat by Mike O'Connor.

On the whole I have been pleased with the way that Vespers have been sung this year - I believe that they have been sung more gently. The new Vespers settings have also been accepted, though not without a little complaining at first.

An excerpt from the Choirmaster's Diary 1983-4.

However, the College Archive contains a great deal of new music created by the seminarians in the late 1960s and early 1970s to respond to the immediate need for settings of the new texts. The 1970 issue of the *Venerabile* provides evidence of the state of affairs in these times of change: “In the Latin Church,” writes diarist Peter Carr, “the pipe organ is held in great esteem. Unfortunately, in the college chapel it is not.”² He goes on to describe the creation of “a music booklet with a selection of guitar and organ accompanied hymns, etc., which have been composed in the college in the last five or six years” for use at Mass, contrasting with the “plainchant” which was at that stage seemingly reserved for the Solemnities of Christmas and Easter.³ Sadly this booklet does not seem to have been preserved in the College Archive. Those artefacts which do survive are primarily for use at sung celebrations of the new Liturgy of the Hours, for which very little “official” music had been provided during the reforms. Vespers booklets were created by the seminarians, with a new and distinctive style. While some musical features of Gregorian chant were initially retained, such as avoiding strict metrical patterns, over the course of several iterations the custom of the house came to be that only the psalms themselves were set to chant, with the antiphons, responsories and canticles sung in a far more contemporary fashion, often featuring remarkable large melodic leaps. These resources are still in use today. The music we sing for Vespers during Ordinary Time is largely unchanged since Peter McGrail “wrote new settings for just under half the psalms — sometimes retaining existing antiphons” in 1983, though the booklet has been reprinted with major formatting and minor musical changes in 2007.⁴

Antiphon 3:



You are the Way, you are the Truth, you, O



Lord are the Life of the world.

After the first half of the verse, all respond :



Al - le - lu - ia.

After the second half, all respond :



Al-le-lu-ia, al-le-lu-ia, Al-le-lu-ia.

The music for the Cantic for Sunday Vespers is still used to this day during Ordinary Time.

It is unclear whether these resources were originally designed for long-term use. Perhaps, just as the disciples anticipated the eschaton during their own lifetimes, the original creators of these booklets expected the second coming of the *Liber Usualis*, possibly even in English translation, during their time at the English College. In reality, the new *Antiphonale Romanum* for Sunday Vespers, containing the Latin Solesmes chants, was published in 2010, forty years after the reforms had been implemented. By that point, if anyone in the house had noticed that the chants had been published, the style of the sung Office in the College had developed so much that it would have been impossible to introduce these official chants on a regular basis. Since 2021 we have sung Morning Prayer for Good Friday and Holy Saturday to versions of these Gregorian settings with English texts, painstakingly adapted by one of our seminarians, but only with a considerable amount of rehearsal time. The fact remains that the Office is primarily sung to music used exclusively by the English College community, composed in-house over the course of fifty years, as a consequence of the liturgical reforms. IFICEL's forthcoming revised translation of the Liturgy of the Hours is to be accompanied by the publication of professional musical settings, then this could prove to be a moment of change.

The second significant influence on our musical traditions today is the Coronavirus pandemic. When the community returned from the “Fourth Exile” in Autumn 2020, congregational singing was initially forbidden. This dramatically altered the shape of the liturgy. On weekdays, the pre-pandemic custom of singing a simple *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* at Mass was fully suspended until March 2022, by which point only a handful of the seminarians and two members of staff were aware that this had been the norm. More significant, however, have been the changes in how we approach music at Sunday Mass. Records from the period 1983-5 show that congregational hymns, accompanied by a wide variety of instruments (such as the cello, recorder, and occasionally the ominously vague “percussion”), were the musical staple at that time.⁵ The College's investment in new *Laudate* hymnbooks as recently as 2006 (at £5.25 per copy) suggests that hymnody had

MASS : Sunday 5th February 1984 (Week 5, cycle A)	
<u>Principal Celebrant</u> : P. Fleetwood	
<u>Deacon(s)</u> : J. O'Brien	
<u>Organist</u> : B. Smith	
<u>Common</u> : Egan, Festival	<u>Accomp</u> : Organ
<u>Entrance</u> : PTL. 180 (2nd Tune) : Praise to the Holiest.	
<u>Penitential Rite</u> : Said	<u>Intoned by</u> : ----
<u>Gloria</u> : Common	<u>Intoned by</u> : Group
<u>Psalm</u> : Simple	<u>Sung by</u> : F. McQuinn
	<u>Accomp.</u> : ----
<u>Alleluia</u> : PTL. 45	<u>Sung by</u> : T. Finigan
	<u>Accomp</u> : ----
<u>Gospel</u> : Said (I hope/think !)	<u>Sung by</u> : ----
<u>Credo</u> : Said	<u>Intoned by</u> : ----
	<u>Accomp.</u> : ----
<u>Offertory</u> : S.P. 132 - Gifts of Bread and Wine . Then organ fill.	
<u>Preface</u> : ----	
<u>Acclamation</u> :	<u>Intoned by</u> :
<u>Pater Noster</u> : Said	<u>Intoned by</u> : ----
	<u>Accomp</u> : ----
<u>Communion</u> : 1. PTL. 68 : Draw Nigh and Take (Not Irish Tune)	
2. Taise : Ubi Caritas. (Group and Cong.)	
3.	
<u>Recessional</u> : Organ Voluntary	<u>Procession Moves</u> : Straight away.
<u>Organ Voluntary</u> : ----	

A record of the music played one Sunday in in 1984, featuring the hymn “Draw Nigh and Take”.

then also been understood as an important part of the liturgical life of the house. Whereas the proper chants for Sunday Mass had been used from time to time before the pandemic, either from the *Graduale* or the *Simple English Propers*, their use greatly increased from 2020 when only cantors were permitted to sing. Even when congregational singing resumed, the requirement for those singing to wear face coverings discouraged many from opting for the proverbial “hymn sandwich” as of old, and proper chants continued to be chosen more frequently. It has subsequently become standard practice for there to be no more than two hymns at a public Mass, unless pastoral considerations suggest otherwise.

Congregational singing was not the only perceived risk during the pandemic: hymn books were falsely accused of transmitting the virus. Once congregational singing was able to continue, single-use Mass sheets with music for each week temporarily made an appearance. This allowed the possibility of having the whole congregation sing the proper chants of the Mass, but more typically provided an English translation for Latin chant sung by the choir and the text of any hymns. Although congregational chant was a nice idea in theory, in practice the effort required to make this possible was not justified by the results, and other than in Holy Week this option hasn’t been taken up at all this academic year. We reverted to using hymn books in May 2022, albeit without consulting the Rector.

While it’s no secret that more than a few members of our community were delighted for proper chants to be more widely used where hymns had become standard, our shift towards chant has not been without its challenges. The most notable of these is our dwindling hymn repertoire. While there are some hymns we can comfortably assume are known by English-speaking Catholics (such as Fr James McAuley’s favourite, *Soul of my Saviour*, sung at almost all his Sunday Masses), the hymns in most regular use at the College are few in number and have rarely been heard before by newcomers to the house. These “VEC hymns” contribute significantly to the sense of College identity, with many of them being requested for Diaconate Ordinations, admission to Candidacy, and institution of ministries in recent years. Examples include *Draw nigh and take*, a translation of a 7th Century Latin Eucharistic text; *The Lord is now about to Enter his Temple*, enriched through Mgr Philip Whitmore’s TTB arrangement for the Schola; and, of course, Ronald Knox’s *O English Hearts*, roared in patriotic fashion by those in the upper years of the house and struggled through by newcomers and visitors on Martyrs’ Day. Our community having a limited repertoire is not ideal, especially as our visitors at public Mass are unlikely to know the few hymns we regularly use, but improving things is a slow process. In the short term we have resorted to singing unfamiliar words to familiar melodies, such as Tallis’ Canon. While this approach ultimately works, it has meant that certain tunes are used so frequently as to be a distraction. Some have even been assigned alternative satirical words. This is therefore not a long-term solution if prayer is the desired result. In the years ahead, broadening the range of congregational hymns is likely to be an ongoing battle.

The College’s music does not only reflect the consequences of these two major historical developments, but also by a more local consideration, namely, the members

who make up our community. In recent years we have been blessed with many talented musicians who have contributed greatly to our traditions, by singing, playing, composing, and adapting music for the College, and much of their work continues to play a role in the life of the house today. This is especially clear in the polyphony sung by the College Schola (*minischolaeque*), as the vast majority of the repertoire has been composed or arranged by staff, students or alumni of the VEC. Since September 2020, the Schola (under the direction of Mr James Finnegan) and various cantor groups have sung works composed or arranged by Mgr Philip Whitmore (*Adam Lay Ybounden*), Fr Andrew Coy (*Ave Maria*), Fr Piotr Wygnanski (*Music for Footwashing*), Mr James Finnegan (*O Sacrum Convivium*), and Mr Ryan Hawkes (*Adoro te Devote*), to name a few. The quality of singing across recent generations of musicians has been such that for many years we have been able to sing Byrd's Passion on Good Friday, and his *Mass for Three Voices* on major feasts. There has also been the very beautiful tradition of marking certain Sundays by singing a polyphonic Magnificat *in alternatim* with congregational plainchant, with special compositions written for this purpose by the seminarians. The influence of individual seminarians on our music is evident, albeit more discretely, in the music sung by the whole house. To give just one example, Fr Tristan Cranfield's *Mass in Honour of Blessed Edward James* is often chosen for use at weekday Masses.

One of the unfortunate consequences of having talented musicians in a community is that they depart. With new seminarians arriving each September and veterans moving on to pastures new, each new year the number of confident singers who are familiar with what we sing (and how we sing it) approximately halves. Similarly, the demographic of the house has been gradually becoming more international, with seminarians and student priests joining from three continents rather than just from England and Wales, meaning that there can be no assumptions made that all seminarians will be familiar with any given music. Furthermore, very practically, the community is not as large as it has been before, which brings its own musical consequences. These factors have exacerbated the challenge of the post-Covid common hymn repertoire. An open-minded approach to resolving these difficulties is needed. For instance, we have begun including music from a broader range of countries, sung by those competent in the original language and/or by all in English translation. The most frequently used of these, *Jesu Din Sote Forening Å Smake* (Jesus, I Long for Thy Blessed Communion), set to a Norwegian folk tune familiar to the Scandinavian contingent in the house, has not been without controversy. Each time it has been sung, yet more Jansenist, Lutheran or simply bad theology has been identified, sparking heated discussion around the dinner table. One exasperated choirmaster adjusted the words to more closely correspond with what Jesus actually said and did, but certain expressions, such as "So that my nature may die in contrition, / And that my spirit may live unto Thee," continue to raise eyebrows. Perhaps more exploration, and adaptation, is needed.

We have seen that the Council, the pandemic, and the local changes to our community have all influenced the state of our music over the course of recent years. At present, at least, there are no immediate concerns that come about from the music that we

use and how we sing it. It may be that in the not-too-distant future it becomes necessary to simplify some of our practical arrangements: we will certainly need new musicians to join the house if we are to sustain some of our more ambitious music, or else we may be forced to let go of certain customs and scale things down. For the present, though, we can be sure that the wonderfully eclectic selection of music used at the VEC builds upon the work of generations of seminarians, expressing a living tradition of singing in the Church and in the College, and that, above all, it is all for the greater glory of God.



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ENDNOTES

- ¹ *The Venerabile*, 16 (1953), 202; *The Venerabile*, 14 (1929), 190.
- ² *The Venerabile*, 15 (1971), 196.
- ³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴ Peter McGrail, Choirmaster's Diary 1983-4, *Archivum Venerabilis Collegii Arnglorum de Urbe (AVCAU)*.
- ⁵ Choirmasters' Diaries, 1983-4 and 1984-5, *AVCAU*.

Memory and Prudence in the Age of the Internet

FR DON WHITE, STL

This essay offers some brief reflections about the impact of the internet upon the moral life. As a starting point, I find it helpful to call attention to this issue in a real-life context. I regularly attend meetings concerning the administration of the Diocese to which I belong. At these meetings, questions arise for the group to consider. Before anyone has time to think, to sift through their memory, and to process thoughts and formulate a response, one of my colleagues, in what seems to be a timeframe of seconds, searches the Internet on his latest iPhone, and gives an answer. He demonstrates a great ability to extract information from the World Wide Web. The rest of us in the meeting do not bother about extracting information from our memories because our colleague ensures that the internet provides any recollection that we need. This story highlights what Clive Thompson argues, cited by Nicolas Carr, that the internet has become an “outboard brain,” taking on the part that memory usually exercises.¹ Carr describes a significant issue for our time. He outlines how the internet is an intrusion into the collective human memory that threatens our personhood and culture.²

Carr argues that the internet is an “artificial memory” that can displace the human “biological memory.”³ He asks, “should this not be liberating?” Does it not free up energy and provide an easy source and depth of information?⁴ Carr responds with a negative answer to these questions saying that the internet causes the human memory to become shallow and diffused.⁵ He points out that the human memory is a living phenomenon expanding with the growth of the brain and its intellectual power.⁶ Carr says that because we make our intelligence stronger when we store new long term memories, we need to be careful that the internet is used only to complement our memories not to replace them.⁷ So if, as Carr posits, the internet can have a negative impact on the memory, it is important to consider the implications of a diminished memory for the moral life. It is a question that Mary Carruthers considers.⁸

Carruthers recalls Saint Thomas Aquinas’ doctrine that memory is part of the moral virtue of prudence.⁹ Drawing upon Saint Thomas, Carruthers argues (1) that prudence is dependent upon memory, (2) that memory is enhanced by repetition or habit, and (3) that memory as a habit has a role to play in the perfection of prudence.¹⁰ Her conclusion hinges on the Thomist view that memory is a habit which needs practice or training if it is not to decline.¹¹

Carruthers recalls Saint Thomas’ observation that human craft is acquired through habit.¹² Habit is the disposition of repeatedly acting in a particular way that makes things well.¹³ So, human memory as a habit is formed by practice; it is a habit of retention.¹⁴ The usefulness of memory as a habit then, lies in its ability to be nurtured or trained, and as a habit, memory has its part in the perfection of the virtue of prudence.¹⁵ As Carruthers points out, for Saint Thomas, prudence as an intellectual virtue needs memory.¹⁶ She recalls

Saint Thomas' understanding of prudence is knowing how to do well.¹⁷ It is a virtue that is "necessary not only for a person to become good, but to be able to lead a good life."¹⁸ Prudence finds its perfection from practice and grace.¹⁹ A trained memory is important in developing one's aptitude for prudence.²⁰ So, Carruthers concludes that a diminished memory has implications for the moral life by the effect it has on the perfection of the virtue of prudence.²¹

So, in light of Carruthers' outline drawn from Saint Thomas, that memory has a part in the perfection of prudence, and returning to Carr's argument, that the internet causes a decline in memory, the proposition emerges: the constant use of the World Wide Web with its effect on memory can cause difficulty in perfecting the virtue of prudence. Simply, the internet causes the loss of the habit of memory which in turn affects the perfection of prudence. When joined together, the arguments of Carruthers and Carr draw us to the conclusion that the cultivation and the practice of memory are not just needed for scholarly reasons, but for moral reasons as well.²² Therefore, the internet, which on the one hand can be so productive for scholarly purposes, on the other hand may become an obstacle to acting in a prudent way.

Considering the above arguments, it is useful to apply them to the example of my colleague that I outlined at the start of this paper. By often using the internet during our meetings, my colleague seeks to do good by providing the benefit of knowledge that comes from the World Wide Web. However, in light of the arguments of Carr and Carruthers together, he is unintentionally playing a part in the diminishment of memory by constantly using the internet which in turn affects the perfection of prudence.

In conclusion, it is worth noting Carr's reference to the philosopher Seneca: regarding knowledge, we should be like bees, diligently turning what we have collected into a sweet nectar.²³ So too with our use of the internet. It brings many benefits to humanity. The task is to keep focused on the good that the internet can bring, and for that, one needs the virtue of temperance and its moderating influence to restrain and direct intelligence towards the good.



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- ² *Ibid.*, 197.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 180.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 182.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 194.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 190.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 192.
- ⁸ Mary Carruthers. *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 56-89.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, 84. Carruthers draws on Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 79, a. 7.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 81.
- ¹³ *ST* I-II, q. 49, a. 4.
- ¹⁴ Mary Carruthers. *The Book of Memory*, 80.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 84.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 83.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
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- ²⁰ *Ibid.*
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 88.
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 178.

Called to Share the Father's Love for Humanity's Future

A Scriptural and Patristic Perspective on Eschatological Cooperation in the Age of Anthropogenic Existential Risks

FR PETER WYGNANSKI, STL

As the 16th day of July 1945 came to a close, the sun set over a changed world. For the first time, humanity had detonated an atomic bomb, and after the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki later that year, society struggled to come to terms with the forces unleashed. Amidst the cacophony of devastation and the uproar of anti-nuclear movements, there were those who caught whispers of a dark threshold quietly crossed. One such thinker, Bertrand Russell, stood in the House of Lords to describe the shadow of a new kind of threat:

We do not want to look at this thing simply from the point of view of the next few years; we want to look at it from the point of view of the future of mankind. The question is a simple one: Is it possible for a scientific society to continue to exist, or must such a society inevitably bring itself to destruction? ... As I go about the streets and see St. Paul's, the British Museum, the Houses of Parliament, and the other monuments of our civilization, in my mind's eye I see a nightmare vision of those buildings as heaps of rubble, surrounded by corpses.¹

Russell recognised that the development of nuclear weapons marked the dawn of a new age: humanity had become its greatest risk to itself. Adam and Eve, in eating the forbidden fruit, opened the way to individual death, but we have now “eaten more deeply of the fruit of the tree of knowledge” and are now “face to face with a second death, the death of mankind.”² An antithesis of God's *creatio ex nihilo*, we have obtained our own absolutising power, the “*potestas annihilationis*, the *reductio ad nihili*.”³

A philosophical response to this new power suggests that threat of nuclear apocalypse is but one example of a category of *anthropogenic existential risks* (AXRs). Other self-caused threats to humanity's future potential also include engineered pandemics, human-caused climate change, and unaligned artificial intelligence, all of which could cause existential catastrophe. Further AXRs still await discovery, and we have no reason to believe these will be less hazardous.⁴ Without action, the danger

humanity creates for itself will continue to grow and Ord, from Oxford's Future of Humanity Institute, argues such increasing risk is unsustainable. We will either learn to mitigate existential risks or one of them will eventually play out, causing a permanent loss of humanity's potential. In the past, survival could be taken for granted as natural threats to the human species are vanishingly rare on the timescale of human history, and technology had yet to develop existential threats of its own making. Yet Ord warns that now our "long-term survival requires a deliberate choice to survive."⁵ He illustrates his point by describing humanity in its adolescence, in urgent need of moral maturation; "just coming into our power, just old enough to get ourselves in serious trouble."⁶ We would certainly be foolish to neglect mitigating natural existential risks,⁷ but the possibility of human agency playing a role for species survival, by causing or mitigating anthropogenic risks, poses unique philosophical and theological questions.

How might a Christian respond to these? Why not scepticism? The psalmist assures that "the righteous shall inherit the land and live in it forever (Ps 37:29);" Jesus himself told us not to worry about tomorrow for "today's trouble is enough for today (Matt. 6:34)," and asked, "can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life (Luke 12:25-26)?" Trust in providence, however, now coexists with awareness that good choices contribute to long and healthy living. By analogy, when any given generation's influence over mankind's long-term potential was negligible, trust was the believer's disposition towards the future. Now, however, faith in divine providence must coexist with awareness that our choices make a real difference for, and could even destroy, the future of humanity. I propose, on Newmanian terms, that theology needs to assimilate awareness of the *potestas annihilationis*, and so long as no discontinuity of principles arises, any theological implications and adjustments inferred by the discovery of AXRs would constitute authentic development of dogma.⁸ There is much to learn about humanity's role within salvation history from even a brief return to the sources of faith in light of this new power. Assuming dystopian scenarios are the reserve of science fiction has become a dangerous option because we will not get a second chance if that assumption is proved wrong.

Before all else, Genesis reveals a fatherly love. God's will that humanity be fruitful (Gen. 1:28) culminates in His promise to make Abraham's "descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky (Gen. 26:4)." Even in the fifth century Augustine understood it was "nonsensical to be sure there are not stars that cannot be seen,"⁹ and we now know of at least two trillion galaxies, each with billions of stars.¹⁰ Perhaps God's promise to Abraham can be taken literally after all? We know of no reason why humanity could not survive for millions of years,¹¹ so we discover the possibility of "a truly staggering number of descendants, with the time, resources, wisdom, and experience to create a diversity of wonders unimaginable to us today."¹²

This vast potential future need not be dismissed as fanciful, for Jesus' commissions of evangelisation show no temporal limitation. In Matthew, the charge to "make disciples of *all* nations (Matt. 28:19, emphasis added)," given at the ascension, binds expectation of the Lord's return to a universal mission, in response to Jesus' promise to be with us "to the end of the age (Matt. 28:19)." Jesus's lordship is not limited to

the world as known to his time on earth, as the Easter liturgy reminds us: “He is the Alpha and Omega, to whom all time belongs.”¹³ When the first Christians realised Jesus was not coming back soon, they realised the Church had a future of service to “a cosmic Lord,” with a horizon of discipleship “as wide as the world.”¹⁴

Saint Paul’s letters exemplify the broad scope of the call to evangelise, as “the horizons of Christian mission are pushed beyond the ethnic boundaries of Jew and gentiles to embrace the entire universe.”¹⁵ Colossians celebrating how the Gospel grows in “the whole world (Col. 1:6),” and Ephesians lauding God’s “plan for the fullness of time (Eph. 1:9-10).” Certainly, by the time of writing of 2 Peter, the acceptance of the delay of the Parousia, and the significance therein for the Church’s mission, were firmly established: The Lord, to whom “a thousand years are like one day” is being patient with humanity, “not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance (2Pet. 3:8-9).”

