

# VENERABILE VIEW

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The English College Rome

## FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

Autumn 2014

As I come to the end of my first year as Rector, it is hard to believe that twelve months have passed since I took on this new role. There has been plenty to learn, but I have been fortunate in having patient and understanding colleagues, not to mention the students themselves and the administration staff, who have helped me to settle into the rhythm of College life and all that it requires from a Rector.

One of the highlights of the summer term was the opportunity for all seminarians in Rome to meet the Holy Father, at an Audience in the Paul VI Hall on Monday 12 May. We were proud that our Schola was one of the choirs invited to sing during the long wait before His Holiness appeared. He took a number of prepared questions, and he answered them from the heart, without using a prepared text. Some students were lucky enough to greet His Holiness personally as he made his way down the central aisle of the Audience Hall afterwards.

The Friends of the Venerabile will have been delighted by the news of the appointment of my predecessor, Monsignor Nicholas Hudson, as an Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster. The announcement was made before Easter, and the ordination took place at Westminster Cathedral on 4 June. Many of our students were busy with exams at the time, but it was good to see a representation from the student body present for the occasion: indeed Stefan Kaminski deaconed at the Mass and our Senior Student Matthew O'Gorman and Deputy Senior Student Tony Rosso were also present. I caught sight of a good many of the Friends in the Cathedral that day. *Ad multos annos*, Bishop Hudson!



Meanwhile, back in Rome, we were preparing to receive two Archbishops from England. One was the Archbishop of Canterbury, on his second visit to the Holy Father. The Archbishop and his entourage stayed just two nights, 14 and 15 June, but they managed to squeeze in an extraordinarily large number of engagements in that short time. On the occasion of the Archbishop's previous visit, twelve months earlier, I was not yet Rector, but I did contribute in another capacity: acting as the interpreter for the Archbishop's private Audience with Pope Francis. So it was good to be able to renew our acquaintance in my new circumstances. On the evening of his arrival, Archbishop Welby took the opportunity to meet a group of the students, and to offer them his encouragement for their studies and their future mission.



The other Archbishop was the Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon, recently transferred from Nottingham to Liverpool. As is customary, he came with other newly appointed Metropolitan bishops from all over the world to receive the Pallium at the Holy Father's Mass in St Peter's Basilica on 29 June, the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. We were honoured to be able to welcome the new Archbishop, along with many of his friends and relations, at a festal lunch in the College after the ceremony. Since 2009, we have seen new appointments to all five Metropolitan sees in England and Wales and it has been a pleasure to be able to mark all five with celebrations in the College.



The start of the *Villeggiatura* was postponed by a couple of days, because of the *Pallium* celebrations. We arrived at the villa in time for Vespers of Saints Peter and Paul, and we were glad to be joined by Bishop Paul Hendricks, Auxiliary in Southwark, who had travelled out to Rome in order to institute our new Lectors and Acolytes at the villa. We had a bumper crop this year: eight new Lectors (James Barber from Plymouth, Andrew Bowden from Westminster, Marco Egawhary, Ryan Service and John Waters from Birmingham, Ben Hilton from Leeds, David Irwin from Shrewsbury and Francis Murphy from Southwark), and ten new Acolytes (Tristan Cranfield from Arundel and Brighton, Ryan Day and Richard Marsden from Middlesbrough, Gary Dench from Brentwood, Adam Dora, Antonio Pineda and Ben Woodley from Westminster, Daniel Etienne from Lancaster, Richard Howard from Salford and Michael Rakowski from Northampton). Bishop Paul astonished us all with his energy: not only did he institute all of the above, but he undertook the 35-mile *Castelli* walk to raise funds for the Christian-Muslim forum, tweeting as he went.

The *Villeggiatura* is a time of celebrations and also farewells. At our leavers' dinner, we said good-bye to nine of our students: the two Danes (Kasper Baadsgaard and Jan Hansen), who are returning home for a pastoral year before diaconal ordination, three of our five deacons (Marc Homsey from Leeds, Stefan Kaminski from Westminster and Colin Mason from Clifton) and four of our student priests (Fathers Michael Coughlan from Shrewsbury, Joe McLoughlin from Birmingham, Javier Ruiz from Westminster and Ben Theobald from Portsmouth). We wish them well for their future ministry and we thank them for all they have contributed to the life of the College during their time in Rome.

Earlier in the year we said good-bye to Father John Paul Leonard, our Pastoral Tutor, who was due to leave in the summer, but had to go prematurely, owing to illness. We miss him, we remember him in our prayers, and we thank him for all that he gave us during his time on the staff. The good news is that we have a new Pastoral Tutor: hitherto one of our student priests, Father Martin Kelly from Leeds is to take on the role for the coming year while he completes his licence in canon law. Thank you and welcome to the staff, Father Martin! We look forward to having you with us on the formation team.