On such scriptural foundations, the spread of the Gospel became a measure of *readiness* for the Fathers of the Church, who prayed that salvation is not drawn to a close too soon that humanity might have the best possible chance to accept the Gospel in Augustine’s “time of mercy.”¹⁶ Along these lines, Hays and his collaborators from the Oxford Postdoctoral Colloquium on Eschatology have argued from the Tradition that we cooperate within salvation history, and that the time of the eschaton is not just unknown, but un-fixed, contingent in some way on the action of humanity.¹⁷ Many of the Fathers of the Church believed the eschatological timetable *can* be “delayed or hastened by the piety, prayers, and penitence of God’s people.”¹⁸ Justin Martyr explains that “God delays causing the confusion and destruction of the whole world... because of the seed of the Christians, who know that they are the cause of preservation in nature.”¹⁹ Likewise, Tertullian prays for “emperors, for their ministers and for all in authority, for the welfare of the world, for the prevalence of peace, for the delay of the final consummation.”²⁰ Perhaps contingency helps to explain why Jesus tells his disciples that He does not know “the hour (Mark 13:32):” Our Lord says plainly that the “good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; *and then the end will come* (Matt. 24:14).”

Bringing the *fixity* of the eschaton into question has considerable ramifications for a Catholic response to AXRs, particularly considering human freedom, which “has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back (CCC §1861).” To paraphrase Newman, in my freedom and human weakness, I can fail to do the definite service God has created me for. *I can fail to live out my vocation*, and even a committed Augustinian notion of perseverance as entirely God’s gift maintains that “a man who does not persevere fails by his own fault.”²¹ By analogy, if human flourishing has a role to play in God’s plan for the last-things, and humanity itself can *utterly fail* by self-destruction through AXRs, then we must take seriously the idea that anthropogenic extinction could just be that, humanly, *not divinely*, caused. A cosmos without humanity is now conceivable, something Aquinas considered as an impossible supposition.²² I therefore make a bold, but simple, claim: Awareness of humanity’s newfound *potestas annihilationis* exposes a presumption that humanity will persevere until some appointed end moment. In the past, if human history were to be ending

through some natural cause, a believer would have recourse to an eschatological explanation. Apocalyptic interpretation, however, cannot be uncritically applied to AXRs. Do believers have grounds to presume the Parousia would be triggered in response to mankind's self-extinction so as to ensure the end of humanity and the end of creation be coterminous?

I contend that theology cannot now remain unchanged because the *potestas annihilationis* was unthinkable throughout the formation of dogma. Pannenberg's view that "what is undoubtedly true in science cannot be wrong in theology"²³ suggests we need to consider the possibility that, by failing to mitigate AXRs, humanity *could* fail to live the fullness of life God would otherwise will for it. Some might argue that anthropogenic extinction would just be the final catastrophe scripture foretells, but to resist shouldering new responsibility on such apocalyptic terms constitutes little more than a projection of human failure onto a diminished eschatological screen, counsel to despair. Hays' case that the end of history is temporally undetermined establishes contingency on humanity *succeeding* to live out God's will, not on humanity failing, as if the eschaton were in some way history's safety net in case of man-made calamity. God trusts and hopes that we mature and develop the moral capacity necessary to mitigate the risks to our future we cause for ourselves.²⁴

Consider a Christian adjustment of Ord's adolescent humanity: our species can be thought of as a young person, with both a vocation to sanctity and the capacity to squander it. Our loving God wills that His child grow in virtue and make the necessary choices to protect and answer His call. Like a young believer, humanity must now make a concerted effort to face the challenges to growth in the life of grace, and this does not exclude trusting in providence. Let us not forget that the command to take nothing for the journey, "no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money (Luke 9:3)" was not the last word on the matter. After the disciples learned to trust in God, Jesus instructs them that "the one who has a purse must take it, and likewise a bag (Luke 22:35-37)." As the mission on which Christ's followers were sent became more demanding, a pragmatism was embraced.²⁵ The challenges that face the spread of the Gospel now include threats to our very survival, so we too must adapt to protect our future from ourselves. We can thus collectively cooperate with grace, to answer God's calling for humanity. With *potestas annihilationis* comes great responsibility, to ensure our descendants receive the best possible chance of living out their vocations, to pass on the gifts of life, faith, and the conditions and environment that make those possible. On these terms, hope for future health and wellbeing does not entail the eschatological reductionism such thought might otherwise attract. We do well to follow Augustine: "Belief in the city of God does not mean that the earthly city is a point of indifference. The earthly city strives for peace, an end it shares with the City of God, as the two cannot be thought about as radically different as in this present transitory world, they are interwoven and mingled with one another."²⁶ One need not surrender belief in a transcendent finalising moment that will occur *in history* to have a sense of accountability, and legitimate hopes, for humanity and the Church in the time, of indeterminate length, between today and the Parousia.

Like the first Christians, we too face a little-evangelised world, and so are also grateful for the time of mercy, the opportunity to make disciples of all nations, including the potential trillions of descendants to come. If human history is just the beginning, if we are in the earliest time of the Church, then God could well bestow countless future graces: saints will be raised up, sinners will be forgiven, theologians will explore new depths, the faithful will experience new heights of spiritual experience, carried higher by new insights into the nature of prayer, fostered by the cumulative enrichment of religious tradition. Saint Peter could not have foreseen the baroque basilica that now stands at the place of his last earthly moments. The early Church could not have imagined the beauty of Durufle's motets on Gregorian themes. Augustine could not benefit from the spiritual exercises of Ignatius, Bonaventure had no way of anticipating the personalism of Saint John Paul II. The Church will be more and more at home in the spiritual richness that the human experience can offer, and perhaps, with the opportunity of millennia, even discover modes of spiritual experience, or categories of theological value, which are unknown today.²⁷ We rightly believe that the major event in Christian life has already happened in the paschal mystery, and we await the day when the Lord will draw all things to himself. Nonetheless, we can look forward to the future of humanity and wonder what prayer and worship we are blind to, what music are we deaf to. Let us dare to hope the Church has a long and bright future, and let us be unsettled by the threat of that future being lost: In light of scriptural and patristic sources, I have sketched out some conditions of possibility for allowing these sentiments of love and concern for our distant future without fear of doctrinal discontinuity. However, moral judgement is one thing, action is quite another.

Safeguarding humanity's potential tomorrow involves making sacrifices today, and faith might make its greatest contribution to mitigating AXRs by providing Christian reasons for motivating costly action. A post-Christian worldview lacks evaluative resources for adequately relating to humanity's future, having set aside beliefs which forged and sustained links between generations. Scheffler, for example, explains that many "experience the poverty of our evaluative thought about the future as a form of privation," recognising "an inchoate sense that other generations matter to us in ways that we cannot easily explain,"²⁸ so he, Ord, and others, develop theories of value, *axiologies*, with which one might find underappreciated reasons why we should care about the future of humanity. Faith can provide compelling and greatly needed reasons why the future matters, inspiring believers to act in charity towards our descendants.

Christians aspire to turn to the past with faith, the present with love, and the future with hope, but these triads can be paired in other ways. I propose that faith in the Gospel received from the past also shows how hope can shine more brightly in the present by a *love of the future*. We need to learn to appreciate the blessings to come in a new way, and a dialogical study of the future axiologies offered by philosophy helps express the rich evaluative resources available to the Christian imagination for overcoming temporal parochialism. Catholics are particularly good at experiencing meaningful communion with those in the distant past. Can we not

do so for the distant future too? The stakes are potentially little less than human life itself, and with it the very phenomena of prayer, beauty, and value. In learning to love the future, we can grow not only in fraternity, but in parental love, the desire to “bring life into existence out of nothing... which begins even before any child exists” and does not attach any conditions for the beloved, “it only wants him to be.”²⁹ Sharing in the Father’s desire that our descendants will be able to praise Him and follow Him as best they can, we learn to love and protect humanity’s future. God realises his promises in the time to come, but that future is now, at least partly, in humanity’s hands.



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- ³ Günter Anders, as cited and translated in U Körtner, *The End of the World: A Theological Interpretation*, (Westminster, 1995), 181.
- ⁴ For a description of the full range of known existential risks, see Nick Bostrom, “Existential Risks: Analysing Human Extinction Scenarios and Related Hazards,” *The Journal of Evolution and Technology*, vol. 9, No. 1 (2002).
- ⁵ Toby Ord, *The Precipice* (Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2020), 191.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.
- ⁷ For more explanation of natural risks see Toby Ord, “Natural Risks”, 67ff.
- ⁸ See Chapter 5 *Genuine Developments Contrasted with Corruptions* in John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1989).
- ⁹ Augustine, *City of God*, Penguin Classics (London ; New York: Penguin Books, 2003), XVI, 23.
- ¹⁰ Davide Castelvecchi, “Universe Has Ten Times More Galaxies than Researchers Thought,” *Nature*, November 14, 2016.
- ¹¹ Toby Ord, 217ff.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, 21.
- ¹³ “The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night”, in *The Roman Missal*, 2010, §11.5.
- ¹⁴ Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller, *The Biblical Foundations for Mission* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 1983), 208.
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- ¹⁶ Augustine, *The Works of Saint Augustine*, vol. 1, Sermons on the Old Testament, 20-50 (New City Press, 1990), 369.
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- ¹⁸ Hays et al., 100ff.
- ¹⁹ Justin Martyr, *Opera Quae Exstant Omnia*, vol. 6, Patrologia Graeca (Paris: Apud J.-P. Migne, 1857), 2 Apol., 1:190, 456.
- ²⁰ Tertullian, *Opera Omnia*, vol. 1, Patrologia Latina (Paris: Brepols, 1844), Apol. 39, 3:46, 532.
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- ²⁴ For proposed practical steps see Toby Ord, “Safeguarding Humanity”, 187ff.
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- ²⁶ Augustine, *City of I*, II.I, Book I, preface.
- ²⁷ Such ideas are a Christianisation of a mode of thought characteristic of Ord, cf. Toby Ord, 237-238.
- ²⁸ Samuel Scheffler, *Why Worry About Future Generations?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 86.
- ²⁹ Jonathan Schell, 175.

News from the College Archives 2021–22

MAURICE WHITEHEAD

Visits from researchers

Following the restrictions caused by Covid-19 from March 2020 until the full re-opening of the College Archives to researchers from outside Italy in September 2021, the Schwarzenbach Reading Room has been a busy place.

Between September 2021 and July 2022, 61 researchers investigating a wide range of subjects came to consult a total of 120 volumes or files of archival material. The largest number came from Italy (45), followed by the UK (6), the USA (6), Germany (2), Mexico (1), and South Africa (1).

This substantial increase, from the 48 researchers welcomed in 2018–19, has placed considerable demands on the current infrastructure: among other things, it has highlighted the need for an additional member of staff to help run the Archives — a matter which has now been addressed and which will hopefully be resolved early in the academic year 2022–23.

Official visitors

As in previous years, a large number of official visitors to the College have expressed an interest in seeing and learning about the Archives. These have included:

- Jane Leek, William Kent, and Steffen Eisenbusch, senior staff respectively from the Amsterdam, London, and Düsseldorf offices of Porticus, the foundation funding the current three-year project to catalogue the College Archives, to review progress on that project (15 October 2021)
- Andrew R. Nicoll, Deputy Head of Archives, Historic Environment Scotland, Edinburgh (26 October 2021)
- The Most Reverend Wayne Lawrence Lobsinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Hamilton, Ontario (12 November 2021)
- Father Robert Godding, SJ, Director of the Société des Bollandistes, Brussels (22 November 2021)
- Her Excellency Caroline Weijers, Ambassador of The Netherlands to the Holy See, together with her consort, Mr Arjuna Kannangara (29 November 2021)
- Professor Dries Vanysacker, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, and Secretary of the *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique / Louvain Journal of Church History* (6 December 2021)

- Dr Anabel Inge, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy to the Holy See (12 January 2022)
- Susanah Gwyn-Jones (*née* Watts-Russell) and Rollo Gwyn-Jones, collateral descendants of Julian Watts-Russell (1850–67), whose monument is located in the College church (18 March 2022)
- Franco Pavan, lutenist and professor at the *Conservatorio di musica «Evaristo Felice Dall'Abaco»*, Verona, and at the *Conservatorio di musica San Pietro a Majella*, Naples (20 March 2022)
- The Master (Christopher Vermont), Wardens, and members of the Commonalty of the Mercers' Company of the City of London (9 April 2022)
- University College Dublin FOCUS missionary team — Alanna Bradley, Moses Chan, Sean Flack, and Áine Lee (2 May 2022)
- The Right Reverend Dr Michael Harrison, Suffragan Bishop of Dunwich, Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich (6 May 2022)
- Anthony McClaran, Vice-Chancellor, St Mary's University, Twickenham, and Mrs Mary-Ann McClaran (20 May 2022)
- Kemi Badenoch, MP for Saffron Walden and Minister for Faith, accompanied by Christopher Trott, British Ambassador to the Holy See (24 May 2022)
- Sixteen members of the Roman Association (25 May 2022)
- Robin and Jane Handley, Australian relatives of the late Archbishop Francis Grimshaw of Birmingham (26 May 2022)
- Dr Mark Byford, Chiswick, London (13 June 2022)
- Nigel Dawbney-Fisher, Head of Internal Audit, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, London and Durham, accompanied by Fr Anthony Churchill (16 June 2022)
- Gian Maria Celardi, Avvocato, Bussoletti Nuzzo & Associati, Rome (18 June 2022)
- Woody and Catherine Kerr, New York City (28 June 2022)
- John McAleer, Head of Theology, Harrow School, London (4 July 2022).

Visits of masters and doctoral students

As news of the greater opening-up of the College Archives has spread in recent years among the academic community worldwide, an increasing number of academic institutions have requested visits for masters and doctoral students keen to learn about the history of the College and its archives, and to gain some generic archival experience through workshop activities using some of the available records.

During the past year, we have welcomed, for workshop sessions in the College Archives, the following groups:

- University of Edinburgh History of Art Masters' students, 9 in total, led by Professor Carol Richardson (2 May 2022). On the evening of 2 May, Carol Richardson gave a talk to the staff and students of the College on the history of the College Church.
- Northern Bridge Consortium Doctoral Training Partnership (*comprising the universities of Durham, Newcastle, Northumbria, Sunderland, Teesside, Queen's*

Belfast, and the University of Ulster) Rome Residential Trip for 13 doctoral students and three members of staff, based primarily at The British School at Rome, on the theme of ‘Cross-Disciplinary Discoveries’ (6 June 2022)

- Sangalli Institute, Florence, 14 doctoral students following a week-long course in Rome entitled ‘The Central Archives of the Religious Orders and their Educational Institutions in Rome’. In line with the theme of the course, the lectures and archival workshop provided at the Venerable English College focused on the surviving records produced during the period of Jesuit administration of the College, from 1579 until 1773 (14 June 2022)



An archival workshop for Northern Bridge doctoral students in the Third Library, 6 June 2022

On 8 July 2022, for a more junior audience of 60 students from Wimbledon College, London, including 45 members of the College choir, all visiting Rome with six members of the staff, I provided a brief overview talk on the history of the English Hospice and the VEC. This was followed by an illustrated talk entitled “Finding God in all things: Christopher Maire, SJ (1697–1767), a Durham cartographer in Enlightenment Italy”, outlining the story of the remarkable former rector of the College, from 1744 to 1750, who in 1755, together with his Croatian Jesuit colleague, Ruđer Josip Bošković (1711–1787), calculated with great precision the previously unknown meridional circumference of the Earth.

The visitors from Wimbledon College concluded their visit with their own College choir testing the contrasting acoustics both of the Martyrs’ Chapel and of the College church as a warm-up prior to their singing at Mass in St Peter’s in Rome for the feast of St Benedict on 11 July.



The choir of Wimbledon College testing the acoustics of the Martyrs’ Chapel, under the baton of their Director of Music, Ifor Thomas, 8 July 2022

Extending Stonyhurst College’s Persons Fellowship scheme to the VEC, 2021–22

In 2010, to mark the 400th anniversary of the death of Fr Robert Persons, SJ (1546–1610), the Stonyhurst Association — the alumni and alumnae association of Stonyhurst College, Lancashire — created and funded a new Persons Fellowship. This was to salute the memory of Persons as founder in 1593 of the English College at Saint-Omer in the Spanish Netherlands, more commonly known as St Omers College, which continues its work down to the present day as Stonyhurst College.

The aim of this annual scheme is to allow a postgraduate former student of Stonyhurst College, or indeed of any other school within the trusteeship of the British Jesuits, the opportunity of working for a period of up to one year as an intern in the Collections, Archives, and Historic Libraries at Stonyhurst: a Persons Fellow thereby both gains work experience in the cultural heritage sector and develops a range of personal skills.

For more than a decade, the Fellowship has attracted applications from able candidates with degrees in the arts and humanities and has proved highly successful. Though not every appointee to date has necessarily gone on to work in the heritage sector at the end of the Fellowship period, all the postgraduates have developed personal skills in a unique environment, while also contributing significantly to the development of Stonyhurst’s heritage collections.

In 2020, on the tenth anniversary of the launching of the Fellowship, the VEC approached both Stonyhurst College and the Stonyhurst Association with the following question: given that Fr Robert Persons was twice rector of the VEC, first in 1588–89, prior to the founding of St Omers College, and then from 1598 until his death and subsequent burial in the VEC church in 1610, might there be an opportunity of building an international dimension into the existing Fellowship scheme by means of a work placement experience in the VEC Heritage Collections?

The suggestion was warmly received and in 2021, for the first time, the VEC was brought into the Fellowship scheme: indeed, to give the new development a flying start, the Stonyhurst Association generously agreed to cover the full cost of the first placement at the VEC.

Happily, William Jolleys, a Stonyhurst alumnus who graduated in History at the University of Edinburgh in the summer of 2021, secured the Persons Fellowship for 2021–22 and came out to Rome on a three-month work placement from mid-October 2021 to mid-January 2022. As William had previously worked twice on placements in the VEC Archives — first, entirely on his own initiative as a self-funded volunteer during his gap year in 2017, and again in 2019 on a scholarship funded by the British Province of the Society of Jesus, he hit the ground running.¹ During his time in Rome, William undertook a large range of useful tasks, including laying the foundations of an on-line

virtual library of historical reference material relating to English and Welsh Catholic history which is being developed as an integral part of the VEC's current Porticus archival project (2021–24).

All in all, the experiment of adding an international dimension to the Persons Fellowship has been deemed a great success by all parties — and one worth continuing and developing — and the VEC is now exploring ways of sustaining financially a three-month Roman placement as part of the scheme in the future.



William Jolleys, the College's first Persons Fellow, in the Schwarzenbach Reading Room, January 2022

The on-going daily work of the Archives

Thanks to our project funding from Porticus, day by day the immense task of cataloguing the College Archives is carried forward by our wife-and-husband team, Elisabeth Lemmens Ickx and Johan Ickx.

Among many other activities, over the past year many thousands of names from the indexes to College account books dating back to 1579 have been added to our ever-growing electronic catalogue. The value of this work is already paying dividends, with researchers being able to locate archival material much more quickly than hitherto.

The detailed work of the project has highlighted, in particular, an exceptionally important part of the Archives — the thousands of documents relating to the Abbey of San Savino at Piacenza, which Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585), gave to the Venerable English College as its main endowment in 1581. Then located in the Duchy of Parma, the extensive abbey lands, comprising some two hundred properties, kept the College afloat financially for over two hundred years until the portfolio was lost in the 1790s.

Through collaboration with the Archivio di Stato di Parma, where another large cache of material relating to the Piacenza properties and the Venerable English College survives, we have managed to launch a pilot project to explore this hitherto forgotten aspect of College history. This involved, over a period of two centuries, at least one College procurator being resident in Piacenza, ensuring that rental incomes were redirected down to Rome to support the College and the future clergy in training for the English and Welsh mission.

With financial support from the Banca di Piacenza, a study day is planned for Saturday 24 September 2022 to begin unpacking this hidden history. During the academic year 2021–22, a team of four Italian scholars in the north of Italy and Emma Wall, a final

year Durham PhD student, have been working on the San Savino materials in Parma and Rome respectively and they will be presenting their first findings at the September 2022 day conference.

Emma Wall was our first Northern Bridge intern in the Archives, from October 2019 until the end of February 2020, just days before the first lockdown in Rome. Having done excellent work during that period, she was invited back to help with our Piacenza project and, happily, Emma managed to secure a travel and study grant from the Catholic Record Society in London. This enabled her to begin work on the Piacenza material in the College Archives during a six-week study period which ended early in July 2022.



Emma Wall at work on Piacenza material in the College Archives, 24 June 2022

We look forward both to hearing and reading about Emma's research findings concerning the College's many activities in Piacenza over a period of more than two centuries and to discovering how this locks into the larger picture of the history of San Savino being researched by Italian scholars.

Donations of archival material, 2021–22

The College Archives continue to attract donations of pertinent material. During the past year the following items have been received:

- A red leather-bound volume of printed *Reports of the Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas de Urbe* (Shrewsbury, 1900–1909), bearing the inscription 'Roman Association Vol. 4', donated by Fr Paul Keane. This volume was clearly bound by Canon Aloysius Thomas O'Toole (1863–1927) of Shrewsbury, for many years Treasurer of the



Roman Association: it is the companion to Volume 5 of the same series, covering the years 1911 to 1913, donated by Fr Keane some years ago.

If any reader knows of the whereabouts of Volumes 1, 2, and 3 of this series, the College Archives would be keen to hear, please!

- Three photographic albums and a small collection of personal papers of Fr Anthony Grimshaw (1936–2016), documenting his years at the VEC, donated by his brother, Peter Grimshaw, through the good offices of Lawrence Gregory.
- The personal papers of Monsignor Bryan George Chestle (1933–2019), through the good offices of Monsignor Anthony Wilcox.

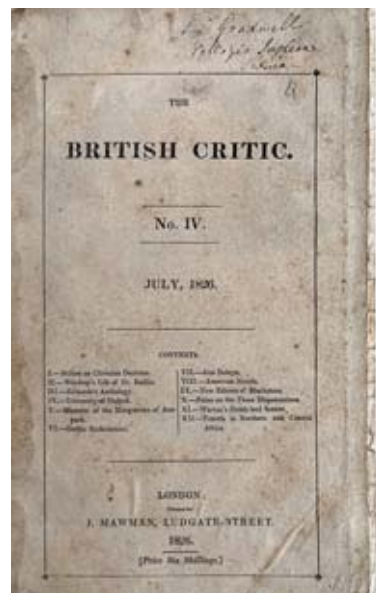
From the Chestle numismatic collection, Monsignor Wilcox kindly selected and donated to the VEC Heritage Collections four coins dating from important periods in the history of the English presence in Rome. As illustrated below, these comprise:

- a silver penny from the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042–1066) and the latter years of the *Schola Saxonum*, or early Saxon settlement in Rome, close to St Peter's;
- a gold quarter noble from the reign of Edward III and the time of the foundation of the English Hospice in 1362;
- a half groat from the reign of Henry VII and the time of Cardinal Christopher Bainbridge (1462/3–1514);
- a groat from the reign of Henry VIII and the time of the break with Rome and the end of the English Hospice as a royal institution in 1538.

Additionally, James Mangino and his family, of North Haven, Connecticut, friends of the late Bryan Chestle, presented to the Archives' reference library in April 2022, in his memory, a set of forty-four modern volumes on aspects of the history of Rome, a very useful addition to our collections. These thoughtful gifts — and other gifts of books, from Dr Alexander Koller, Fr John Metcalfe, Dr Emily Michelson, Dr Ubaldo Morozzi, Fr Anthony Pateman, and Fr Gerard Skinner, are all greatly appreciated.

In many ways, the most remarkable donation during the year was something of a 'repatriation'. During recent work on the rare book collection at Oscott College, Birmingham, there came to light a set of five volumes of *The British Critic*, a quarterly review journal which ran from 1793 to 1843, and subscribed to by Dr Robert Gradwell (1777–1833) during his time as Rector of the Venerable English College (1818–28). Indeed Gradwell's signature is clearly visible on the title-page reproduced below.

Quite how the five volumes, covering the years 1825 and 1826, were acquired by Oscott



remains unclear, but we are grateful to the Trustees of Oscott College for returning them to their original home through the good offices of Fr Paul Keane.

Towards the future of the VEC Heritage Collections: a generous donation

In May 2022, the College received the very welcome news that Pam Coote had made a generous donation of £150,000 towards the cleaning, restoration, and cataloguing of the College's collection of nearly 15,000 rare books. Pam and her late husband Nick have been very generous friends and supporters of the College for many years.

Pam has been following the development of the Archives with keen interest. The College is very grateful indeed to her for this welcome gift, which matches the sum received from Porticus in 2021 for the cataloguing of the Archives, and Pam hopes that this initiative will encourage others to consider contributing to the almighty task ahead. Plans are already being drawn up to initiate this important new project: it promises to begin to bring back to life, and into active use once again, a currently invisible but significant part of the College's heritage, dating back to the earliest days of the printing press.



*Pam Coote in the College Garden,
25 May 2022*

Finally, prayers are again requested for the success of all of these ventures. Our thanks are due to the many members of the College staff and student body, to the members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, the Venerable English College Trust, and the Roman Association, as well as to visitors and friends of the College in the United Kingdom, as well as in North America, who continue to support and take forward the work of the Heritage Collections in so many ways.



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

ENDNOTES

¹ See *The Venerabile*, 36 (2017), 37–38, and *The Venerabile*, 36 (2019), 48.

Schola Report 2021-22

JAMES FINNEGAN

[For the Choir Master: For voices jubilant and complete with joy]

More avid followers of *The Venerabile* may remember the “Schola Report” from two years ago when I, a young second year, still green and just on the cusp of loosing my unadulterated, treble voice, lamented the hopes and dreams for the Schola Cantorum having been “sewn-up in that great cadaver called ‘history’ where the proud go to die.” Much (apart from my gratuitous and tasteless use of hyperbole) has changed since then, and the Schola — upon the gradual abrogation of the woeful catalogue of restrictions imposed upon singing over the past two years — has slowly, but proudly, shaken off the dust of disuse.

Since our return from the Fourth Exile, the duties of the Schola Master have been split between the Schola Cantorum and the increasingly-frequent “mini-scholæ”, the latter — usually made up of 3-6 singers — providing music when rehearsing the singing of the former’s full complement would have been too incongruent with the diktats of the *Ministero di Salute*.

Throughout these past 18 months, the mini-scholæ have prayerfully adorned the College’s public worship with beautiful music; from Byrd’s *Mass for Three Voices* to Remondi’s *O Sacrum Convivium*, as well as a selection of English choral music for the Worshipful Company of Mercers. A special word of praise must go to the gentlemen who sang Victoria’s *Popule Meus* and Byrd’s *Passion* on Good Friday; their effort and dedication did not go unnoticed by our guests, many of whom communicated to me their appreciation and thanks.

The “Full Schola”, as it were, continues to attract committed singers of all abilities, and we were blessed to have recruited 85% of the College’s intake over the past two years. They have been working exceptionally hard, and all the singers have done themselves proud. Their prayerful and masterful performance at the Advent Meditation this year showed, given the absence of guests, their genuine passion for singing and love for praising the Almighty with music. Likewise, their presence at the San Lorenzo in Damaso Station Mass, where they sang Auguste Chérion’s *Anima Christi* and Wesley’s *Si Iniquitates*, along with their singing at Chiesa Nuova on the Feast of Saint Philip Neri, have demonstrated their dedication to the solemn purpose and quality execution of sacred music.

At the Villeggiatura this year, we decided to immortalise this dedication — and to celebrate the revival of choral singing in the College — by beginning to record tracks for a new album. Hopefully by the time you are reading this, *Clamaverunt Iusti: Voices*

from the Venerable English College will have made its way to you by some technological means. Special thanks to Mr Luke Theobald and Fr Piotr W̄ygnanski for coordinating the *enregistrement*. I would also like to thank Mr Ryan Hawkes for playing the organ for the recording, as well as for his invaluable (and life-saving) advice and expertise in all areas of choral singing which he has so generously shared with me.

This year, I have often found myself moved — usually, and quite embarrassingly, to tears — when I’ve heard the gentlemen of the Schola Cantorum sing. So, permit me to write the following here, because saying it to their faces would only provoke a relapse of the above: It has genuinely been the honour of my time at the VEC to stand before the Schola each week and hear them sing once more. Their prayerfulness, dedication and wicked sense of fun have furnished our liturgies with a beauty that points lovingly and longingly to the Divine, and in their songful prayer we have heard the infatuated worship of the Psalmist: “O how amiable are Thy dwellings, Thou Lord of Hosts.” Thank you, gentlemen.



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

Sports Report

LUKE THEOBALD

The academic year began with a vacancy in the position of VEC sportsman, the sportsman having been another victim of Covid cutbacks. With no one at the helm and the annual Ragheed Ganni Cup drawing ever closer (for new students ignorance that a sportsman or the tournament even existed), one of the few passionate football supporters of the college took matters into his own hands. It was Martin Fyles who stepped in as caretaker manager of the VEC football team. Mr Fyles brought with him a wealth of experience: years as an Everton supporter have toughened him to occasional highs and regular lows of football, his regular attendance at *Trastevere Calcio* gave him insight into the Italian game. More importantly he has taken England, Germany, Italy and Russia to world cup success, albeit on Football Manager in the 80s.

With the coach sorted the call for players went out, some injury doubts kept some out of the team and for some time it was looking possible that a team of five may be beyond the VEC. However, that wasn't to be, and final line-up was formed:

- Martin Fyles, player-coach and pretty much responsible for all of this going ahead
- Fr Piotr Wyganski, team goal-keeper, morale raiser and available for anointing of the sick in case of sporting injury
- Ludvig Hareide, Norwegian aerial presence with military experience if things really kicked-off
- Viktor Torres Airava, the ultimate blend of Brazilian flair and Scandinavian resilience
- Ben Sinclair, no-nonsense northern grit
- Mathias Ledum, from kick-flips on the skateboard surely overhead-kicks in football wouldn't be too dissimilar
- William Jolleys, recruited whilst interning in the archives providing genuine sporting ability
- Carlos Arenas Javier, BIBOS staff and passionate 5-a-side player again to provide real skill

The team roster set, certainly relied on passion over traditional ability, but this only set the stage for a classic sporting underdog story we all love. On match day Mr Fyles, taking note Gareth Southgate's fashion blunder over the summer left the "shacket" at home manging in sports gear. The competition began, as any Hollywood film would, with a series of defeats against the other colleges. However, unlike a classic film in which the plucky heroes turn their fortunes around, the VEC continued it losing spree to finish defeated in every game at the end of the competition. The VEC was able to put one goal

against the opposition when a ball was crossed into the box and bounced off the back of Mr Jolleys' head and into the back net. The goal may have been unintentional, but it counted none the less, and Mr Jolleys shall still be immortalised as this year's top goal scorer!

Football aside, it was only after Christmas that a new sportsman was selected. A survey was sent around to ascertain the use of the gym and any other sporting matters. The gym is currently used by 80% of the students with over half of those users being regular and at least weekly users of the gym, some suggestions for new equipment and changes were made, and a battery was added to the scales (after an apparently many year flat battery situation!).

The current "hot sport" at the VEC has become table tennis with a good number of the community playing regular or sporadic games. Even the occasional breakfast has been used to dissect previous games and weigh up opponents with mind games being played over morning coffee ahead of match. We look forward to next year's Ragheed Ganni Cup and pray that some sporty first years join the college next year.



The Ragheed Ganni Cup team



Player-Coach Martin Fyles lays out the game plan or possibly dinner plans...



LUKE THEOBALD is a second-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, currently studying philosophy at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

Wiseman Society Report

DAVID BENCH

College life was hit hardest during the lockdown in its restriction of outside guests. This year, as we gradually returned to normal, I took the initiative to revive the long-standing *Wiseman Society*, so-called in honour of former rector Nicholas Cardinal Wiseman (1802-1865), gifted ecclesiastical leader, linguist, and budding novelist. It is indeed fitting, then, that the society that prizes the intellectual endeavour here in college should be styled after him.

Certain courses on this second year of the theology STB inspired me to have some of the professors come and share their expertise with the wider college community. Conscious that we are all getting the basics one way or another, I look out for particularly interesting speakers who approach a given topic in a refreshing way. Fr Mariusz Tabaczek, OP was the first speaker invited this year seeing as he has written on how theology can dialogue with the modern science of evolution. While this may sound old hat nowadays, Fr Mariusz is on a mission to root out the dualistic language that still dogs this discussion, eloquently describing how God works through secondary causes to bring about His creative intent. The human soul in particular is not, for example, a substance (in Aristotelian terms) that supervenes on evolutionary matter, but, rather, is an organising principle that transforms the matter prepared from within. In this sense, the divine works with nature in a way that is not purely supernatural, nor purely ordinary, since humanity would not be the paragon of creation if not made in the image and likeness of God. The question of how this substantial change from *homo erectus* to *homo sapiens* occurred was specifically the topic presented to us. Is it possible, scientifically, to hold today that this only happened to a single couple? Do we complicate the notion of the Fall by positing a first population of humans instead? These and other questions were perfect *Wiseman Society* debating material.

The uptake on the first talk in December was very positive. I hope it had more to do with the content than the enticing offer of freshly-baked scones afterwards(!). Therefore, I was on the hunt for a second speaker this past semester. Fr Joseph Hamilton, a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney and secretary to Cardinal Pell, had just joined the staff at the Angelicum. He introduced me to the *passio* of Felicity & Perpetua — the most commented on piece of Christian literature outside the Bible. Indeed, Fr Joseph was able to mine the text for insights not immediately apparent. There is a lot more going on in the Latin original than is always adequately rendered in the English translation. I knew I had my second speaker. Fr Joseph found time in his busy schedule to come and talk to the society about the visions of St Cyprian, bishop and martyr. Universally acclaimed, how did this Church leader allow himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit in a way that still speaks to us today? Should the

Church be praying for more charismatic gifts, or, is that primarily a Protestant affair? This one certainly gave us all pause for thought.

Consequently, it has been a joy to revive the *Wiseman Society* and hopefully the community is enriched by making the most of this precious time to pick the brains of some of the most engaging minds in our Pontifical system today. I look forward to another year of stimulating talks and varied presentations.



DAVID BENCH is a fifth-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Birmingham, currently studying theology at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

The Year in Pictures

RYAN HAWKES



Some of the New Men relax after an audience with the Holy Father.



A rousing number ends the traditional New Men's Show.



The opening of the College doors by Paolo as we welcome the public to Mass for the first time since March, 2020.



Some members of the community visit the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Anzio to pray for the war-dead in the month of November.



Then-Archbishop Arthur Roche, Prefect of the then-Congregation for Divine Worship, presides at Mass for the Solemnity of the College Martyrs.



Coffee and liquori being enjoyed following a splendid festive meal.



The Schola Cantorum working hard during rehearsals...



...and their efforts came to fruition in the annual Advent Meditation.



The Venerable English College Football Team do us all proud at the Ragheed Ganni Football Tournament.



Competitive spirits emerge during the Great Seminary Bake Off.



The beginning of Lent is marked with both the Imposition of Ashes and the veiling of faces to hide weariness from fasting.



Fr Stephen leads the Community in dedicating Russia and Ukraine to our Lady on the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord as requested by the Holy Father.



Sisters Monica and Cecilia, Franciscan Sisters of the Renewal, deliver an edifying and thought-provoking spiritual conference on vocation.



Fr John Flynn bids the Community farewell before leaving to take up his new role as the Rector of the Royal English College, Valladolid.



Holy Week begins with Mass on Palm Sunday and the music team are hard at work.



The College Church is filled with pilgrims for the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday.



The Community and guests watch with Our Lord in the Martyrs' Chapel.



Under the direction of Mr James Finnegan, a crowd from the Beda joined the Schola Cantorum singing in Welsh in St Peter's Square on Easter Sunday morning.



Mr Viktor Torres Airava addresses a full refectory to mark Nordic Night.



Fr James McAuley lets his hair down and enjoys some witty comment or other.



Commencing the Ministries Season, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, the Holy See's Secretary for Relations with States, institutes four new Lectors. Left to Right: Mr Jack Ryan (Portsmouth), Mr Jonathan Henry (Birmingham), the Archbishop, Mr Ryan Hawkes (Portsmouth), Mr Benjamin Sinclair (Hexham and Newcastle).



Three new Acolytes are instituted by then-Archbishop Arthur Roche, the Prefect of the Dicastery for Divine Worship. Left to Right: Mr Ryan Browne (Portsmouth), the Archbishop, Mr Viktor Torres Airava (Helsinki), Mr Mathias Ledum (Oslo).



Bishop Paul Mason of the Bishopric of the Forces in Great Britain presides at Mass with Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders. Left to Right: Mr Hugh Donleavy (Liverpool), Mr Mark O'Farrell (Waterford and Lismore), Mr William Meehan (Hamilton), Mr James Finnegan (Liverpool), the Bishop, Mr Joseph O'Brien (Hexham and Newcastle), Mr Martin Fyles (Liverpool), Mr David Bench (Birmingham).



Seminarians welcome visitors into the College Church during the Night of Light.



Canon David Grant teaches the seminarians how to prepare a scone.



Mr Theo Sharrock attempts to repair one of the College cars during a weekend at Dear Old Palazzola.



Fr Piotr Wagnanski celebrates Mass in the Abruzzi mountains.



Mr William Meehan addresses the Community at the launch of the 100th Anniversary issue of The Venerabile.



Bishop Nicholas Hudson of the Diocese of Westminster ordains Rev. Mr Edward Hauschild (Portsmouth) and Rev. Mr Trym Hellevig (Oslo) to the Diaconate at the Church of Our Lady of the Snows.



RYAN HAWKES is a third-year seminarian for the Archdiocese of Liverpool, currently studying theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University.

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The College Diary 2021–22

Saturday 11th September 2021: Our two new seminarians, Mr Ludvig Hareide from the Diocese of Oslo and Mr Luke Theobald from the Archdiocese of Birmingham, arrive today to begin their two-week induction period. They are joined by Mr Charles Cowper from Ridley Hall, Cambridge, who will be with us for one semester. This year, Birmingham and Oslo share joint first place with Portsmouth with four men each represented in the total seminarian body of twenty-three, who come from six countries.

In the evening the new men have the customary welcome supper, this year at Polese. Afterwards, Fr James introduces them to an essential Roman staple food — gelato from Frigidarium. Having been introduced in early August by Fr James to gelato from Frigidarium, shortly after his arrival in Rome, our new Rector, Fr Stephen Wang, is in complete agreement that Frigidarium sells the best gelato in Rome. Or perhaps he is just trying to humour the Academic Tutor.

Sunday 12th September: Canon David Grant from Middlesbrough arrives for a three month sabbatical, during which he will follow some spirituality courses at the Angelicum.

Monday 13th September: The new men are introduced to *la lingua italiana* at Italiaidea. They seem to have survived their first lesson. After lunch, seated on a bench in the garden, while drinking his coffee, Canon David is surprised to discover that the package he had thought contained a biscuit to accompany his coffee actually contained another coffee capsule.

Wednesday 15th September: Ludvig manages to find himself locked out on the third-floor terrace overlooking the cortile (which in recent years seems to have become a de facto smokers' terrace). Fortunately he is rescued by Fr James after a wait of only five minutes. For the avoidance of doubt, Ludvig insists that he is not a smoker.

Saturday 18th September: A group of seven from the College, including the new men, visit the Catacombs of St Callixtus. Ludvig appears pleased to be able to converse in his native tongue with two Swedish women, who joined the VEC group for the visit.

Tuesday 21st September: Fr Christopher Warren (Hexham & Newcastle) arrives from Assisi, where he had been attending a language school. He will shortly begin a Licentiate in Liturgical Theology at the University of the Holy Cross (Santa Croce).

Wednesday 22nd September: The new men and our new Rector attend the Holy Father's Wednesday Audience and have an opportunity to shake his hand. Fr Stephen gives Pope Francis a copy of his recently published book, *Sycamore – The Catholic Faith Explained*.

Sunday 26th September: The whirl of suitcase wheels, the stench of Penhaligons and

dread, the groans of misery over already-published liturgy lists and caloric temperatures. You might not recognise them in their masks, but be beyond doubt: the VEC boys are back in town. The returners form their joyful file back through the doors of Via di Monserrato, 45.

Monday 27th – Tuesday 28th September: The “usual caper” abounds as students settle, or resettle, into College Life. Leftovers like protein powder are flogged by the Common Room Team, business ties are dispensed like Maundy money by new Candidates for Holy Orders, while “ref sheets”, Benedictus cards, and threats of liturgy rehearsals abound; all of this a blunt reminder that seminary life carries on from the word *procedamus*. What has changed, however, is something of greater significance than paper and polyester misfortunes. The seminary, having bade farewell to our beloved Rector, Mgr Whitmore, welcomes our new “Fr Rector”: Fr Stephen Wang, of the Archdiocese of Westminster. In a tandem of meetings — one on Monday evening, another on Tuesday morning — Fr Rector informs us that he’s not Fr Rector at all, but rather “Fr Stephen”. Fr Stephen lays out his vision for the seminary, and shares something of his vocational story. Non-appellative changes (which, let’s be honest, is all we were waiting to hear), both liturgical and functional, are introduced from the outset, including:

- Day to start at 7am instead of 6.45am with 30 minutes of meditation followed by morning prayer.
- Standardising the recitation of the Divine Office (antiphons no longer to be cloven in twain between cantor and community).
- Introduction of community recitation of the Rosary on Mondays.
- Introduction of Adoration and Benediction at Sunday Vespers.

Many ears stop listening and most eyes stop watching at mention of a later start — as well as the dropping of the requirement to see the Rector if one misses a community event — as all energy focusses on Mr Joachim Teigen who has made the decision to leave formation. Many had assumed it was because he was simply too fatigued, now many wonder if he’ll stay. With the prospect of change so immediately present, the College, wondering, hoping, fearing, dreaming, head up to Dear Old Palazzola for their start-of-year retreat.

Sunday 3rd October: Our time on retreat comes to an end. This year we were led beautifully in prayer and reflection by Fr Gerard Sheehan. Comparisons were drawn on his series of conferences with the structure of Augustine’s Confessions as we were dragged into the depths of self-knowledge, only to be edified and encouraged by the assurance of God’s Grace. There was also a second retreat-giver this year in the form of C.S. Lewis whose Screwtape Letters took the usual place of Bach in the Villa Refectory.

Other than Fr Sheehan and C.S. Lewis, we are also joined on retreat by Fr Ansel d’Mello (Portsmouth), who is studying for a Diploma in Spirituality at the Angelicum, and Fr Donald White (Rockhampton), whose last attempt at a stint at the English College lasted for just under a month before COVID sent him packing back to the antipodes.

The silence is also broken by people enquiring about Edward Hauschild’s health, who seems to have injured his neck on the way up to the Villa and has taken to wearing a cervical collar.

Fr Stephen outlines his approach to social media, and many students — realising that the new Rector is social media savvy — hasten to review pre-seminary Facebook posts.

Monday 4th October: Students head back to the Pontifical Universities, brandishing “Green Passes” and reams of papers and documents that only the most layered bureaucracies fighting to shake off the severest of institutional scleroses could make requisite. Meanwhile, Charles Cowper’s introduction to the Pontifical System starts in the Common Room, where Fr Paul Murray is beamed in with the help of projectors and screens.

Tuesday 5th October: The community bids farewell to Joachim Teigen with the customary *Poti Defunctorum* on the roof. Emotions abound, mostly from Ryan Browne upon whom has been bestowed the unenviable office of Choir Master, but also from Joachim who — in a heartfelt and lengthy address — describes his years at the English College as “the best” of his life. Canon Grant suggests he must have had “a bloody awful life”.

Saturday 9th October: Fr John Flynn returns to the UK to be with his sister who is ill. The seminary assures her and all the family of our love and prayers.

Sunday 10th October: The College heads off on a Gita of sorts to Santa Maria in Trastevere, stopping first for lunch at La Cassetta. Fr Ansel d’Mello gets lost on the way and the cruelty of English College seminarians makes sure that *d’Mello* is quickly substituted for *n’Gretel*; alas, even a trail of breadcrumbs didn’t help him find his way. Later in the evening, Sunday Vespers takes place *sub Fomo Novo Rituus Venerabilis* for the first time. Despite the general consensus that nobody — musicians, servers, presider — had the slightest idea at any given point of what was about to happen next, it passes with all the poise, grace and aplomb that typifies Vespers at this Venerable College.

Tuesday 12th October: Choir practice resumes for the first time since our return, and with Ryan Browne comfortably and masterfully directing from the podium in what had been Mr Teigen’s place. Despite the change in Choir Master, little else differs as the usual Wagnerian tones and pleas to “keep it moving!” abound.