A fitting conclusion to the *Villeggiatura*, and indeed to the whole College year, is the ordination of deacons, which took place this year on Sunday 13 July. Archbishop Arthur Roche kindly joined us for the great day, and he ordained three men: Sean Crawley and Tony Rosso from Leeds and Matthew O'Gorman from Southwark. The weather, which had been fine throughout the *Villeggiatura*, finally broke on the morning of the diaconate, and we were unable to risk taking lunch outside: but Giuseppe and his staff worked wonders setting up for us in the Refectory and the Cloister, and a good time was had by all. The Friends will have an opportunity to meet Deacon Matthew, our Senior Student, at the AGM in September.



The summer so far has seen five ordinations to the priesthood. Many of the Friends will have been present for one or other of them: Stefan Kaminski on 18 July in Kensington, Tony McGrath on 19 July in Sale, John Poland on 20 July in Anfield, and finally, both on 26 July, Marc Homsey in Leeds and Colin Mason in Clifton. It will be good to have two of our new priests – Father Tony McGrath and Father John Poland – back in Rome in the new year, as they continue their studies. And we remember also our Norwegian student, Tao Nguyen, who is to be ordained a deacon in Oslo towards the end of August.

“Ring out the old, ring in the new”. In the autumn we will be joined by eight new students bringing our numbers back to the same level as last year: Alexander Balzanella from Westminster, Andrew Clarke and Deacon Kevin Athaide from Nottingham, Matthew King and Simon Jones from Portsmouth, Dominic Jenkinson from Hallam, Mark Paver from Salford and Piotr Wygnanski from East Anglia. Please remember our new students especially in your prayers.

They will be among the first to enjoy the facilities of the newly refurbished Common Room, for which we are most grateful to the Friends. And they will begin their time in Rome with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, thanks to the generosity of Pam and Nick Coote. We thank God for all our benefactors and friends who have been so good to us, and we ask you to remember us especially during our six-day pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Nazareth from 30 September to 5 October. What better way to begin the seminary year than to follow in Our Lord's own footsteps, as we prepare to follow him in priestly service?

**Mgr. Philip Whitmore**  
**Rector**



The College Photograph 2014



Fr. Rector welcomes  
Fr. Martin to  
the College staff



Sister Daniela with some of the new  
men as they start their Italian studies

## 2014 AGM REPORT

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion and AGM of The Friends of the Venerabile took place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September in one of the meeting rooms at St. Thomas More Church in the Styvechale district of Coventry. Incidentally, this is also the Parish Church of our past Chairman, Jo Barnacle.

Tea and coffee were provided by Mr Chef Catering of Coventry who also provided the excellent lunch.

Our Chairman, Mike Lang, welcomed all members and our guests - Fr. Mark Harold, the Vice-Rector of The Venerabile, Revd. Matthew O'Gorman, Senior Student, Mgr. Timothy Menezes, Vicar General and African Fr. Anthony Afaako. The Parish Priest, Fr. Philip Gay was away on holiday.

### Vice Rector's Report

Fr. Mark requested prayers for Carlo, one of the Porters at the Venerabile who was suffering from terminal cancer. (*N.B. Carlo died on the 20th September, RIP*). Fr. also requested prayers for Fr. Dennis Marmion of Shrewsbury Diocese who had recently died.

During the last year, under the leadership of the new Rector, Mgr. Philip Whitmore, there had been 6 new Students plus Fr. Andrew Chase from Australia (as a Student Priest) and Ben Drury (an Anglican Exchange Student). During 2013-2014 there were 41 Seminarians, 6 Priests and 1 Anglican Exchange making a total of 48.

The *Friends* provided a new car for the Students in 2013 and this year all the large sofas and armchairs in the Student common room have been re-upholstered.



Fr. Mark described the activities of the Students throughout the year: the academic studies at the Gregorian, Angelicum and Lateran Universities; retreats both at the College and Palazzola, external Conferences; working classes in Pastoral Formation, Catechetics, Homiletics, Pastoral Liturgy, preparation for Diaconate

and Priestly Ministry, Parish Administration - sacraments, marriage documents etc.

The Students also attended intensive courses on counselling, community media, leadership, preparation for Parish Ministry, received Voice Training two weeks during the year and saw a Psychologist on a one to one basis five times a year. They also took part in pastoral work in Roman Parishes with the San Lorenzo Youth Group, Missionaries of Charity and the Sant'Egidio soup kitchens.