Wednesday 13th October: A day yet-unseen by the New Men and the Second Years arrives, a day of great joy and blessing: the first Mass open to the Public since March of 2020. Much of the day is spent remembering exactly how we “do” guests and Hugh Donleavy, acutely aware of the sensitivities of the visiting Faithful, publishes a diagram on how to fold a corporal ere the servers embarrass themselves before an all too scrupulous public. As evening comes, the doors to College are flung open once more, and we rejoice to worship once more with faces familiar and new. At last, it seems that some “normality” is finally returning to us. *Te, Deum, Laudamus!*

Thursday 14th October: We are joined at lunchtime by Anders, Cardinal Arborelius, the Bishop of Stockholm, who has come to check on Antonio Bajlovic, and who reminds us of the increasing proportion of Scandinavian brethren in College by saying grace in Swedish.

Undoubtedly aware of the propensity that the students have for provoking diplomatic crises, we are joined at supper by the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain.

Sunday 17th October: Just as the pastoral glow of Wednesday evening was beginning to wear off, we open our doors yet again to welcome guests for Sunday Mass. The now more sustained use of the College Facebook page has served as a welcome point of information for many of our “once-regulars” as well as new visitors. We are delighted, once more, to share in the celebration of Mass with so many others.

Monday 18th October: A ranting, historical aside from an increasingly-libertarian student: As is the wont of the English College, the memory of the sublime cannot be permitted to remain immortal, and the oscillating battle-axe that is seminary life in Italy must bring us all with it as we swing yet again into the ridiculousness of modern bureaucracy. If you are a legal historian, studying the Great Plague of the 2020’s, and you — for whatever reason — find yourself researching COVID information sharing between the UK and EU, know this without doubt: Never has there been an article so talked about and yet so proudly hopeless, so flagrantly unnecessary in the history of the Northern Hemisphere as the “converted green pass”. Yet, nonetheless, this is the fresh hell that this week’s conversation seems to be dedicated to inflicting upon us. *De profundis*.

Tuesday 19th October: Joseph O’Brien launches the annual “give us your clothes” campaign on behalf of the Charities Committee. Whilst the community finds his altruistic endeavours laudable, we are left slightly disappointed at the exclusion of socks from the list of acceptable items: it seems we must continue to endure Mr Sharrock’s spectral array for a little longer.

Thursday 21st October: The students gather for the first “Rector’s Conference”, which will now take place every other week where Spiritual Conferences ordinarily would have been given. Afterwards, we gather in the Common Room for a farewell to David Ottersen, who has announced he will be leaving this Sunday. True to form, Canon Grant uses the farewells as an occasion to insult a member of the student body, this time telling an old boy waxing lyrical about his Cantab days: “I’ll give you a compliment, you never come across as intelligent”.

Sunday 24th October: The students gather in the Cortile after coffee to bid farewell to Mr Ottersen. Interestingly, this takes the form of an incongruently hearty rendition of *Requiem Æternam*, of which the diarist is sure not to be a comment on David’s transfer to the Carmelites. The tenants, meanwhile, have completely given in.

Monday 25th October: Hands to action stations as Rev. Mr Toby Duckworth, SS, asks for “feedback” regarding our weekly Mardi Gras in the ref. Feedback, we know, can only mean that something is under threat of change and, as this threat comes to pizza and free beer, the student community readies itself for a battle of cosmic proportions. Perhaps unrelatedly, Viktor Torres-Airava is spotted on a desperate hunt for a rubber band.

Wednesday 27th October: The battling spirit spills over as the choirmaster goes head-to-head with the MC during morning prayer in an attempt to correct a hymn which has gone catastrophically wrong. Each takes a stab, or rather a hack, at correction, but we're left with a mess worthy of the botched beheading of the Queen of Scots. The Vice Rector delivers the *coup de grace* with a worthy intonation on the tune of Old 100th.

Friday 29th October: The extended free weekend — or “non-timetable weekend” as Fr Stephen prefers, operating under the premise that “we're all free” — begins like the good old days with Mass immediately after morning prayer. Afterwards, students away to various places: Pompeii, Salerno, Viterbo, Scholars, to name a few, and let off some steam in the run-up to the celebration of All Saints.

Sunday 30th October: The Rector is overheard preaching at length about cruise ships at Sunday Mass, prompting some to wonder whether he needs to untimetable himself for a few days.

Monday 1st November: The College in diaspora celebrates the great Solemnity of All Saints wherever they find themselves. Fr James McAuley offers Mass with the renewal of vows in the Martyr's Chapel for a couple celebrating their 50th Wedding anniversary. The sad news of the death of Jack Murphy, Fr Enda's father, reaches the community. We assure Fr Enda, who has been a great support to many of us here, of our prayers.

Tuesday 2nd November: The machine having been reset over the break, Mr Sharrock, in his eminent capacity as an organiser and MC, clarifies how the typesetting of liturgy lists indicates the rank of liturgy. Talk of “Bold Caps” and “Small Caps” confuses Canon Grant, who has now proved himself to be infinitely quotable, and who wonders if this means the reintroduction of “hats for Mass”. As luck would have it, he's later named Canon Provost of his Cathedral, so a Bold Cap is definitely in order, though his humility ought to be underlined. *Ad multos annos*, Canon Provost!

Wednesday 3rd November: Mr Hauschild is seen making enquiries around the College as to whether anybody took receipt of the bar provisions delivery. Most people say no, we think... the hiccuping makes it difficult to understand.

Friday 5th November: The penitence of a usual Friday is alleviated at lunchtime by Fr James McAuley who, in hearing only part of Charles Cowper's establishment protestations, assures his *conpranzandi* that 5th of November is definitely not listed as “Papist Conspiracy Day” in *Universalis*. The japes continue into the evening for the New Man Show. The Senior Student decides not to censor the show this year, but a run-through with the director mercifully manages to filter out some brazen double-entendres which had gone unnoticed by innocent content-creators.

This year's show follows the same kind of format — a word used loosely here — of previous shows, but with the addition of acts from all years across the house. Beautiful music, and Mongolian throat singing, Norwegian poetry from Ludvig accompanied by

freakish interpretative dance from Luke, filthy, Old English riddles from Charles, and Finnish language lessons all abound. Nothing quite prepares us, though, for the final act of the night, “Synod 7BC”, masterfully crafted by Mr Theobald and woefully performed by the New Men to the point of breath-stealing laughter. Finished in true VEC style with “Hymn Practice”, where the words of modern “songs” are forced to fit old tunes. Fr John Flynn is spotted keenly signing “99 Problems” to *Cwm Rhondda*.

Saturday 13th – Sunday 14th November: Remembrance Weekend. A trip is organised by some students to visit the Commonwealth War Graves at Anzio on Saturday. We pay our respects in the cemetery before heading into the adjacent church for a Requiem Mass where a beautiful faux-bourdon of *Jesu, Son of Mary*, arranged by Mr Ryan Hawkes, is sung. Lunch follows in Nettuno where a little awkward Italian-speaking means that some who had hoped for swordfish are inadvertently served chicken skewers.

On Sunday, we join the Pontifical Scots and Beda Colleges, along with representatives from the Pontifical Irish College, for Mass on Remembrance Sunday at the Church of San Silvestro in Capite, the first such commemoration since the start of the pandemic. The music and liturgy is led prayerfully and exquisitely by the Scots.

Wednesday 17th November: The evening Mass is celebrated by Bishop Wayne Lobsinger, Auxiliary of the Diocese of Hamilton. The bishop informs us that his visit is geared towards intelligence gathering on Mr Meehan, our sole Canadian seminarian, whom most people “believe to be perfect”. William eavesdrops nervously in the bar, anxiously checking that the queue of people is simply a line of those waiting to congratulate the Bishop on his appointment. It is.

Friday 19th November: After much pestering, the Vice Rector finally gives the go-ahead for the heating to be switched on. Until this point, he had been resorting to the line in Viceregal Scriptures: “Many are cold but few are frozen”. Once-chilly students swiftly realise how they’ve been their own undoing as plumbers descend on the college to check radiators in rooms. Complaints of nobody being able to find a Hoover or bin bag fill the corridors.

Saturday 20th November: “English seminarians”, known for their footballing prowess, are represented at the Ragheed Ghani memorial tournament by two English seminarians (Messrs Fyles and Sinclair), along with: a Finn, two Norwegians, a Pole, William (the Parsons scholar working in the archive), and Carlos (a Peruvian member of BIBOS). Disqualification would have been met had the organisers not been so filled with hysterical pity.

Tuesday 23rd November: A visiting latinist, Vincenzo, known to the Rector from his time at the London Universities, comes to the College to give us a taste of “living Latin” at lunch. None fight harder to be on his table than Fr James who — many note — has never been seen smiling so keenly. Some wind up on the table by an unhappy accident and are forced to nod and simply recite the *confiteor* when they’re asked for the fruit.

Thursday 25th November: Another post-pandemic revival as the Jubilarians visit the College. Upon being reliably informed that 1350 years of priesthood are being celebrated in the room, the students begin investigating if the supreme jubilarian was around in Mr Martin Fyles' days. *Ad multos annos!*

Friday 26th November: Mr Henry sends an emergency message around College on behalf of Mr Hauschild who "due to a baking catastrophe" is unable to expose the Blessed Sacrament (or indeed use his phone). Some wonder whether Ed is in fact simply too ashamed to face the Blessed Sacrament after, in his position as Entertainments Czar, proposing the most fixed competition in the College's history: The Great Seminary Bake Off. Nonetheless, students and staff remain undeterred by upper-level corruption and produce an array of sumptuous gateaux. The Rector, Viktor, and Canon Grant are appointed as "chief tasters" giving the spectators something of a "Cour de Marie-Antoinette" vibe.

Saturday 27th November: Mr Henry, prompted by his unsurpassed knowledge of and inspiring passion for all things liturgical, organises a celebration of the New Liturgical Year. First Vespers with the blessing of the Advent Wreath takes place in the College Church and, afterwards, a party in the Common Room complete with sherry and the crossed-arm singing of Auld Lang Syne. *Sit benedictus novus annus liturgicus!*

Sunday 28th November: Fr James Hanvey comes to lead the College in our silent day of Advent Recollection. After a series of beautifully crafted reflections, he brings us back down to earth in the Sacristy just before Mass by instructing the MC and Sacristan: "Just tell me what to do, I'm a Jesuit, and I have no idea what's going on".

Monday 29th November: The Advent Recollection now over, the eyes of some are turning to the preparations for Martyrs' Day. Mr O'Brien announces the publication of his wonderful edition of *The Venerabile*, but the adulation which he is rightly given is drowned out by the shouting coming from the Garden Room. The general consensus is that this signifies rehearsals for Byrd's Mass for Three Voices are still ongoing. Mr James Finnegan, the Schola Master, is seen slumped over the piano for a half-hour afterwards.

Wednesday 1st December:

*O Saints of English Speech and race
Caught up to heaven, of heavenly grace
A double portion send us*

Beginning with First Vespers and the Office of Readings last night, the College springs into full Solemnity mode to honour the *Quadragesima Quator*. The efforts of musicians, the sacristans, the MC and volunteer flower arrangers ensure that the celebration is fittingly beautiful. In the evening, the doors of the College are opened up to guests who arrive for the veneration of the relic and the singing of the *Te Deum*.

Thursday 2nd December: As the omicron variant ravages the world, and the threat of travel restrictions increases, the Rector announces that the Christmas holiday will start

slightly earlier this year. Unfortunately, however, this means that the Advent Meditation and entertainment will be cancelled.

Friday 3rd December: The festive obsequies now completely over, students head off on a free weekend. Rev. Mr O’Lavery, Mr Hawkes, and Mr Finnegan almost have their trip to Lourdes quashed by the Rector on environmental grounds after he questions the environmental efficiency of flying to both Sicily and Toulouse to get there, but the intercession of *La Dame du Masabielle* prevails. Meanwhile, the Vice Rector pushes the community for intelligence regarding the recent disappearance of ice cream from the private fridge.

Saturday 4th December: Charles Cowper, in a brazen show of ecumenism, plugs “Anglican Carols” for those who aren’t heading up to the NAC’s carol service this year. Many agree that they prefer their carols to be Catholic, most notably the fans of Countdown.

Monday 6th December: A large crate is delivered during Mass containing a stunning statue of St Joseph which has been created by Tyrolese craftsmen and designed to complement the statue of Our Lady. It is installed on its pedestal after lunch, and Mr Hareide has the honour of placing St Joseph’s staff (or is it “team”?) in his hand. Some comment that he bears a striking resemblance to Stefano who had often been seen outside the College. Later, an exquisite Wiseman Society lecture is given by — to quote Mr Bench, the organiser — “a very open-minded Dominican”. Later still, Mr Browne informs the community that yet more ice-cream has disappeared.

Tuesday 7th December: The Ministero di Saluto, having been quiet for longer than a week, publishes new COVID rules regarding boosters and “Strengthened Green Passes” that will become obligatory after Christmas. The students thank the government of the Italian Republic for continuing to walk the *via simplex* in all things.

Wednesday 8th December: A *Dies non* for the community in honour of the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception. Some students head up to Palazzola the night before for the customary Holly Cam joshabout, while those who subscribe to the McAuley Doctrine (“I dislike people singing and having fun”) remain in Rome to mark the day. The celebrations are tinged with sadness as we say farewell to Canon (Provost) Grant who has been a welcome source of levity, and a beloved father figure in the house.

Friday 10th December: Students and staff gather to begin the process of decorating — in a manner of speaking — the Common Room with holly from the Villa and tinsel and baubles from the late 19th century. The work finishes with the singing of carols and the consumption of homemade Gluhwein leading Mr Fyles to give a particularly hearty rendition of *Stille Nacht*.

Saturday 11th December: Some students head to the NAC for an evening of carols and Republicans pretending to be English. One of the attendees notes the quantity of their

singers and asks himself, “is this what a schola is supposed to sound like?”. The Schola Master is not impressed.

Sunday 12th December: At a house meeting in the evening complete with many, lengthy speeches, Rev. John O’Lavery, in his capacity as DSS, stands up to deliver a “9-word speech” (in which the word “please” is used four times). Having kept his promise for brevity, he receives the most sustained applause of the evening.

Thursday 16th December: Fr Stephen, having recently been in contact with a positive case, goes into a State-mandated week of isolation and Mr Sinclair, in a lengthy message, laments the disappearance of his chocolate from the Common Room. Mr Bench is unlikely moved by either of these events after stating at breakfast: “We were told that if charity is dead then faith is dead. I guess my faith is dead then”. In the evening the SS organises yet another evening of carols, food, and wine after the Christmas dinner.

Friday 17th December: Not wanting to see the efforts of the Schola Cantorum go entirely to waste, the Schola Master and Mr Sinclair — who has been temporarily appointed as his secretary — press ahead with a recorded Advent Meditation, accomplished through the technological skill of Mr Meehan. This year’s Meditation features a reading from Queen Elizabeth II’s 2012 Christmas message and is proudly read by our Commonwealth representative, Fr Konrad. After a sublime evening of prayer and music, the Schola head to Polese (in place of the crypt) where the Schola Master throws a glass of red wine over Mr Theobald, thus marking the end of term.

Sunday 9th January 2022: Some members of the community manage to make it back to Rome in time for the start of term. Others have been banned from travel after being infected with the omicron variant which has most of England in its grip and must await negative tests/the end of mandatory isolation. They are anticipated to return throughout the following 10 days.

Friday 14th January: With so much attention having been afforded to actual health issues in recent weeks, conversation at table turns to “fantasy cosmetic surgery”. Mr Bench admits that he’s always thought he’s had “too much skin above my eyes”.

Sunday 16th January: With HD Weekends now having been condensed to take place solely on a Sunday — in order to leave Saturdays “free” — the community is joined by Dr Rosanna Giacometto. The Rector also publishes the Examtide Timetable, which many have been fearing is going to include compulsory morning religion. Mercifully, little changes.

Tuesday 18th January: Those who experienced the “Cour de Marie-Antoinette” (cf. 26th November) are forced to relive the narrative as Viktor announces the decapitation of one of the owls-sentinel, which has been one of the last — and most

useless — vanguards against the inevitable seagull colonisation. The plastic crows are the sole remaining flank in the line, forming the “Vice Rector’s Own, Covid-19 Regiment”.

Wednesday 19th January: A note is found in the Common Room detailing the much-overdue relaxing of governmental COVID restrictions.

Thursday 20th January: Fr Tony Curren, head of the Anglican desk at the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, and one of our lodgers, gives the community an informative talk on Anglican-Catholic relations in this Week of Christian Unity.

Friday 21st January: A free-weekend serves as a leisurely prelude to and herald of Examtide, the most loved and hated period of any seminarian’s year, when the ability to stay in bed until 6.30pm without missing a community event is somehow possible, and often a necessary remedy to the hours of angst-riddled cramming that keep students at the pontifical universities awake into the small hours.

Monday 24th January: News reaches the College (*in ritardo*) that Henry Woodhouse — *alumnus huius Venerabilis* — was ordained a deacon on the Feast of the Epiphany. *Ad multos annos!*

Wednesday 26th January: Some Scandinavian confectionary makes its way to the Common Room in commemoration of the Feast of St Eystein of Nidaros, one of the many Nordic Saints we now commemorate in College. Meanwhile, the Holy Father issues a call for a day of prayer for peace over the escalating tensions with Russia in Ukraine.

Tuesday 1st February: The community is visited by Bishop Erik Varden of the Territorial Prelature of Trondheim who has come to meet the Nordic seminarians. Later, and thankfully out of the earshot of the bishop, a very hungry Mr Sharrock issues a call to those who are collecting forks on their bedside tables as “modern art installations” to return them at once to the student kitchen.

Wednesday 2nd February: The thick of Examtide finally gets to Mr Fyles who claims at lunch that he is planning to spend more time out of doors in order to “get more eros”, especially on Sundays. It later transpires that this was misheard, and Martin actually intends to “get more air” on the Day of Resurrection. Later, a beautiful celebration of Candlemas takes place with a procession from the Martyrs’ Chapel to the Church.

Thursday 3rd February: Yet another lunchtime misunderstanding leads Fr Stephen to state that pastoral work will “inevitably ruin one’s sense of vocation”. He subsequently clarifies that he did in fact mean to say “reinforce”. Fr McAuley finds even the most entrenched francophones applying for the Paris summer school as calls for bar tabs and car bills to be paid are issued on the same day.

Friday 4th February: Students who remember the last impromptu, WhatsApp-announced VEC meeting — which was the harbinger of the most recent *exilius collegio* — are filled with fear and trembling as Fr Stephen convokes yet another. This time, however, it brings the news of just one departure, that of Fr John, who has been appointed Rector of the Royal English College, Valladolid. Ever the worker bee, the Vice Rector is unavailable to receive our obsequious sorrow, so obeisances are made to Fr James McAuley, who is announced as Interim, Acting Vice Rector Elect. *Vivant!*

Sunday 6th February: Our vivating becomes distinctly regal as we celebrate the 70th anniversary of Her Majesty’s accession to the throne. A hearty Sunday lunch complete with union flag and the singing of “God save the Queen” provide us with a welcome injection of patriot spirit. Long may she reign!

Tuesday 8th February: We are surprised with a shock room ballot, and many community members rush to cover their black mould and blue-tack marks with cheap tapestries in order to participate. An expression of desperation appears in the common room tiles which now spell out “SOS”, though most are unsure if this is related to exams or the snatching away of a coveted room.

Wednesday 9th February: With the end of exams mercifully approaching, and the usual jetting-off with which it is accompanied, we use the opportunity of our evening Mass and dinner to bid farewell to Mr Cowper who is returning to Ridley Hall. We wish him all the very best, and assure him he will be welcome to return whenever he likes.

Friday 11th – Sunday 13th February: Exams now completely over, students head off for some much needed RnR. Mr Browne, however, returns to college this weekend having embarked some weeks ago on a much publicised goodwill tour of the Italian peninsula.

Monday 14th February: The commemoration of St Valentine is usually the saddest day in a seminarian’s year, however the scrabble tiles spell out a 24-point cause for jubilation: “EXAMS ARE OVER”. The vicissitudes of fortune in a seminary, however, mean that we’re all back to the Pontifical Universities, where the hope of any romance has been long dead.

Tuesday 15th February: With Messrs Hauschild, Hellevig, O’Farrell, and Sharrock leaving us at the end of this year, we gather to cast our vote for Senior Student with a choice of only two names on the ballot. Meanwhile, Fr Stephen — now filled with student days nostalgia — shares a photograph of his time at the VEC from 1996. Most agree that the horrific ties and pastel petticoats give it a distinctly “Friends, Season 1” aesthetic. Later, the announcement is made that Mr Donleavey and Mr Hauschild have been elected as SS and DSS respectively.

Thursday 17th February: Cabinet reshuffle day is once more upon the community, and hordes of students anxiously file up outside the Rector’s office praying that they’ve not been made an assistant sacristan. Mr Meehan anticipates the generalised anxiety this year

and offers much-welcomed glasses of Johnnie Walker. Later, Fr Stephen confirms that the process of petitioning for Ministries/Holy Orders is changing, and all of the Ministries will now be conferred in College on various days during Eastertide. This is welcome news as it means that the *elenchi* are more easily able to invite guests for the occasions.

Friday 18th February: As we prepare for another free weekend, outgoing and incoming Capos share their twopenneth with the community before they head off. Some welcome news is that we will, after 2 years of a mostly empty church, be able to welcome guests for the Easter Triduum liturgies, though unfortunately not to stay. Mr O'Brien, who has just been nominated as MC, desperately looks on Skyscanner so that his parents might come and buy him a cassock before the paschal ceremonies.

Monday 21st February: The Rectors of the English seminaries come to visit us for Mass. The sanctuary, however, looks distinctly empty, and it transpires that the pandemic has yet again thwarted some of the best-laid travel plans.

Tuesday 22nd February: Mr Henry makes an admirable debut as Choirmaster at practice. A look of horrific realisation besets his face halfway through as he realises that, no matter how many times the choirmaster asks, we will simply not “keep it moving”.

Wednesday 23rd February: The community gathers in the evening to say farewell to Fr John Flynn. The SS gives a précis of all of the sentiments of nostalgia and gratitude in a locution of Churchillian craftsmanship. We wish Fr John well, and rejoice for the Royal English College in Valladolid who will gain a great man, a good and holy priest.

Thursday 24th February: The College awakes for morning meditation and liturgies to the shocking news that Vladimir Putin has launched an apparent invasion of Ukraine. War, it seems, has come to Europe once more. Throughout the pandemic, we have become used to learning new phrases and assimilating them into our speech. Yet, it is without any reservation or fatigue that we take up another and cry out: Slava Ukraini! Glory to Ukraine!

Saturday 26th February: Fr Stephen and Fr Michael attend the ordination of Sean Elliott in Leeds Cathedral. Many of us who know Sean rejoice in the fact that the Diocese of Leeds will gain such a good man as a pastor. *Ad multos annos!*

Sunday 27th February: Mr Hauschild, still recovering from “vising” for his exams, falls asleep during Vespers and embarks on a truly cacophonous snoring session. Some note that, even in slumber, he is still the loudest person in the church.

Monday 28th February: Mr Finnegan reveals at lunch that he will be celebrating his 10,000th day of life during the summer. Mr Sharrock's great mathematical mind calculates that he, too, must be approaching the same milestone and he becomes quite excited about the celebration he might have. The calculations are checked for him during coffee, and a

gleeful seminarian calls Theo to inform him that today is day 10,001. Rossetti is dutifully quoted: “Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been; I am also call’d No-more, Too-late, Farewell.”

Tuesday 1st March: St. David’s Day and, rather than the smell of daffodils, some students are keen to bring alternative aromas into certain areas of the College. Rev. Mr Toby Duckworth establishes an odorous tyranny in the library with an unsolicited scented candle. Fellow bookworms are not impressed: Fr Piotr Wygnanski objects that the smell brings to mind “an inter-religious prayer room at an overpriced old people’s home”. Unfortunately, the coup falls on deaf ears and promises of tomorrow’s reform from “Beach Escape” to “Cotton Fresh” does little to cool tensions.

Sunday 13th March: A role-playing activity during today’s Human Development Day reveals revolutionary tendencies in the otherwise conservatively-minded contingent in the house. Twelve unique pastoral responses to fictional challenges at a fictional chocolate factory raise eyebrows and arouse concern for the future of the Church in England, Wales and Scandinavia.

Friday 25th March: The Venerable English College joins with Pope Francis and Christians around in making an Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, praying above all for peace in Ukraine.

Tuesday 29th March: With significantly fewer pandemic-related restrictions in place, the Lenten Station Mass is held at San Lorenzo in Damaso. The Venerable English College provides the servers and a schola for the occasion.

Thursday 31st March: The end of the visitation by the Trustees is marked with a formal supper. The annual visitation was an opportunity for Bishop Mark O’Toole, Archbishop Bernard Longley, and Archbishop John Wilson to get to know the seminary, the seminarians, and the changes which have been imposed throughout the year.

Saturday 2nd April: Fr Don sees snow for the first time in his life. He is both astonished and perplexed by the Meteorological phenomenon.

Wednesday 6th April: After a few drinks at the Bar, reminiscing about his childhood, one seminarian remarks: “I’m so glad I didn’t have any friends.” Those gathered around are unsure whether to laugh or to call Dr Rosanna Giacometto.

Saturday 9th – Tuesday 12th April: At Palazzola, the Holy Week Retreat is led by Fr Vivian Boland, OP who offers a reflection on how Christ made manifest his identity as Priest, Prophet, and King in the Passion narratives.

Thursday 14th April: The Triduum begins with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper. Always seeking to exceed expectations those in charge of the Altar of Repose spend an unbelievable

amount of time and effort filling the Martyrs' Chapel with flowers and candles. In the end, the Altar of Repose is arguably the most beautiful in Rome. Many seminarians make visits to other Altars of Repose throughout the City, while the Martyrs' Chapel is filled with visitors throughout the night.

Friday 15th April: Good Friday is marked in the traditional way at the Venerable English College with visitors from both Rome and abroad flooding the Church. William Byrd's setting of the Passion is sung impeccably, with the crowd parts sung by a small schola.

Saturday 16th April: The hard work by the entirety of the community reaches its climax at the Easter Vigil. The Church is filled with guests, music, and incense as the Venerable English College celebrates the great and noble solemnity.

As a surprise to all, after being dormant for several decades *Chi Lo Sa?* appears in the Common Room. Its contents spark much laughter and speculation as to the identity of the anonymous editors.

Sunday 17th April: Members of the Schola didn't look entirely awake as they gathered before sunrise to sing in St Peter's Square in anticipation of Easter Sunday Mass. Under the glorious leadership of Mr Finnegan, the seminarians managed to navigate singing in English, Welsh and (alas) Classical, rather than Ecclesiastical, Latin. Rumours of there being a soundcheck turned out to be false, resulting in an awkward moment of realisation that it was all over.

Thursday 28th April: While gathered at lunch, in an effort to defend a previous comment, Fr Michael proclaims: "When there's doubt about the law, you can do whatever you want." A special votive Mass of St Ansgar is celebrated today, marking the annual Nordic Evening at the Venerable English College. Supper features Nordic cuisine, accompanied with a Nordic-themed quiz, speeches, and plastic Viking hats.

Sunday 1st May: The Sunday Mass is marked by the institution of four members of the College as Lectors by Archbishop Paul Gallagher. This is the first of the ministries to occur under the revised timetable, having been moved from July to Eastertide. Congratulations to Mr Ryan Hawkes (Portsmouth), Mr Jonathan Henry (Birmingham), Mr Jack Ryan (Portsmouth), and Mr Benjamin Sinclair (Hexham and Newcastle).

Saturday 7th May: The annual College Gita is held with a trip to Villa Lante near Viterbo. The day is a fantastic opportunity to spend time with the domestic and administrative teams. Following a visit to the beautiful Renaissance gardens, a delicious meal is enjoyed on the side of a nearby lake. Highlights include the homemade pasta and fish caught in the lake only the day before.

Saturday 10th May: A member of the community is shocked after having been followed into the Cortile only to receive an unsolicited compliment from the stranger. He begins to wonder if the time spent at the gym is worth the added attention.

Wednesday 11th May: Archbishop Arthur Roche joins the College this evening for the celebration of Acolytate. The Venerable English College is pleased to have three new Acolytes. Congratulations to Mr Ryan Browne (Portsmouth), Mr Mathias Ledum (Oslo), and Mr Viktor Torres Airava (Helsinki).

Thursday 19th May: After being offered another glass of wine at lunch, Fr Don, who has replaced Canon Grant as the most quotable person in the College, proclaims that the only option when faced with the food at the VEC is more wine.

Saturday 21st May: The doors to the Church are opened this evening, as the VEC welcomed visitors for “A Night of Light”. The Blessed Sacrament is exposed, music is played, confessions are heard in multiple languages, and guests are invited to place a candle in front of the altar. The number of visitors is overwhelming, and the evening is considered a great success.

Sunday 22nd May: What is likely one of the busiest weeks on the timetable for the year begins with the Admission to Candidacy for Holy Orders. Seven seminarians are admitted as candidates by Bishop Paul Mason. Congratulations to Mr David Bench (Birmingham), Mr Hugh Donleavy (Liverpool), Mr Mark O’Farrell (Waterford and Lismore), Mr James Finnegan (Liverpool), Mr Martin Fyles (Liverpool), Mr William Meehan (Hamilton), and Mr Joseph O’Brien (Hexham and Newcastle).

At Solemn Vespers in the evening, those preparing for ordination make their Oaths of Fidelity. Congratulations to Rev. Mr Toby Duckworth (Birmingham), Rev Mr John O’Laverty (Down and Connor), Mr Edward Hauschild (Portsmouth), and Mr Trym Hellevig (Oslo).

Monday 23rd May: It is a great joy to have members of the Westminster Cathedral Choir visit the Venerable English College. Led by the Cathedral Master of Music, Simon Johnson, the College is treated to a concert of heavenly music. The programme included music from Fauré, Couperin, Lallouette, and Stanford, as well as Britten’s *Missa Brevis*.

Tuesday 24th May: Another surprise meeting is called by Fr Stephen, who wishes to address the College. The abrupt nature of the meeting reminds seminarians of the Friday 4th February meeting at which the departure of the Vice Rector was announced. This sentiment is validated when it is announced that both Fr James McAuley and Fr Michael Doody will be leaving at the end of the academic year.

Wednesday 25th May: The College welcomes the Roman Association for Mass and Supper. Stories and memories are shared by past seminarians, eager to share their wisdom and advice to the current generation. At the end of the meal, Fr Stephen announces that Pam Coote, a long-time supporter of the VEC, has made a generous contribution to help with the rare books in the library.

Thursday 26th May: There is no mid-day Mass today, as the College celebrates the feast

of St Philip Neri at Chiesa Nuova. Following a long-standing tradition, the servers and music are provided by the Venerable English College.

Saturday 28th May: The end of lectures is marked by the annual BBQ. Food and drink are enjoyed by all, who cherish the calm atmosphere prior to the beginning of exams. The publication of the 100th anniversary issue of *The Venerabile* is overshadowed by the appearance of an enormous amount of ice cream purchased by an overzealous Fr Michael.

Wednesday 8th June: Mr Jack Ryan is forced to leave the Church in agony after genuflecting so violently that he manages to injure himself.

Sunday 12th June: For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, the Friends of the Venerabile came to the College for Mass and Lunch. A group of nearly 50 Friends spent a week at Palazzola with visits throughout the City of Rome. The Refectory is filled with joy and laughter as the College recognizes the great support the Friends provide to the VEC and its mission.

Monday 13th June: Having completed their first year of studies at the Angelicum, Messrs Hareide and Theobald depart the VEC for their Italian residential course. Their departure is met with jealousy from those who have only just begun their exams.

Sunday 19th June: Dave Bench takes inspiration from more traditionally-minded seminarians this morning and prostrates himself before the tabernacle upon arriving in the church. On a completely unrelated note, the College is suddenly covered in signage warning visitors of “uneven flooring”.

Friday 24th June: To recognize the support of the many local suppliers and friends of the College a wonderful party is held in the garden with food of a calibre rarely seen at the Venerable English College. An enjoyable time is had by all as the College Community thanks all who have supported the College.

Monday 27th June: Marking the end of the exam period, the College makes its way to Palazzola for the annual *Villeggiatura*. This year, the excitement of arriving at Palazzola is heightened by the election of the Senior Student. Putting their trust in the belief that wisdom comes with age and experience, Mr Martin Fyles is elected SS.

Tuesday 28th June: The summer issue of *Chi Lo Sa?* makes its mysterious appearance as students emerge from their rooms in the morning. Taking inspiration from Pope Francis’ Synodal Path, the team leads the community in a three and a half hour review of seminary life. While there were some inevitable moments of tension, the review was marked by constructive and civil discussion on all aspects of the house, with a great deal of commonality between formators and seminarians alike on where our formation could be improved. The community looks forward together in

hope to concrete action being taken. This ecclesio-democratic process culminates in the election of William Meehan as Deputy Senior Student.

Wednesday 29th June: Today the pallium which Archbishop O’Toole receives in his Diocese is blessed by Pope Francis. Several members of the community make their way from the Villa to Rome for the Mass, which is followed by a festive lunch in the College Refectory. We congratulate Archbishop O’Toole and rejoice for the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Menevia.

Thursday 30th June: The Outgoing Interim Acting Vice Rector, in a final expression of his authority, instructs seminarians to amend the “egregious cases” of the “squalor some people seem to choose to live in”. The defects in our human formation are clearly known; the team’s main concern is evidently that the external cleaners may find out themselves during the summer deep clean.

This day also marks the beginning of the pastoral classes for seminarians. This year, James Abbott leads a course on communications and media skills, while Fiona O’Rielly speaks about models of Christian leadership.

Sunday 3rd July: The final Sunday Mass of the year is designated the “Leavers’ Mass”, fittingly celebrated by VEC Veteran Fr Piotr Wygnanski. In his homily, Fr Wygnanski drew attention to the fact that he avoids preaching about himself, only to do so for approximately ten minutes. Later, at supper, seeking to break Fr Stephen’s record, Mr Sharrock proceeds to speak so long that even Fr James decides it is not possible to make it to the end without a glass of wine.

Tuesday 5th July: Fr Stephen provides the annual “State of the Union” Address. It is anticipated that six new men will be arriving next year, with the remainder of the seminarians to return on 23 September. Mr Ryan Browne is announced as the new Editor of *The Venerabile*.

Later, wine tasting on the Villa terrace is followed by a memorable (or not, as the case may be) celebration of Vespers. It didn’t seem that anyone was intentionally turning the hymn into a cacophonous three-part round, but with so great a cloud of intoxication it came to pass nonetheless. Viktor attempted to invite us to pray for the selection of a new bishop for Helsinki, but found himself temporarily unable to remember the name of his own Diocese.

Wednesday 6th July: The 2021-22 year ends with the ordination of two deacons: Edward Hauschild (Portsmouth) and Trym Hellevig (Oslo). The traditional lunch following the ordination marks the end of scheduled activities and all relax with the prospect of returning home to an untimetabled existence.

Thank you to Fr James McAuley, Mr James Finnegan, Mr Jonathan Henry, and Mr Benjamin Sinclair for their submissions to the Diary.

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Leavers' Profiles

Fr John Flynn

“I didn't want to come back in 2016 and now I don't want to leave.” With these words, Fr John bade farewell to the College community at dinner in the Refectory in late February 2022, as he prepared to move to The Royal English College in Valladolid to become Rector there. The suddenness of John's departure from Rome was a shock to the College community, especially to Fr Stephen Wang who, having just completed one semester as Rector, faced the prospect of losing his “right hand man”. The willingness of both to make sacrifices for the greater good of the Church was truly a modelling in action of words often spoken to seminarians about the importance of obedience and of trust in Providence.



In the nineteen years I have known him, John has been remarkably consistent. As a seminarian, he set a good example by choosing to remain for seven years in the same room on the '44, which he had been allocated on his arrival in the College in 1999. His recognition of the importance of philosophy in the training of future priests meant that he chose to do two years of study of philosophy at a time when it was possible to choose to do one year only. This decision meant he had to wait a year longer than his peers to be ordained.

My brief tenure as Interim Acting Vice Rector, following John's departure, has given me an insight into how much of the Vice Rector's work is unseen (and therefore sometimes unappreciated) by the College community, even if it is critical to the success of the College as a place of formation for the priesthood. In his first year as Vice Rector, John had to contend with an earthquake, flooding, a thunderstorm which knocked out all the electrics and WIFI and, most serious of all, a fire in May 2017 in a room on the staircase which leads up from the entrance at Via di Monserrato 43.

Major building works were coming to an end when John arrived. Nevertheless, during his time in office, the fabric of the College continued to be enhanced: the stage was moved to the crypt from the Common Room, an Archives Reading Room was created, the Bede chapel was brought back into use for Mass, the gym was totally rebuilt and moved back to the crypt from the Gradwell Room, a cope press was installed in the Salotto, a refreshments area was created on the third floor and the boiler system was completely overhauled. By reducing costs and eliminating wasteful duplication, John also streamlined the College's administration and building maintenance systems. His work in this area, assisted by Emanuela Piacentini and Sandra Filipponi, means that the College continues to be in good financial shape, despite the pressure on income as a result of fewer students.

John was often teased by Emanuela and Sandra for his obsession with establishing order in the area of College door locks and keys. It took him several years, but the

gradual changing of locks created master keys for different areas of the College. There now exist immaculately labelled and well-ordered key cupboards in the Portineria and in the Vice Rector's office. He also spent much of the Coronavirus lockdown of spring 2020 in the College crypt sorting out decades' worth of accumulated items. After the removal of about ten lorry loads of items surplus to requirement, the crypt is now spick and span. It may even in the near future become income generating.

Palazzola has been hit hard by the Coronavirus. In spring 2022 it had a relaunch, with a new website and marketing strategy. It is to be hoped that John's creative vision, energy, enthusiasm (and bulldozer attitude, when required), ably assisted again by Emanuela, will soon begin to bear fruit. The cost base has been restructured, resulting in substantial savings. With the imminent creation of a dedicated "events area" on the Saint Edward's Terrace, Palazzola can now be marketed more effectively to Italians as an events location, while maintaining its long-established role as a place for English and other visitors to relax and enjoy its simple pleasures. His sudden move to Spain meant that John was unable to complete the project to secure Palazzola's future, and so it has been a good training for him in the priestly spirit of detachment.

All of his many other duties have not, however, distracted John from his primary role as a seminary formator. He considers formation tutorials with seminarians to have been one of the highlights of his time in the College. Underpinning all of his work has been his commitment to developing his relationship with God in prayer (he was consistently one of the first people in church in the morning), to growing in love for the Church and to a clear priestly identity. In pastoral classes with seminarians, he communicated his passion for preaching and for the RCIA.

It has not been all work with John. He enjoys cooking. I benefited in particular from this during lockdown in spring 2020 when he, I, and Philip Whitmore were "home alone" for more than three months. He is a keen cyclist. On one occasion, when he was cycling furiously through one of the many dangerous underpasses on the Lungotevere, a passing motorist slowed down and shouted at him, "*Cretino!*" On a more sedentary note, despite suffering from ornithophobia, something which counselling has failed to cure, he is also a keen bird-watcher (provided they don't come too close). He prefers to call his interest "bird-hearing" and notes as one of the highlights of his time in Rome hearing a nightingale singing during an early summer evening on the Via Appia Antica. (Not surprisingly, a highlight is not the cacophony of sound created in the spring by our nesting seagulls.)

It has been a privilege to work with John these past four and a half years. In Valladolid he will no doubt communicate his passion and enthusiasm for the priesthood to propaedeutic seminarians, planting seeds which will bear much fruit, God willing, in the decades to come. So too, his mainly unseen labours here in Rome over five and a half years will continue to bear much fruit, in the College and at Palazzola, but most of all in the men whom he has helped, directly and indirectly, in their formation for the priesthood.

Fr James McAuley

Fr James McAuley

God has a big nose. At least, he does according to Fr James McAuley, who leaves the College after five years as Academic Tutor. In a homily on the Almighty's benevolence, James touchingly made us see how the divine smell is something worth hearing about. The sermon must have been to everyone's taste, as people were still talking about it at lunchtime.

In his time on the formation team, James prioritised preaching as a formation tool. Precise, calm, truthful — James's delivery style is replicated more generally in his person: as brother priest, friend, and formator.

Never known for wasting words, James could deliver a killer punch. This writer was the unwitting (but grateful) recipient on many occasions, particularly in formation team meetings. "What John is trying to say is..." would deliver us from rabbit warrens of subordinate clauses and help the agenda move seamlessly on.

James came from his native Northern Ireland to read Law at Keble College, Oxford, before turning his hand to accountancy, working for the-then Ernst and Young.

His seven years as a seminarian at Rome for the Diocese of Portsmouth (2003–2010) left him with a Licence in Biblical Theology and the unofficial title of Mr Ice Cream. His love of the sweet stuff (usually from his favourite place, *Frigidarium*) is legendary, and while he might have fooled many that he was just going for a walk, the cat-who's-got-the-(ice)-cream grin upon return would give the game away.

His walks — whether for ice cream or not — were important for James, as they got him moving. Not one for vigorous exercise (he went to the gym once while on the formation team, and then only to let in some workmen), he nevertheless pounded the streets frequently. He often used those occasions to chat with students, talk with beggars, find a coffee fix at his favourite bar, or simply make the short journey across the Piazza Navona to Santa Croce University, where he completed (*summa cum Laude*) a second Licence, this time in Philosophy. His *tesina*, on the page-turning theme of "the final causality of human sexual differentiation according to Aristotle and St Thomas" should stand him (and, one would hope, the Church in England and Wales) in good stead for addressing the pressing questions of our time around sexual identity and dysfunction.

James took over as College librarian after the departure of Sr Mary-Joseph in December 2019. His job included streamlining the migration of some 18,000 volumes from one software system to another. The work was completed without any major hitch and in a systematic fashion ("I'm going to do 300 today, and will have finished the whole thing next month").

Meanwhile, the creation of Room XVII, a second-floor annex of the library with some 1,500 literature titles, included the task of the cataloguing of around 700 books donated by another member of the formation team. In February 2022 responsibility for the library again became a seminarian's house job. Needless to say, James has provided handover notes for the *House Jobs Descriptions* booklet...



James employed his immense organisational skills (and experience as editor himself) in guiding successive editors of *The Venerabile* through their rôle. The production quality of recent editions is testimony in no small part to his dedication to the task.

Upon arrival, James re-taught himself Latin, in order to teach it to seminarians. They always say that a teacher needs only to be half-an-hour ahead of his pupils. We do not know how far ahead of the seminarians James was, but his disciplined and gentle manner would dispel any personal anxieties, and certainly brought out the best in his men.

A keen explorer, James often spent his Saturday mornings out and about. While he is as equally comfortable on his own as he is with others, he would sometimes be seen with a group of seminarians going off to visit Roman sights that he had previously researched. It was a good lesson in industriousness and planning, vital for today's priests who are often overstretched and under-resourced. His interests extended well beyond Rome, though: he has completed his own Grand Tour of Italy, ticking off Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia, thus finishing a journey started when he was a seminarian.

It was unfortunate that a trip to Ischia in May 2021 left James with Covid; but even though he was confined to his room, he played a (disturbingly) convincing murder suspect in a game involving the whole house (with coronavirus invalids Zooming in) on the occasion of the departure of Mgr Philip Whitmore (the victim). The actual culprit was another former accountant (and current editor of this magazine).

James was a wonderful lockdown companion to the then-Rector and Vice-Rector, when he became an expert with Mgr Whitmore in the finer points of Italian law. Perhaps more importantly, it gave him a chance once again (*cfr The Venerabile* Vol 34 no.3, 2010) to display his skills as a sacristan: the candles have never been as well trimmed as in those lonely three months. During that time he became a proficient orienteer, giving a somewhat liberal interpretation to the requirements to go out only for essential shopping. How he found a supermarket *en route* to the College on the other side of *Castel Sant'Angelo* is beyond this writer, but it's a mark of his ingenuity.

James is a faithful and happy priest. He is as at home in front of the Blessed Sacrament (in whose presence he could be found for long periods) as he is with the day-to-day. The sacred and the profane meet most beautifully in the baptised individual and it is the coherence arising from this marvellous truth that shines through in James. There is an enviable unity of life in him, who is at once prayerful and outgoing, mischievous and disciplined.

Fr James McAuley leaves the VEC (as Interim Acting Vice Rector for the final five months of his tenure, upon this writer's unexpected departure for Valladolid) after five happy years giving encouragement and offering a priestly example to all those who had the pleasure to receive it from him. He returns to Portsmouth donning many new hats: Dean of the Cathedral, "Coordinating Pastor" of four local parishes, Vicar General, and Moderator of the diocesan Curia. He goes with the prayers and good wishes of us all.

Fr John Flynn

Fr Ansel D'Mello

A priest of Portsmouth Diocese for five years. He joined the seminary community of the *Venerabile* last September. His easy-going manner enabled him to settle in well, and to make friends easily. His love of Manchester United led to the well trodden path to the Abbey pub (a little bit of England/Ireland in Rome). Even in the pub he is the epitome of good manners, as he chats colloquially with the locals and tourists alike. Unfortunately, Manchester United were not that successful this year, but that did not stop the after-match analysis. Fr Ansel has a mind like a sponge that collects, collates, and analyses material, but never a dull moment, which makes his company very entertaining.



He was the head student at St. John's Seminary in Womersley, which showcases his flair for leadership. He also has specialist knowledge of business and economics, as well as an extensive knowledge of psychology/human development, both of which he puts to good use in his Diocese.

The student priests have a spiritually and pastorally enriching effect in the seminary, as they share their experience of being on the "front line" of pastoral ministry in England. Fr Ansel is very much an Englishman, with English tastes, although he has an appreciation for other cultures, with his parents' ancestral home in India. Fr Ansel studied at the Angelicum for the Diploma in Spirituality.

His knowledge is great and extensive in many areas, but he shines this light of learning most brightly from the pulpit in a disarmingly quiet, unassuming, and mellifluous way, which makes one listen even more attentively. He has the gift of teaching. He can weave wisdom out of obscure Old Testament passages, that few preachers would dare to tackle. This erudition of his is honed in the seriousness with which he applies himself to his studies, for which he is an example to us all. He wears his learning lightly, which I am sure endears him to his parishioners. He obviously has a great relationship with his professors, as one of them hand delivered a document to him in the VEC, which took all who witnessed it by surprise.

As a priest he has internalised the "unostentatious ascetical spirit" of the "Charter for Priestly Formation for England and Wales", as he knows how to live well within in his means. In no time in Rome, he is the man to go to, if one wants to know the best value shops for different items. Fr Ansel also knows the best clothes shops in Rome, but of course they must be good value!

If you have the good grace to meet Fr Ansel, why not ask him about his fascinating vocation story. I am sure he will bring back to the Diocese of Portsmouth and its parishioners all the riches of learning, culture, and history that Rome provides. He might even bring some better luck to Manchester United!

Mark O'Farrell

Hugh Donleavy

Nothing says “welcome” more than enforced fasting, medical tests and solitary confinement. Arriving at the English College on Ash Wednesday with the Coronavirus rampant, Hugh’s first days in Rome were unenviable to say the least, because they were spent almost entirely within the four walls of his room. His quarantine experience garnered our sympathy, but also resulted in minor-celebrity status for the “new boy.” Mr Donleavy was an enigma, and each of his socially-distanced encounters was, to us, another piece of the puzzle for discussion at breakfast.



What we discovered was that Hugh is a man of contradictions: he is near-fluent in Latin and Greek, is passionate about ancient history and culture, and holds rather particular views about the interpretation of Gregorian chant rhythms; he is also the VEC’s most committed patron of McDonald’s, knows all the words to more Busted songs than he’d like to admit, and has made a habit at breakfast of inhaling his boiled egg in one ungracious motion. While parts of this vivacious character are seen and known by the whole house, Hugh’s no-frills sophistication in tracksuits is expressed more fully in the closeness of one-on-one conversation, in a complex of wit, secret handshakes, and in-jokes.

Hugh’s contributions to community life can be illustrated by three moments which have irritated, astounded, and inspired the house respectively. Not long after arriving, Hugh managed to drive the community crazy by humming an exceptionally annoying tune he had heard blaring from Bar Peru during Adoration. The melody sounded vaguely familiar, but none were able to identify it for weeks, until one devious member of the house sent him a tantalising seconds-long recording of the original track, and eventually the song title was revealed. He went on to perform *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*’s anthem at the New Men’s Show in November, complete with a live band. When he hasn’t been enriching us with such musical delights, he has shocked us with the occasional blunt comment which has taken us all quite by surprise. No-one else would have the confidence to respond to Mgr Whitmore’s civil humour by saying “I was about to tell a joke even worse than that!”, especially not at the dinner table. I have never seen Father Rector look so forlorn.

In a contrastingly refined fashion, his Vespers reflection on the Pentecost Sequence has left a lasting impression upon the house, identifying the irony that the Holy Spirit is described as *our* guest rather than the other way around and drawing out the implications this has for us as Christians. Possibly to his embarrassment, his reflection is still held by seminarians as an example of excellent homiletics, capturing something of the depth of his prayer life as well as his sense of humour.

Hugh will be greatly missed as he leaves us to continue his formation in his home Diocese. I hope that even in northern England it will be possible for us to enjoy drinks *al fresco* together in the years ahead.

Jonathan Henry

Rev. Mr Edward Hauschild

Varied phenomena (including the late flickering of light from the bottom of Old St Joe's, and his ability to hide so very well at the Pontifical Universities) have meant that, for many, Rev. Mr Hauschild has gained something of a mysterious "ship in the night" reputation.

But ships with their foghorns are wont to make their presence known, and where else to start than with "The Voice". Over the years, Edward has found something of a hobby in singing, and he has been most generous in sharing his voice with the rest of the community. From his masterful *Christus Vincit*, heard in the farthest corner of the College by a student in isolation, to his stratospheric performance of "A Spaceman Came Travelling" in 2019 (currently on its fourth, incoming reverberation from the very bounds of the universe); Edward's voice truly resounds on the waters and breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

His voice has also been put to good use as a public speaker on the impressively varied councils upon which he has sat. Indeed, to say that Edward has a skill (and an all-consuming passion) for bureaucracy would be an understatement. His days as president of the Durham Union Society, combined with his legal studies, certainly stood him in good stead for the ever-deepening hellscape that is an expatriate subjection to the officialisms of the Italian Republic; it also gave him a thrust to achieve his *meisterplan* of dominating as many committees in College as he could. De Balzac may have compared bureaucracy to "a giant mechanism operated by pygmies", but Rev. Mr Hauschild made it look quite the inverse. The movement which I have taken to calling "Ed's Eastern Front", where German precision meets the Soviet *Politburo*, eventually saw him running the Common Room Team, the Bar and the Entertainments Committee all at once, leading him to christen himself: "The Arbiter of all Fun"/"Archbishop of Banterbury".

But arbitrate fun or, more accurately, promote fraternity, he did. Edward's voice has spoken in love for the community, in a way that is creative, present, and interested, and he has always been forthcoming in conjuring up ways in which to bring the brethren together. The most recent of these inventions was the highly popular "DepuTea", which took place every Tuesday, and where good drink, biscuits and a listening ear were provided to all and to any who wished to pop in on the Deputy Senior Student.

The community is immensely sad to see Edward go. His leaving tolls the departure of yet another great character of this Venerable College; a character of little-rivalled eccentricity; a man with a brain, heart, and larynx of infinite power; a noble, loyal, and devoted defender and lover of the Church; and an enviably capable and analytical thinker. In all of this, those that he will serve will surely be blessed.

Edward, thank you for always being yourself, for taking God and His Church seriously without affording yourself the same privilege, and for being a loving brother in this community. We will all miss you so very much.



James Finnegan

Rev. Mr Trym Hellevig

Trym asked me to write this note over a pint of Guinness at the Abbey Theatre — a usual haunt for many seminarians in Rome — but a place of choice for Trym to enjoy a tipples, after the rigours of the Greg. Not many people would know this about Trym because, as we all know, he is an incredibly discreet man, preferring the side-wings rather than centre stage.

Trym has been a key member of the community since he arrived in 2017. He has established himself as a person of prayer, of charity, and of superb intelligence. Prayerful, because he prioritises his relationship with God. Charitable, because he goes about his duties to others without complaint. Intelligent, because he is dedicated to deepening his understanding of the Catholic faith. These are gifts which the Church desperately need, especially in his native land of Norway where the Church is growing.

A favourite memory of Trym was during my time on the choir team. He emailed me with a *grave* concern about the Latin translation of the responsory we sing at lauds during Lent. Specifically, asking that the old, *erroneous* translation of the Latin be updated to reflect the original Hebrew meaning. No longer will this community chant the perfect tense, *liberávit*; rather, the future tense form, *liberábit!* If you're like me, you wouldn't pick up on this detail. However, Trym did. He is a man sharp on the details. He is invested in understanding the rich heritage of the languages of the Catholic faith.

I have known Trym for three years. I have been impressed by the development I have seen in Trym during this time. What is most satisfying is seeing someone settle into being a Catholic. Trym had been a Lutheran for much of his life. To become a Catholic is more than simply taking on a new name. It is a *via*. It is a way of living, a way of existing. To become Catholic is like assimilating into a new culture. We have a sense of praying, seeing, feeling which is somewhat different to other Christian denominations. Trym has entered into the Catholic life in a remarkably smooth way. I have been a Catholic since infancy, and to meet someone like Trym who knows so much about the Church's rich traditions (clarifying them better than I could), is incredibly edifying. Trym has become an example for us to see that God's call truly is real and alive.

Trym, as you prepare to leave these hallowed halls, I speak confidently on behalf of everyone, as I say that you will be missed! The fact that the college will lack your kindness, gentleness and poignant humour will be a marked difference next year. Please know, you always have a place in Rome that you may call home. As you now return to your diocese to progress towards ordination to the priesthood, stay close to the Lord and know that we are praying for you and willing you on here in Rome.

Ryan Christopher Browne



Mark O'Farrell

The first time I encountered Mark was at the Angelicum in 2019. There he was adorned in his cycling helmet, after bracing the chaotic, morning traffic of Rome. Little did I know that a year later this same Mark of the Irish College would become my neighbour at the English College for two years. Mark joined us in September 2020, when we all returned after the Covid-19 exile. The first native from Ireland to enter the English College for many years, but certainly not alone, as he is joined by those who are of Irish descent at the College.



As a son of Irish parents myself, I'm delighted with all things Irish. I answered the door once and there was Mark, with the largest box of Barry's Tea I've ever seen, accompanied with Chocolate Kimberley. Barry's Tea and Kimberley biscuits — for those of you who don't know — offers an authentic image of Irish teatime. To have a neighbour who brings such treasured gifts has been a delight. I can say, my home will always be open to Mark, as long as he doesn't forget the Barry's Tea and the Chocolate Kimberley biscuits!!

In all seriousness, these offerings are a sign of Mark's genuine hospitality, a gift he has showcased in his role as a guest master and infirmarian. These simple gestures are signs of a great priest in the making. When I reflect on who Mark is, I'm struck by his personality and also his devotion. His personality has offered us a great example. He's brought a real sense of humility. Mark isn't a person who seeks the limelight, but goes about his duties with a smile. He's a person who has gone out of his way to ensure the happiness of others, simply carrying out acts of charity where they need to be done.

Within the daily life of the seminary, I've been impressed by Mark's devotion to faith. Typically, his devotion to the Rosary and the Eucharist. Discipleship is not easy, especially when the going gets tough. However, having examples such as Mark makes it easier, because it offers us a reminder that God is close and listens to our needs. During his time at the English College, Mark has been truly exemplary in this manner since he arrived and has been a source of encouragement for us all. Thank you, Mark, for your constant example of perseverance in faith.

It will be this assuring presence that we'll miss. Our loss is the gain of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore. The skills he has nurtured throughout his years in seminary will now firmly be put into practice in pastoral ministry. Mark, as you venture into this next part of your vocational discernment in Ireland, may the Holy Spirit guide you. You have given us another image of Christ the High Priest through your personality and charisms. Thank you for this! We pray that your ministry will continue to touch the hearts of many more people.

Ryan Christopher Browne

Rev. Mr Marc Pitson

I first encountered Marc during an enquirers' weekend with the English Dominicans, with whom he began his journey towards priesthood. While he later discerned that his path lay, not with God's Dogs, but with the diocesan priesthood, he continued to be a loyal son of St Dominic throughout his time here. Indeed, he may have had his OP surgically removed after a few months in Rome, but his devotion to the *Summa*, *Supplementum*, and Mother Angelicum remained notably undimmed.



The lingering influence of the Order of Preachers was evident in other areas as well — above all, in his love of community life. Marc's presence among us was a blessing in a number of ways; he could always be relied upon to take part in community events (especially anything involving Palazzola, a favourite spot of his), and to bring a certain gallows humour to conversations about the many and varied absurdities of life in seminary, or the vagaries of the pontifical system.

When the unwelcome arrival of Covid on the world scene led to the great exodus of March 2020, Marc and I found ourselves boarding the first plane back to the UK, without any clear idea of where we were going to stay when we landed. The upshot was that I got to experience his aptitude for community living (if not necessarily for cooking!) in the highly unusual circumstances of the short-lived Venerable English College, Liverpool Branch. This consisted of two weeks' quarantine in the presbytery that my VD had generously vacated for the occasion, with only each other and a certain Fr Silviu for company. Living at close quarters with Marc during this exceptional period, I found that one question above all others would pass repeatedly through my mind: how on earth can a man single-handedly demolish an entire chest full of Dairy Milk *and still not put on any weight???*

Those of us for whom the long-term effects of shovelling bucketloads of Bibos pasta down our necks are sadly all too visible, would often be struck by a similar sense of injustice when accompanying Marc on trips to Gino Sorbillo's, for his favourite Neapolitan-style pizza, or indeed anywhere at all that served decent carbonara — especially if said carbonara was *tartufata*. For while it would be fair to say that the Rev. Mr Pitson does not overflow with enthusiasm for life abroad in general (this is a man for whom the very act of passing through UK passport control is a profoundly emotional experience), he would gladly make an exception for the cuisine of the *bel paese*. On the whole, however — and even if truffle carbonara in the eateries of his home town of Hull is conspicuous by its absence — this proud Yorkshireman must surely be content to be back safely within county boundaries. We can be just as certain that the good folk of Leeds diocese will be delighted to have him, as he continues his journey towards priesthood.

Martin Fyles

Theodore Sharrock

How best to describe the quiet, reserved, placid, understated, restrained Theo Sharrock? Certainly not with any of those adjectives. Perhaps the English language lacks the words to sum up the man. Perhaps an idea, an experience, is better to convey some of the nuance of Sharrock better than language. Like witnessing the yearly ritual of Theo pestering of the Vice Rector about when the tank opens. Or the experience of passing Theo's laundry hanging out in all its eclectic Marks and Spencer's glory for the first time. Or perhaps a slogan would be better; one could paraphrase the motto of Theo's preferred maker of gin-and-tonic glasses and say "Never Knowingly Unopinionated".



Theo, in fact, was the first *Venerabile* seminarian I ever had the pleasure of meeting. Stood in the Baron's Hall of Arundel Castle at an ordination reception, he was the first of the seminarians to stride over, becassocked, and introduce himself to us "New Men" who were preparing to join the VEC in the autumn. Kind, welcoming and full of praise for the College, he enkindled in us nothing but excitement for what was to come. Indeed, Theo perhaps embodies the age-old concept of *Romanità*. A true son of the College, his love for Rome, the VEC and all things Italian is second to none. Few people could be said to have embraced the Roman life more than Theo — embracing his studies, embracing the life and history of the College, embracing the language, culture and all the opportunities Italy has to offer — whether "reading" the Harry Potter audiobooks in Italian around Palazzola's pool for the hundredth time or donning a tunic for a Eucharistic procession in Milan while on pastoral placement. Yet Theo always manages to bring his own talents and abilities to all he does; whether trying to introduce a touch of the Jesuit-formation of old with his science lessons on the international standard of the kilogram, or his drive to make the College as green as possible with his winter-long crusade of closing windows and turning down radiators.

In short, it always seems to me that Theo can turn his hand to anything with characteristic drive and enthusiasm balanced with his ability to bring his own gifts to the fore — his hard-working spirit, his kind-heartedness, and his prayerful attitude.

In his five years in College, Theo has been one of the great animators of the community's life; always eager to sign up to any events, eager to encourage his brothers to engage in the life of the College, eager to keep alive the spirit and traditions of his beloved VEC.

His presence in the community, his love of the College and his well-rounded abilities are certainly going to be missed in College, but I am sure these same qualities will continue to allow Theo to excel, as he moves on from the VEC. Know, Theo, that the prayers of the whole community are with you as the Lord's call takes you on the next stage of your formation journey back in the Diocese of Salford!

Joseph O'Brien

Fr Don White

Fr Don's existence at the Venerable English College has been far from ordinary. I had the pleasure of meeting him in his first incarnation, in 2020. He was fresh-faced after the arduous journey, all the way from Mackay, North-East Australia. A journey, as Don has reminded us, takes well over a day! Alas, his long journey was in vain. He was here for only six weeks, when the Covid-19 Pandemic struck and everyone was evacuated to their home countries. The end of an Australian priest in our seminary. Or so we thought....



Fast forward to 2021, a student claimed that Fr Don had appeared in an online class at the Angelicum. Crikey! Fr Don was still with us — at least through the medium of online learning. Much speculation emerged: was Fr Don to return to the English College? Mgr Whitmore confirmed at the 2021 *Villeggiatura* that Fr Don was indeed to make a triumphant return.

A second voyage to the eternal city commenced. As I write this leaver's note, I'm reliably informed by Google that the trip is 9,546 miles from his parish town of Mackay to Rome. No easy task, but Fr Don, a born and bred Australian, is made of stronger stuff. On arrival, he was greeted with much jubilation by those who remembered him from 2020. In his typical style he greeted us in return with a thick Australian, "GOODAYYY!"

When he returns to Australia, he will have covered almost 40,000 miles during his time at the English College. So, he has undergone a great physical journey these last years. In addition to this, he has achieved a life-long desire to undertake further studies in Moral Theology. This desire is the culmination of many years in his diocese, where he was worked tirelessly for the people of God. Now that he has had this opportunity, he returns to Australia with an even greater wealth of experience — the eternal city — which has given him a prolonged experience of the wider church universal. This nurturing experience will benefit the people of God in the Diocese of Rockhampton.

Fr Don has been a welcome addition to our community. He has brought another experience of the Church to us. Specifically, he has brought with him over thirty years of pastoral experience. This experience, the longest of our priests in the house, has vitalised our conversations this year. He has been a prime example of a good and holy priest to students and priests alike. It's examples such as Fr Don that encourage us as we further discern how to become good and holy pastors. This is the lasting mark Fr Don leaves on us.

It's for this witness to the diocesan priesthood during your time at the College, Don, that we thank you for. For showing us that even after thirty years of priesthood, we can still be joyful and youthful in spirit! Thank you for this. Please remember us in your daily prayers, we will certainly keep you in ours.

Ryan Christopher Browne

Fr Peter Wygnanski

It is no secret that Fr Piotr Wygnanski has enjoyed his time in the Eternal City, and that he has availed himself of every opportunity here. He's handled the heat of the summers better than the typical Brit, for years, retiring in the middle of the day to his hammock on one of the finest *terrazas* of Rome's *centro storico*. Of an evening, this terrace became a place of welcome attracting civilized philosophical and theological debate, and broader discussions pertaining to the Church, the world, and politics, all thankfully accompanied by a drink or two.



Pete excelled in his studies at the Pontifical Universities, and embodies, for me, the best version of a Greg student — one who applies himself to study far *beyond* that of the classroom. As an alumnus of the esteemed patristics, or *Communio*, seminar of Fr Joseph Carola SJ, one already hears something of an echo of the Father's in his own words. As a fundamental theologian, he has a fondness for St John Henry Newman, and I know it was one of his personal highlights, that he was able to proclaim the Gospel at his canonisation in St Peter's square. Pete's intellect is, no doubt, a gift to the Church and it will be exciting to watch what profound insights he will share in due course.

Pete is a cultured man who appreciates the contribution of a broader education for our lives as pastors. Himself, a talented musician, has been known to bridge the great divide between that of contemporary praise and worship music (led each week on an electric guitar), and the use of Gregorian chant and polyphony (which he sang, wrote, and encouraged the use of within the liturgy). His Mass setting in honour of Our Lady of Walsingham remains here as part of his legacy. Pete, having first trained as an electronic engineer, is a man who values the complementarity between science and religion. For years, he volunteered at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. On one occasion, enroute, caught in the rain, he was even offered a lift there by a chauffeur.

Perhaps my words thus far present Peter to be a man that is all work and no play, but that could not be further from the truth. I know no man that has availed himself of the opportunity to explore and travel Italy (and beyond) as much as he. From city breaks featuring Cathedrals and ecclesiastical museums, to the more rural expeditions up mountains, he has explored as much as one could, whilst also being faithful to the demands of priestly formation. Yes, he has been known to retreat to his man cave of a room, but he has truly valued the company of his brothers. These first two years of his priesthood have been a blessing to the house, and we thank him for organising Masses in the various basilicas, churches, and shrines across Rome. We wish him well as he departs for the English mission, assure him of our prayers, and look forward to seeing him again soon.

Fr Toby Duckworth



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View over Lake Albano from Palazzola

The Roman Association

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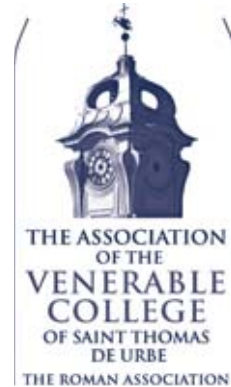
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The Minutes of the 152nd Annual General Meeting of The Association of the Venerable College of St Thomas *de Urbe*

16th November 2021

Twenty-one members of the Association attended the AGM online: John Ainslie, John Allen, Thomas Atthill, Anthony Coles, Tom Cooper, Pamela Coote, Anthony Dearman, John Fegan, Philip Gillespie, Mark Harold, Sean Healy, Patrick Kelly, Christopher Lough, Fergus Mulligan, Nicholas Paxton, Ryan Service, Aaron Spinelli, Stephen Wang, Mark Woods, Anthony Wilcox, William Young.

1. Prayer to the Holy Spirit

The Meeting began at 19:00 via Zoom with Mgr John Allen in the Chair, and Association Secretary Fr Aaron Spinelli taking Minutes.

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

2. Apologies and best wishes

Received from Bishop John Arnold, Bishop Nicholas Hudson, Bishop Crispian Hollis, Philip Andrews, Anthony Barrett, Chris Beirne, Austin Bennett, Liam Bradley, Neil Brett, Paul Bruxby, Stephen Coonan, Michale Coughlan, Paul Daly, Christopher

Dawson, Anthony Dodd, Robert Draper, Frank Fallon, Tom Finnigan, John Flynn, Joseph Gee, Matthew Habron, Eugene Harkness, James Hadley, Tim Hopkins, Tim Galligan, Miguel Garnett, Bruce Harbert, Tim Hopkins, Edward Jarosz, Paul Keane, Stephen Langridge, David McLoughlin, Patrick Mileham, Peter Morgan, Paul Moss, Gerard Murray, Tony Myers, James Neal, John Nelson, Terry Phipps, Peter Purdue, Robert Reardon, Alan Sheridan, Gerard Skinner, David Standley, Adrian Towers, Mervyn Tower, Michael Tuck, Philip Whitmore.

3. Minutes of the 151st AGM

These were approved by the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

5. The *De Profundis* for deceased members

Mr Nicolas Coote, Sr Gertrude, Fr Michael Sharratt, Mgr Canon Cyril Murtagh, Canon Michael McCoy, Canon William Kevin Rea, Mgr Mark Langham.

6. Prayer for sick members

Prayers were said for Bishop Christopher Budd, Bishop John Hine, Anthony Jones, Frank O’Loughlin.

7. Chairman’s Remarks

The Chair remarked on another unusual gathering in unusual times and hoped meetings and celebrations will revert back to normal next year.

8. Treasurer’s Report

The Treasurer sent his report to the meeting via the Secretary — here follows a summary:

- a. The 2020 accounts were filed with the Charity Commission in September (within the deadline). The Treasurer plans to complete and have at least a final draft of the 2021 accounts for presentation at the AGM in Rome next year.
- b. The legacy from Bryan Chestle is now mostly with The Trust (some remaining disposals to be made and their proceeds to be received). The current amount received is approaching £300k, with this being added to our existing portfolio of investments, which currently stand at around the £1.5m mark.
- c. We supported the College this year with the second year payment of 2 bursaries made in 2020, plus a further one made in 2021 (again for 2 years). We plan to reassess the nursery approach for our grants to be made in 2022.
- d. AIB notified us of their intention to withdraw from the UK banking

market and, as such, have given us 3 months notice to find alternative banking arrangements. This is now progressing with Metro Bank. It is important to note that, when we have the new bank details, we will email out to all members to request they change their Standing Orders as, otherwise, we will not receive their payments. A big emphasis was placed on the importance of people to do this to ensure we continue to receive their annual membership payments.

Thanks were given to Damien McGrath for the great work he had done in bringing finance matters up to date. The Members also acknowledged Bryan Chestle’s significant contribution to the Roman Association.

9. CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Chair of Trustees, Sean Healy, informed the members that the CIO with its constitution is finally set up. Members all approved of this.

10. Rector’s Report

We welcomed the new Rector, Fr Stephen Wang, who shared with us the outgoing Rector’s report and gave us a short report on the college since his arrival.

The meeting expressed its thanks to the former Rector and to the new Rector for their reports, particularly given the continuing challenging circumstances of the pandemic.

11. Election of new members

The following were elected to Ordinary

membership from the summer: Alexander Balzanella, Peter Ellul, Anthony Fyk, Elliot Hanson, Torbjørn Holt, David Irwin, Dominic Jenkinson, Aayrton Muscat. A note of congratulations will be sent to them.

12. Elections and Appointments

- e. Election of Chairman and President of the Roman Association — John Allen was asked to continue to serve for another year in these extra-ordinary circumstances.
- f. Councillors of the Roman Association — for clarity, membership of the Council is defined as Trustees, Councillors, Rector, Past Presidents, up to 15 members but 3 elected each year for a fixed term and then must not be elected until a gap of a year has passed.

The meeting elected three new Councilors: Fergus Mulligan, Philip Gillespie, James Neal (to serve until 2024) to join, Seamus O'Boyle, Liam Bradley (Until 2023), Mark Woods, Patrick

Mileham and Mervyn Tower (Until 2022), and Philip Andrews, John Fegan and Mark Harold (Until 2021).

13. 153rd AGM

It is hoped that this will be celebrated at Palazzola and incorporate many of the postponed events of the previous year. The dates of the meeting are to be 23rd May to 27th May 2022.

14. 2021 Martyrs' Day gatherings

A number of gatherings will take place this year after a hiatus in all regions except the South West.

15. Any Other Business

Sr Gertrude's funeral — The Sisters of Mercy wished to thank members for their prayers and expressed their thanks to those who attended her Requiem Mass.

The meeting then concluded with the Chair encouraging members to continue online if they so wished.

News from Old Romans

Arundel and Brighton

We begin by giving a noisy hand to Fr Aaron Spinelli for his many years of service compiling these Old Romans reports from the Diocese of “Gin and Jag”, who lays down his *venerable* pen for now. Fr Aaron continues to serve as parish priest of Horsham.

- Bishop Emeritus Kieran Conry is in Hampshire.
- Canon Tony Churchill retires as parish priest of Ashstead, Surrey; we wish him a long and happy retirement in the Diocese!
- Mgr Michael Jackson continues to help assist in his retirement in Hove.
- Fr Tony Bridson continues as parish priest of Redhill, Reigate and Merstham.
- Fr Raglan Hay Will is parish priest of Haywards Heath.
- Canon Kieran O’ Brien remains parish priest of St Joseph’s, Brighton and of St John the Baptist, Kemp Town, Brighton.
- Canon Bill Davern is parish priest in Epsom.
- Canon Rob Esdaile, after a few well-deserved months of sabbatical, has moved from Thames Ditton to take up a new role as parish priest of Woking.
- Fr Jonathan How is parish priest of Godalming.
- Fr Tony Milner continues as parish priest of Southwick and Hangleton.
- Fr Kevin Dring continues as parish priest in Eastbourne.
- Fr Stephen Dingley is parish priest of Effingham, and this year celebrates his Silver Jubilee (*ad multos annos!*)
- Fr Stephen Hardaker is parish priest of Oxted.
- Fr Terry Martin is parish priest of Worthing.
- Fr Simon Hall is parish priest of Dorking.
- Canon David Parmiter continues as Dean of Arundel Cathedral.
- Fr Andrew Pinsent remains at the Ian Ramsey Centre at Oxford University.
- Fr Bruno Witchalls continues in Eastbourne as an assistant priest.
- Fr Andrew Moss works abroad.
- Fr Tristan Cranfield has moved from Eastbourne, to become part of the moderated clergy team at Guildford.
- Fr Stephen O’Brien is assistant priest in Epsom.
- And last but not least, Rev. Mark Woods continues as parish deacon at Worthing.

Fr Tristan Cranfield

Birmingham

There have been very few changes to the appointments of Old Romans in the diocese since my last report in 2020. Bishop David Evans (1978) and Bishop Stephen Wright (2000) are getting to grips with their many roles as Assistant Bishops to Archbishop

Bernard Longley. Bishop David Mc Gough (1970) has retired.

Timothy Menezes (1995) remains Cathedral Dean, and the now Richard Walker (2000) is Vicar General.

Patrick Kilgarriff (1966 and onetime Rector) is retired and living at St George's, Worcester. John O'Brien (1984) is retired too and living in Nuneaton. Danny Mc Hugh (1967) is also retired and living in Solihull and caring for the ethnic Chaplaincies. 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, Sheldon, Birmingham. Paul Moss (2005) as you know is serving in the Vatican. David Gnosill (2003) has recently moved to St Christopher's, Codsall and St Thomas of Canterbury, Tettenhall, near Wolverhampton. Joseph McLoughlin (2002) is at St Peter and Paul's, Pype Hayes also serving St Mary and John's, Gravelly Hill (near Spaghetti Junction) in North Birmingham. He is Judicial Vicar. Patrick Mileham (2002) is at St Mary's Warwick with St Charles Borromeo, Hampton on the Hill. Robert Murphy (2001) is serving in the Apostolic Nunciature in New Delhi.

Gerardo Fabrizio (1993) is Pastoral Director at St Mary's College, Oscott. Mark Crisp (1991) is at St Peter and Paul's in Wolverhampton, University Chaplain and sharing pastoral care for St Michael's Penn and St Bernadette, Wombourne. Patrick Broun (1989) is at Our Lady and St Hugh, Whitney, Oxfordshire.

Harry Curtis (1984) is at Our Lady Help of Christians, Cowley, Oxford. Bruce Harbert (1979) is retired and living in Oxford. Mervyn Tower (1978) is at Corpus Christi, Headington, Oxford. John Osman (1975) is at St Birinus, Dorchester on

Thames. Gerard Murray is at Sacred Heart and English Martyrs, Rugby.

Our not so new Old Romans remain in their first appointments; Marco Egawhary (2019) at Holy Trinity, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Ryan Service (2019) at St John's Banbury and John Waters (2019) at St Dunstan's Kings Heath, Birmingham. Jan Nowotnik (1998) is working on Ecumenism and Mission for the Bishop's Conference.

Ryan Service will be taking over as Diocesan Contact for the Old Roman Association and compiler of this Report.

Canon Gerard Murray

Clifton

A few changes since last year, and we have been joined by Michael Patey of Northampton, as Chaplain at Downside School, with the departure of the monks.

Canon Tony Harding, seven years on now from the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination, is still our Diocesan Archivist. Michael Healy's Golden celebration was deferred *Covid causa* from before Christmas to May. He is no longer PP of Withywood (Bristol) and Chew Magna, although still active in the family of parishes that includes them. Michael Robertson continues at Fairford and Cricklade on the upper reaches of the Thames, Philip Beisly is across the Cotswolds, at Dursley and Nympsfield and Colin Mason at Westbury-on-Trym with Henbury, Bristol. Alex, who became Anselm Alexander, Redman formerly one of two Parish Clergy at Glastonbury, also serving Wells, has left the Diocese. Parishes in the south of the Diocese have still been supplied, Coronavirus permitting, from Mendip as necessary by Bishop (Emeritus of Portsmouth) Crispian (Sam) Hollis, and your correspondent.

Thomas Atthill

Hallam

“Still” is the operative (or perhaps inoperative) word for Hallam this year. Peter Kirkham is still in retirement at Worksop; John Ryan is at St. Bede’s, Rotherham; Mark McManus at St. Joseph’s, Handsworth; Adrian Tomlinson at Chesterfield; Dominic Jenkinson is unwell and on leave; and Craig Fitzpatrick is in Leeds Diocese. Tom Clarke, and Kevan Grady are (still) as they were, the latter being involved in running the diocesan “synodal process”. Henry Woodhouse is to be ordained on 9 July.

I regret to report the death of Anthony Towey in late June.

Your correspondent is to undertake a little foreign travel to be spiritual director at the other English College at Valladolid.

Fr John Metcalfe

Leeds

*Changes from 2021 are indicated in **bold** type.*

- The Right Reverend Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds
Bishop’s House, 13 North Grange Road, Leeds LS6 2BR
- **His Eminence Arthur Cardinal Roche**
Prefect 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**
Parochial Administrator *ad interim* of Our Lady Immaculate Parish, Pateley Bridge, and St Joseph’s Parish, Bishop Thornton, in addition to his responsibilities as Chaplain to Wetherby Carmel and Harrogate Hospital; residing in Harrogate.
- **Mgr Andrew Summersgill**
St Joseph’s Presbytery, 20 Westgate, Wetherby LS22 6LL; Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia; Associate Judicial Vicar
- 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 Episcopal Vicar for Education from summer 2023. From this summer, Mgr Grogan will work alongside Canon Timothy Swinglehurst in the Vicariate for Education in addition to his responsibilities in the parish.
- 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
St Peter and St Paul Presbytery, St
George's Walk, Standbridge Lane,
Wakefield WF2 7NR
- 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**
Parish of Our Lady of Kirkstall,
Holy Name Presbytery, 52 Otley
Road, Leeds LS16 6HW
- Rev. John Carlisle
English Martyrs Presbytery,
Teddington Avenue, Huddersfield
HD5 9HS
- Rev. Marc Homsey
Chaplain to the Universities of Leeds
and Director of Youth Service
Cathedral House, Great George
Street, Leeds LS2 8BE
- **Rev. Martin Kelly**
Holy Redeemer Parish, St Patrick's
Presbytery, 34 New North Road,
Huddersfield HD 1 5JY; providing
chaplaincy care to Huddersfield
University; and continuing with his
responsibilities as Vice Chancellor
of the Chancery, as Co-ordinator
of Lay School Chaplains for the
Vicariate for Education, and with
providing oversight of the diocesan
"Parish to Mission" process.
- Rev. Anthony Rosso
St Joseph's Presbytery, Queen's Road,
Ingrow, Keighley BD21 1AT. **Priest**
Chaplain to Holy Family School,
Keighley.
- Rev. Sean Crawley (Assistant Priest &
Bishop's Secretary)
Cathedral House, Great George
Street, Leeds LS2 8BE
- Rev. Elliott Wright (Assistant Priest)
St Robert's Presbytery, Robert Street,
Harrogate HG1 1HP
- Rev. Benjamin Hilton (Assistant Priest
and **Chaplain to Armley Prison**)
Cathedral House, Great George
Street, Leeds LS2 8BE
- **Rev. Mr Mark Pitson (Deacon)**
Pastoral service in the Parish of St
John Mary Vianney, Immaculate
Heart Presbytery, 294 Harrogate
Road, Leeds LS17 6LE

Canon Matthew Habron

Liverpool

I hope you don't mind if there isn't a full list. Basically, most people are still where they were last year, so I'll limit this to those who have moved and those whose lives have been affected by unusual circumstances in the past year.

Archbishop Paul Gallagher has been involved in the Holy See's response to President Putin's "special military exercise" in Ukraine, by going to visit Ukraine in May, stopping in various parts of the country. I don't envy him his job. Francis Marsden, who has made numerous contacts with Ukrainian Catholics over recent decades, has been able to help focus a remarkable response from the people in The Archdiocese of Liverpool, and make sure the right things were collected, despatched, and delivered to the right people. Several van loads of goods have travelled to the Poland-Ukraine border, and — as far as I know — Canon Aidan Prescott blessed them all before they left. Father John Goddard, the former Anglican Bishop of Burnley, acknowledged Gerald Anders' support on his journey to ordination as a Catholic priest in the crypt of our Metropolitan Cathedral on 2 April this year.

When Ince Blundell Hall closed, Brian Newns moved to Christopher Grange, a care home on the border between West Derby and Dovecot. David Potter has been asked to move from Saint Albert's in Stockbridge Village to the lovely church Saint Francis of Assisi in the parish of Saint Wilfrid in Garston, an area very proud to be associated with Saint John Almond. Peter Fleetwood, your scribe, became fully resident in the Faroe Islands last October, and now has to surrender his passport to the police before leaving the country, to request approval from the Danish authorities to re-enter the Faroes. Every time! Life after Brexit is very different. Mark Drew didn't make it in 2021, so I am hoping to lure him to the North Atlantic in 2023!

Paul Robbins and Tony Murphy have both written; they are alive and well. Paul reassures me Paul Crowe is on good form,

too. Paul (Robbins) is a defender of the bond in the dioceses of Westminster, Oslo, and Nottingham, occasionally helping the tribunals in Plymouth and East Anglia. "Semi-retired", he says!

If there are any errors or omissions, they are my fault.

Mgr Peter Fleetwood

Northampton

I started my report last year with the news of Andrew Coy's ordination and his appointment to the Cathedral in Northampton, and I can begin this year's report with news of his transferral from Cathedral House to Bishop's House! Andrew has been appointed as Private Secretary to the Bishop. He continues having a pastoral role within the Northampton Hub. Paul Hardy has now moved to a nursing home in Middlesborough. John Koenig remains in Wellingborough, enjoying his retirement. After thirty years, Kevin McGinnell has stepped down from his education role and remains a parish priest in Luton. David Barrett is in Olney, and I continue to have responsibility for two parishes in Beaconsfield and Bourne End. As I began with Andrew Coy — I am still hopeful that he will become the Northampton correspondent for next year!

Mgr Seán Healy

Nottingham

There have been few changes over the last two years. Here is the present position:

- Fr Kevin Athaide is at St Joseph's, Derby
- Fr Mark Brentnall is at English Martyrs, Derby; and is Dean for Derby

- Canon John Cahill is at the Most Blessed Sacrament, Leicester; and is Provost of the Cathedral Chapter
- Fr Andrew Cole is at St Mary's, Grimsby; and is Dean of Lindsey
- Mgr John Hadley is at St Pius X, Leicester; and is Chancellor of the Diocese
- Fr Martin Hardy is working outside the Diocese
- Fr Peter Harvey is at Our Lady of Good Counsel, Sleaford
- Canon Edward Jarosz is at St Hugh's, Lincoln; and is Vicar General of the Diocese
- Canon Christopher Thomas; Episcopal Secretary to the Bishop's Conference
- Fr Peter Vellacott is at St Mary & St Augustine, Stamford; and is Judicial Vicar
- Mgr Brian Dazeley; retired at St Peter's, Leicester
- Mgr John Guest; retired at Parr, Cornwall
- Canon Bernard Needham; retired at Tupton, Chesterfield
- Fr Anthony Pateman; retired at St Peter's, Leicester
- Fr Michael Stappard; retired at Sutton-in-Ashfield
- Rt Rev. Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham

Fr Mark Brentnall

Plymouth

This year we have not gained or lost any of our Roman priests. Our senior citizen, Mgr George Hay has had a couple of visits to hospital, but continues to bounce back. Our other "retired" priest, Mgr Adrian Toffolo,

is in Friuli and now that travel is easier, is beginning to attract visitors keen for a little Italian sunshine and cuisine.

Mgr Robert Draper continues as parish priest in Sherborne, and given that our Diocese now faces potentially a long interregnum with Bishop Mark going to Wales, he is very relieved to be no longer Vicar General and potentially Diocesan Administrator. Having survived the long Covid restrictions, he was very happy to see the parish getting back to normality.

Fr Michael Wheaton remains at Crediton and Exeter University, but at the latter he is being greatly helped by Fr Albert Lawes, who is certainly not idle in his curacy in Exeter. Apart from the parish and the University, he has responsibilities in the district hospital and in the prison. Similarly well occupied is Fr James Barber in Poole, where he assists in two parishes and in school chaplaincy work.

We never forget in these lines Fr Guy de Gaynesford who acts as chaplain to a Community of Sisters of Mary Morning Star in Lynton, and who helps at Ilfracombe, and Fr Mark Skelton, Dean of Torbay and Parish Priest of Teignmouth, who also has Diocesan responsibilities in Safeguarding and on-going Clergy formation. And then there is the Russian Orthodox priest, Hieromonk Porphyrios, alias Robert Plant, who lives and ministers in Exeter. We are not quite sure what he currently thinks of his Patriarch!

Mgr Adrian Toffolo

Portsmouth

As I am writing this, most of our parishes have more-or-less returned to normal following the last lockdown. Bishop Philip Egan (1984) has not yet announced any moves of Old Romans in Portsmouth

Diocese for 2022, so for now we are still in our current parishes or retired. Moves will probably be announced later in the year.

As you will know, the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales reintroduced the Sunday obligation to attend Mass from Pentecost Sunday onwards, so, hopefully, we shall all be able to return to normal Mass attendance.

The Diocese of Portsmouth has undertaken a lengthy period of listening and discernment over the last two years, in order to develop a long-term plan of spiritual renewal.

During 2020 an extensive survey was undertaken. "A Thousand Voices: The views, hopes and fears of the lay faithful in the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth" was published in June 2021. Pastoral area and Deanery reviews were completed in November 2021, and further engagement of the laity via meetings with the Bishop has been ongoing since January 2022. In July, priests and deacons are gathering to discuss the proposed diocesan strategy.

Fr Phillip Pennington Harris

Shrewsbury

The main event since our last report is the sad news of the death of our senior Old Roman, Chris Lightbound, on 18 May 2022, in Nazareth House in Birkenhead, cared for by the wonderful sisters. Chris was a huge part of our Diocese, not least as Vicar General, 1982-2000, part of a legendary Triumvirate with Bishop Joe Gray and Mgr Peter O'Neill.

A proud Old Roman, he was ordained at Palazzola by Archbishop William Godfrey on 10 July 1955, one of the year

which included Jack Kennedy and Tony Kenny. I wish I had time to check my facts properly: but was Chris Senior Student to Tony's DSS? If so, just the two of them were ordained at Palazzola, the rest of the year *en masse* in a Roman church? I can just see Jack shaking his head and firing off one of his humorously reproofing emails if I've got that wrong. Chris stayed in Rome to complete his studies in Theology and Canon Law, returning to the Diocese and to the Cathedral, working with Canon Terence Welch, whose brother, Hugh, was PP here at St Werburgh's, Chester. After the Cathedral, he served in Romiley, Greasby and Wilmslow, finishing in the historic parish of Hooton from where he retired in 2003.

He was a Wallasey lad, born 31 July 1930, and one of the very big Lightbound family on the Wirral. He was baptised in the old SS Peter and Paul, New Brighton, five years before the famous "Dome from Home" was opened, a landmark to anyone sailing into Liverpool Bay. From St Anselm's College in Birkenhead, he went to Ushaw Junior Seminary in 1943 and then out to the VEC in 1949. After a very active retirement, he spent the last chapter of his life at Nazareth House, on the opposite corner to St Anselm's College. May he rest in the Peace and Light of the Risen Lord Jesus.

The mantle of Senior Shrewsbury Old Roman now passes to Jim Robinson, a mere child having been ordained in 1960. Coming down a decade, it's congratulations to Peter Burke, ordained 1971, who celebrated his Golden Jubilee last December. *Ad multos annos!*

Fr Paul Shaw

Roman Association AGM 2022, Rector's Report

FR STEPHEN WANG

As I write, in mid-May, we are coming to the end of the teaching period of the second semester. Rome has suddenly become incredibly hot, with highs of 32 degrees predicted for this week, and the city is heaving with tourists and pilgrims.

This is such a relief after the Omicron scare, when Covid restrictions tightened once more and impacted our life directly. For three months, from mid-December to the mid-March, we were not able to have guests in for meals or guided tours. It has been a real joy to open up the College once more and remember that hospitality is as much a part of our spiritual DNA as priestly formation. At the same time, what a joy to see Palazzola opening up again after two very difficult years, with many guests staying in the months ahead — groups, individual pilgrims, and more and more day visitors for special events.

I arrived in Rome at the end of July 2021. I had two very precious weeks overlapping with Mgr Philip Whitmore. He went on to have a few months' much deserved rest and sabbatical before he moved to the parish of Spanish Place in central London. He takes over as parish priest this summer. We are all so grateful for everything he brought to the College over his eight years as Rector, and I am full of gratitude for the support and encouragement he has given to me personally. Let us keep him very much in our prayers.

When Mgr Philip had left, I went to Assisi for two weeks to "perfect my Italian";

or, rather, to bring it up a notch from where I left it in 1997. We then had a wonderful three days at Palazzola as a formation team: myself, Fr John Flynn (the Vice Rector), Fr Konrad Grech (Spiritual Director), Fr James McAuley (Academic Tutor), and Fr Michael Doody (Pastoral Director). Time to pray, to get to know each other, to share our faith, and to prepare for the coming year.

The new men arrived mid-September for a fortnight of induction, Italian lessons and orientation: Luke Theobald (Birmingham), Ludvig Hareide (Oslo), and Charles Cowper from Ridley College — our Anglican exchange student. They were soon joined by Fr Christopher Warren (Hexham & Newcastle) and Fr Ansel D'Mello (Portsmouth) who are here for further studies, Fr David Grant who was on a short sabbatical, and Fr Donald White (Rockhampton) — who was returning after the Covid crisis sent him back to Australia. We said goodbye to David Ottersen (Oslo), who is discerning religious life, and to Joachim Teigen (also Oslo), who wanted to discern life as a layman — and who recently got engaged! In total we are now twenty-two seminarians, plus four priests for studies or sabbatical, and five members of the formation team — a total of thirty-two residents in the house.

The highlight of the induction period was undoubtedly meeting Pope Francis. We went to the General Audience expecting to wave at him from a distance. But right at the last minute one of the security guards called the English College group to come

forward and we had a few minutes alone with Pope Francis. He greeted me as the new rector, and spoke to each of the new men personally. It was a real privilege to meet him, and it certainly deepened our sense of communion with him, and through him with the universal Church.

We stuck to our tradition of having our annual retreat at Palazzola just before the semester began. The retreat giver was Fr Gerry Sheehan, a priest of Opus Dei who is well known to many of us through his ministry of spiritual direction in England. There were some great conferences, and during meals we listened to a recording of the Screwtape Letters by CS Lewis — very amusing and very sobering, in equal measure.

The Sunday after the retreat we went to the Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere to consecrate our year and our lives to the Virgin Mary — a very beautiful tradition at the College. And yes, we had a magnificent lunch in a local restaurant too.

As a new rector, I didn't arrive with a big list of revolutionary changes to impose on the College. Of course, I brought some of my own convictions about formation, and I have been influenced by my own experiences at both the VEC and at Allen Hall Seminary in Westminster Diocese. But I was very conscious that I was arriving at a College with its own extraordinary history — a place that has been shaped, for the good, by so many others. It instils a healthy sense of humility in a new rector.

I was grateful to join a very experienced team here. We wanted to do a lot of listening and learning. Listening to everyone involved in the life of the College, to what the Church is saying about priestly formation today, and above all listening to the Holy Spirit together.

One of the priorities coming from the Congregation for Clergy in the Vatican is that seminaries find a better balance of the

four fundamental dimensions of priestly formation: human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral. How can we acknowledge the continuing importance of intellectual formation without letting the academic timetable dominate everything, to the exclusion of the other areas? How can we put more focus, for example, on pastoral formation and the rich learning that takes place through a regular pastoral placement? How can we give proper time and space to human development, to fraternity, and to deepening our spiritual lives?

Just a small example: As a formation team we had some good discussion about the structure of the week and decided to experiment with a few small tweaks to the timetable. We used to have early morning Mass, but now on most weekdays we have Mass before lunch (and a slightly later lunch as a consequence). This gives us time to have half an hour of silent prayer in the Church together each morning, before we pray the Divine Office.

We have also started to pray the rosary before supper each Monday, and have an hour of Exposition on Sunday evenings which includes Vespers and Benediction. It seems important to put Eucharistic Adoration and Devotion to Our Lady at the heart of our seminary community, and to start each day with a period of silence and contemplation.

We are trying to respond to Pope Francis's insistent call for a more missionary and outward looking Church. Our weekly pastoral classes are now structured around three phases of pastoral formation that have the headings: "Missionary Disciples", "Missionary Communities", and "Missionary Priests". In the same vein, our seminarians have started their weekly pastoral placements: working in local parishes, helping with social action projects, welcoming pilgrims to Rome, etc.

It was a real joy for us to welcome the Jubilarians to the seminary in November — twenty-seven priests and one archbishop from England and Wales who were celebrating significant anniversaries: 40, 50 or 60 years since their priestly ordination. In total we had 1,350 years of priestly service in the church together! Their faithfulness was such an inspiration to us here at the Venerable English College. We celebrated Mass together in the church, prayed the *Te Deum* at the end of Mass, and then had a delicious dinner in the refectory and toasted our Jubilarians.

Fr Gerry Ewing gave us some advice after supper: “Have a seriousness of purpose and a lightness of touch.” Archbishop Bernard Longley pointed out how we see the future in each other: the Jubilarians see the priesthood of the future in the seminarians, and the seminarians see the priests they will become in a few years’ time! I spoke about the vision of Cardinal William Allen, who founded the English College as a seminary that would form missionary priests, when so many other voices wanted it to be a refuge where people could hide away until better times emerged in Elizabethan England.

Martyrs’ Day, as always, was one of the highlights of the year, when we celebrated St Ralph Sherwin and his Companions on 1 December. The night before we had the Vigil of Readings; then Solemn Mass on the day followed by a delicious festive lunch; coffee and liquori in the Cardinals’ Corridor; and in the evening the traditional Veneration of the Relics and the singing of the *Te Deum*. It was a joy to welcome Archbishop Arthur Roche who presided at the Mass, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher who concelebrated — both alumni of the College.

One highlight of the year was definitely the Seven Churches pilgrimage in March. The devotion was started by

St Philip Neri and has been part of the English College tradition for many years. We started with Mass in the *Confessio* at St Mary Major and finished at St Peter’s. We prayed the Divine Office through the day, and a seminarian shared a personal meditation at each church. And there was a hearty meal after church number 4 at lunchtime. We covered 7 churches and 22 miles in 14 hours of walking.

We normally celebrate our ministries during the Villeggiatura at Palazzola in early July. This year, Diaconate will take place as usual at the Villa, but the three “ministries” have been brought forward to May so that they can be celebrated in the College church before the end of the semester. This allows the men to invite friends from Rome who would normally have left the city by July. Please pray for our new Lectors, Acolytes and Candidates.

There have been some very memorable events: a talk by Fr Anthony Curren, who works at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, about his experience of ecumenism in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; a Mass with the Poor Servants of the Mother of God at the Mater Dei house near Spanish Steps on their patronal feast day: *Regina Prophetarum*, Our Lady, Queen of the Prophets; the priestly ordination of Fr Sean Elliott in Leeds Cathedral; an inspiring Holy Week retreat at Palazzola led by the Dominican Fr Vivian Boland; a Nordic night — complete with plastic Viking hats (which apparently are not very authentic anyway), Nordic cuisine, Nordic nuns (a Cistercian from Norway and a Benedictine from Sweden — visiting Rome for a formation course), flags galore and even a shrine to the Nordic saints; and the Great Seminary Bake Off, when six competitors spent hours in the kitchen preparing their cakes.

The College Schola has been very active over these months. They led our Advent Meditation and sang at the annual Lenten “Station Mass” in our local parish church of San Lorenzo. We sang in St Peter’s Square on Easter Sunday morning for Pope Francis and the hundreds of thousands of people gathered for the Mass. We are traditionally one of the few choirs that is invited to sing here for the liturgy each Easter Sunday.

Everyone has been very concerned about the war in Ukraine. Some of us were able to visit the Basilica of Santa Sofia, to pray with and for the Ukrainian community here in Rome, and to unite our prayers with them for peace in their country. We have tried to help in small ways, by contributing from our Student Fund to support charities who are working in Ukraine, and by holding a prayer vigil each Tuesday evening before the Blessed Sacrament in the church here. Let us hope and pray that there is a just and speedy solution to this conflict.

The VEC has always been a place of hospitality and a focus for English-speaking visitors in Rome, both Catholic and non-Catholic alike, and in October we had the first public Mass in 18 months after Covid. A number of distinguished people visited the College in the autumn, including Lord McFall (the Lord Speaker), Sir Lindsay Hoyle (the Speaker of the House of Commons) and Helen Wood his Chief of Staff, Cardinal Anders Arborelius (Archbishop of Stockholm), Archbishop Justin Welby (Archbishop of Canterbury), Archbishop Ian Ernest (Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome), and our own Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Recent graduate William Jolleys took up a Persons Fellowship at the College which involves archival research supervised by Prof Maurice Whitehead, our Director of Heritage Collections.

We have had some notable visitors over the months since Christmas: Chris Trott, British Ambassador to the Holy See, who took up his post last summer; Minister Kemi Badenoch, onetime contender for the leadership of the Conservative party; Dr Anabel Inge, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy to the Holy See, who discovered that she had a possible ancestral connection with a certain Hugh Ing who ran the English Hospice in the early 1500s; two former rectors, Bishop Nicholas Hudson and Mgr Pat Kilgarriff; Archbishop Rowan Williams; seminarians and the formation team from St John’s Seminary, Womersley (which sadly closed last summer); Anglican ordinands from St Mellitus College in London; our three episcopal visitors (Archbishop-Elect Mark O’Toole, Archbishop Bernard Longley and Archbishop John Wilson), together with members of the VEC Trust; a number of other bishops from the UK and beyond; the FOCUS lay missionary team from UCD in Dublin; and young leaders from the CAFOD “Step Into the Gap” programme.

We were very sad to hear of the death of Sr Gertrude Stranding in November. She was at the heart of the Palazzola community for many years when the Sisters of Mercy were there. She was such a warm, loving and wise friend to so many of us. We also heard that Mary-Jo Lorello sadly died on 15 February. Mary-Jo was at the heart of College life for over twenty years from the early-1970s until her retirement to New Mexico in 1996. She looked after the College accounts and — perhaps more significantly — led the seminarians from the tired world of British pop music into the infinite and mellifluous expanses of contemporary jazz. We remember her very fondly. May they rest in peace.

We are all so grateful as a College to the Roman Association and all its members and friends — for your friendship, prayers, and support. Personally, I'm very grateful indeed for the support and encouragement that you have given to me as a new Rector. It's good to see so many of you here at the AGM at Palazzola, and I hope that you and many other Old Romans will be able to visit and stay connected to the College in the months and years ahead.

ADDENDUM (September 2022)

I'd like to add four notes to this report just before *The Venerabile* goes to press, so the report covers a full year:

First, to express our shock and sadness on hearing of the death of Prof Anthony Towey this June. Anthony was an Old Roman and a former Theology Tutor at the VEC. He died after a very swift illness. He leaves behind his wife, Káren, and their dear daughter, Bethany — and so many family members and friends. May he rest in peace.

Second, to share the happy news that Edward Hauschild (Portsmouth) and Trym Hellevig (Oslo) were ordained to the Diaconate on 6 July at the end of the Villeggiatura. We wish them well and pray for them as they return to their dioceses for full-time pastoral ministry as deacons. We pray as well for Marc Pitson (Leeds) who was ordained to the Diaconate in Leeds this summer, and Elliot Hanson (Cardiff), Toby Duckworth (Birmingham) and John O'Laverty (Down and Connor), who were ordained to the Sacred Priesthood in their home dioceses. *Ad Multos Annos!*

Third, to congratulate Archbishop Mark O'Toole who came to Rome to receive his Pallium in July, and Archbishop Arthur Roche who was made a Cardinal at the end of August. We hosted the Thanksgiving

Mass for Cardinal Roche in the College, with thirty bishops and cardinals present, fifty priests, and over two hundred people in total crammed into the church and then piling into the garden for a delicious buffet supper. It was a very happy weekend, and we were honoured to be part of it.

And finally, to introduce our new team. It has been such a blow for the College (and for me personally) to lose three members of staff this year: Fr John Flynn, our Vice Rector, has been appointed as the new Rector at the Royal English College in Valladolid. He moved there in March and takes over formally this summer. Fr James McAuley, Academic Tutor and Interim Vice Rector, will be working back in the Diocese of Portsmouth as Vicar General. Fr Michael Doody, Pastoral Director, has been appointed as a parish priest in the Diocese of Leeds. We are very grateful to them and to their bishops for all they have given us.

Our new team consists of Fr Christopher Warren (Hexham and Newcastle) as Vice Rector and Formation Tutor; Fr David King (Arundel and Brighton) as Director of Pastoral Formation and Formation Tutor; Sr Valentina Stilo (Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity) as our Pastoral Formation Coordinator; and Mr Julian Paparella (a married layman) as our Intellectual Formation Coordinator. They join myself; Fr Konrad Grech SJ, our Spiritual Director; Dr Rosanna Giacometto, our Human Formation Tutor; and Prof Maurice Whitehead, our Director of Heritage Collections — as well as our fantastic administrative and domestic teams. We are very blessed to have such a wonderful group of people working together as we start the new formation year together, and as we look forward to welcoming our six new seminarians, and to welcoming back those who are returning.

Obituaries

Anthony Towey

The following text was first published in The Tablet, 2 July 2022.

An image that will always flash up when Anthony Towey's name is mentioned is of a swaying, charismatic man in a bar singing "On Ilkla Moor baht 'at" and cajoling his mesmerised audience into increasingly raucous renditions of the chorus. His choice of party piece at the evening sessions of the annual conference of the Catholic Theological Society tells more about Anthony than that he came from Yorkshire. Only someone adept at creating a warm rapport with any audience and a preternaturally assured performer could have had so many biblical scholars and feminist theologians eating out of the palm of his hand.

Anthony Towey, who died on Friday 24 June after a sudden and brief final illness, was not only a fine theologian but a master of communication — and so, not surprisingly, he had become a specialist in catechetics and in RE in schools. While the loss to his family, especially to his wife and daughter, and friends is bitter and personal, the loss to the Church and the academy is considerable: few Catholic theologians in Britain could match his formal expertise and articulacy.

Anthony Towey was born on 14 October 1959 in the former mining town of Maltby, south Yorkshire, the youngest of six and the only boy. He was delivered with his umbilical cord wrapped around his neck; it is recalled that his mother exclaimed a prayer to St Anthony, hence his name. He was part of the generation who grew up amidst the great changes and hopes brought about by the Second Vatican Council — and much of his ministry as a priest and an academic would be concerned with understanding and implementing the Council's vision. Soon after completing a BSc in International Trade and Development at the LSE, he studied for the priesthood at the Venerable English College (VEC) in Rome. He was ordained for the Diocese of Hallam in 1986 in St Marie's Cathedral in Sheffield.

His intellectual and teaching abilities became obvious to his teachers and his bishop, and he soon returned to the seminary (Oscott and the VEC) as a teacher. He completed his doctorate at the Gregorianum in Rome in 1995; it was published as *Amicitia* as Philosophical Foundation in the Eucharistic Theology of Thomas Aquinas. How appropriate a topic for Anthony, for he had a singular ability to establish and maintain relationships.

One of the enduring friendships he established while at the Greg was with one of his teachers, the Australian theologian and biblical scholar Gerald O'Collins SJ. He remembers Anthony as "among the most cheerful and dedicated theological teachers I have ever known and worked alongside. He faced the world with a ready smile and

never flinched in making a generous contribution. I always left his presence freshly encouraged and energised. Anthony was the incarnation of Christian joy.”

Unusually for someone of his generation, all of Anthony’s studies in philosophy and theology were carried out in Rome and there was a certain Roman stamp on the way he did theology. He worked from the large picture inwards, valued the writing of textbooks and the activity of spending oneself in the service of one’s students rather than for the more abstract goal of “the discipline” or the more individualistic “my research”. These aspects of his ministry as a theologian are exemplified in his hefty one-volume survey of the inheritance of western theology from a Catholic perspective: *An Introduction to Christian Theology: Biblical, Classical, Contemporary*.

Towey served as academic tutor at the VEC and head of RE at Loreto College, Manchester, before he joined St Mary’s, Twickenham as head of Theology, Philosophy and History. His work spread outwards from teaching formal theology towards imparting theology within a larger context of teacher-training, training catechists, and communicating theology in a pastoral context. He took a leading role in discussions on current trends in RE in the curriculum, seeking to influence education policy where it intersected with church-run schools, and in fostering research on the effectiveness of RE.

It was at St Mary’s — where he worked until his death — that Towey met Káren North; they married in 2010. Then we saw a whole new side of his lovable personality develop: engaged as ever, but with a wider vision of the needs of the community of faith summed up in the title of his 2016 essay: “What you Believe is what your Life is.” Ever active, Towey was beside Michael Hayes when in 2004 *Priests and People* was relaunched as *The Pastoral Review*, and he became editor following Michael’s death in 2017. It is a tribute to Towey that, in difficult times for a pastoral journal, he took part in a successful restructuring and diversification into other media. At the time of his death, he was formulating even greater plans for the journal and for research on communicating faith.

But it will not only be for his skills as a communicator that Anthony’s death will be lamented. His family, friends and students will miss even more his ability to debunk pomposity, to express mysteries in a warm and attractive vernacular, and to make us laugh: his was a joyous light-filled faith that appreciated the loveliness of God.

Thomas O’Loughlin

Chris Lightbound

An obituary for Chris Lightbound has been included in the report from the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Report of the Friends of the *Venerabile*

MICHAEL LANG

After three attempts, the members of the Friends and their guests arrived at Palazzola for the long-awaited group visit. At the end of May our TV news reports caused much concern carrying details of cancellations and/or long delays, but on the day, everyone managed to arrive at the villa (that is except for the Chairman and his wife). I am still unable to travel!

I have to tell you that I was there in spirit, and every day I received pictures of the group enjoying the facilities and the various visits which had all been arranged by Anthony Coles.

It was good to see the smiling faces (all-be-it shrouded in pac-a-macs) for the visit to the original summer villa at Monte Porzio.

Many in the group remembered the visits to the villa in the DIY times and were joined by the “Marsland” group, from the Lancashire area, so of course there was a musical evening, and indeed much talk about a duty cook making the famous apple pies to feed about 90 to 100 people. Thank you, Mary, for the 1980 puddings, but I am sure the present “Fruit Trays” are more healthy.

The visits to Nemi, Castel Gandolfo, Anzio, and Rome followed the usual pattern, and none would miss the visit (on Sunday morning this time) to the College for Mass, DBL, and lunch with the community. The visit enabled most of the group to meet Fr Stephen for the first time. The seating plan for lunch was

arranged to allow the members to sit with their diocesan seminarians.

One of our Italian members suggested that we should invite the new Ambassador to the Holy See to last year’s AGM (on Zoom,) and any visit to Rome. So, we decided to invite him to Palazzola to give a talk on the Duties of the Ambassador, followed by lunch. This was arranged! HM Ambassador Christopher Trott (making use of the Lecture Room facilities) gave an excellent talk on his duties. The whole group then decamped to the terrace for a memorable lunchtime session.

After the lunch and the Ambassador’s departure, Sr Assumpta took to the stage and gave an interesting talk on the “Friendship of Florence Nightingale and the Sisters of Mercy during the Crimean war and afterwards”, which was very thought provoking; to say nothing about the daily and nightly encounters with enormous rats.

In a second talk, Sister spoke about the blessings and privileges of being a Sister of Mercy with special attention to her ministry at Palazzola and in Nairobi where God always affirmed her ministry by sending practical and financial assistance in times of great need. Her mother’s maxim always stood her in good stead when she asked for a pair of shiny shoes for her confirmation: “Child why do you trouble your head about small things? Don’t you know God always provides?”

And God always did provide at Palazzola and elsewhere, especially in Africa.

During my term as Chairman, I and members of the Committee have tried to attend as many ordinations as possible, and I believe that apart from ordinations during the COVID lockdowns, at least one member of the committee has been present at all but one. This exception was the ordination held in Florida USA when we could not justify the travel costs.

This year the Ordination of Fr. John O'Laverty was held in N. Ireland and it looked like no one from the Friends would be present. But when talking to a Buckfast visitor he said, "Tell me about the Friends".

The next day I received an email asking if he could represent the Friends at that ordination and asking if he could join the Friends. Another new member for us!

In recent years, I have been commenting on the reduction in membership. But the Friends' visit to the Villa has reversed this comment. I received four joining forms in the following week. It only goes to show that if you broadcast news of the College and its Villa, then you will encourage visitors, and this is evident from the parting words of the Ambassador as Jim Holroyd bade him good-bye: "My family and I will definitely spend some time at the Villa."



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

Friends of the Venerabile

(The Venerabile English College, Rome)



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2021-22 House List

3rd Cycle (Year I)

WYGNANSKI Fr Piotr (East Anglia)

2nd Cycle (Year II)

O'LAVERTY John (Down and Connor)

WHITE Fr Donald (Rockhampton)

2nd Cycle (Year I)

DUCKWORTH Toby (Birmingham)

WARREN Fr Christopher (Hexham
and Newcastle)

1st Cycle Theology (Year III)

DONLEAVY Hugh (Liverpool)

HAUSCHILD Edward (Portsmouth)

HELLEVIG Trym (Oslo)

O'FARRELL Mark (Waterford
and Lismore)

SHARROCK Theodore (Salford)

1st Cycle Theology (Year II)

BENCH David (Birmingham)

BAJLOVIC Antonio (Stockholm)

FINNEGAN James (Liverpool)

FYLES Martin (Liverpool)

MEEHAN William (Hamilton)

O'BRIEN Joseph (Hexham
and Newcastle)

1st Cycle Theology (Year I)

BROWNE Ryan (Portsmouth)

LEDUM Mathias (Oslo)

TORRES AIRAVA Viktor (Helsinki)

1st Cycle Philosophy (Year II)

HAWKES Ryan (Portsmouth)

HENRY Jonathan (Birmingham)

OTTERSEN David (Oslo)

RYAN Jack (Portsmouth)

SINCLAIR Benjamin (Hexham
and Newcastle)

1st Cycle Philosophy (Year I)

HAREIDE Ludvig (Oslo)

THEOBALD Luke (Birmingham)

One year theology course

D'MELLO Fr Ansel (Portsmouth)

Anglican Exchange

COWPER Charles

Sabbatical

GRANT Fr David (Middlesbrough)

Formation Team

WANG Fr Stephen (Westminster),
Rector

FLYNN Fr John (Salford), Vice Rector

DOODY Fr Michael (Leeds),
Pastoral Director

GRECH Fr Konrad SJ, Spiritual Director

McAULEY Fr James (Portsmouth),
Academic Tutor





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R O M E



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