Fr. Mark spoke about and requested prayers for Maria Grazia who had been the cook at the College for 31 years and unexpectedly died last year.

We were then treated to a pictorial record of the year including the Schola singing at the Easter Sunday Mass celebrated by Pope Francis in St. Peter's Square; the five-a-side Football Team in action; visits in January to the British Commonwealth Graves at Anzio. The Consistory in Rome in February of Cardinal Nichols at which fifteen Students served at the Mass. Students visited Marian Shrines throughout Rome, and Subiaco in June. A great celebration for the College was the Episcopal Ordination of Mgr. Nicholas Hudson at Westminster Cathedral on 4<sup>th</sup> June.

There were also ceremonies for eight new Lectors, ten new Acolytes and Matthew O'Gorman, Sean Crawley and Anthony Rosso were ordained as Deacons in Palazzola on the 13<sup>th</sup> July, plus five Ordinations to the Priesthood at various venues in the UK during July.

Palazzola had received the highest income ever in its history and was now able to run itself. Many Clergy and Religious Orders had attended for Retreats and team meetings; the English and Welsh Bishops have booked their Easter Conference there in 2015. The public and en-suite bathrooms had been updated and new furniture placed in the New Wing.

Jim Holroyd thanked Fr. Mark for attending the AGM and for his excellent presentation.

### Annual Report

Following lunch the business meeting was chaired by Mike Lang. The numbers attending were disappointing being 23 in total with 91 apologies received. Mike stated he understood people were away on holiday.

The Minutes of the last AGM which had already been distributed amongst Members were accepted as a true record and were signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.

Forty-seven new members had been recruited since the last AGM, but due to deaths, moving into care homes etc., the total membership remained at approximately 500. All members should try hard to increase the membership numbers.

This was Mike's first AGM as Chairman and he wished

to thank Jo Barnacle for all her hard work over the years as Chairman.

Mike and his wife, Teresa, had been privileged to visit the College three times during the past year; for the formal unveiling of the past Rector's portrait and well deserved Papal Award Presentation to Jo Barnacle; the formal meeting with the new Rector and for the Consistory where Cardinal Vincent Nichols expressed his thanks and appreciation to the *Friends*.

During July, Mike had attended four of the five Ordinations to the Priesthood with other Members of the *Friends* attending the fifth. Mike had been very impressed with the tremendous support given by the many Students who attended. Transcripts of the homilies given by the individual Bishops will be found with this Newsletter.

Mike spoke about a proposed weekend to Buckfast Abbey possibly in May 2015 and also wondered whether the *Friends* would think of holding alternate AGM's at Palazzola commencing in 2016. He referred to an "Adopt a Student" scheme for *Friends* to consider and looked forward to feed-back from Members on these matters.

He thanked the Committee for all their support during the year and in particular Jim Holroyd for his constant support and wise words, Hamish Keith for his support as Treasurer over the last twenty-three years and for Louise Sage's article in Oremus, the Westminster monthly Journal, which had brought in new Members.

#### **Accounts**

Hamish Keith had presented his resignation as Treasurer to the Committee. However, Mike had persuaded him to stay on for another year when, hopefully, a successor would be found. The Final Report for the seven months up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 showed a surplus of Expenditure over Income of £838.00 giving a total balance of £12,485.00. The next Financial Report will be for the full year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. The Accounts were approved and accepted by all present.

#### **Membership**

As suggested by the Committee, the minimum subscription would be increased to £25.00 for individual members and £40.00 for family members. The Chairman suggested Life Membership for £250.00 be offered to anyone requesting this which was accepted by all present. The Secretary also pointed out that Honorary Life Membership is in the gift of the Committee.

#### **Election of Officers and Committee**

No nominations having been received for the position of Treasurer, the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer were all voted into office for the following 12 months.

Likewise, as no nomination for the vacant place on the Committee had been received, the following Commit-

tee Members were re-elected for the following 12 months: Louise Bradley, Mary Ewing, Sarah Gough, Jeremy Hudson, Louise Sage and Barbara Smith leaving one vacancy on the Committee. Fr. Thomas Wood and Anthony Coles continue to serve as ex-officio members of the Committee.

#### **Any Other Business**

The proposed weekend to Buckfast Abbey would be investigated with the assistance of Anthony Coles and arranged if feasible. Likewise, the proposed alternate AGM's at Palazzola would be looked at although there were considerable difficulties connected with this as regards cost, length of visit and age of participants.

Angela Tiffin wondered if new students would be able to generate interest in the *Friends*. Mike stated that he would raise this when he met with the new students in November.

Mike was pleased to report that the *Friends'* website had received a considerable number of hits over the past year. The website was updated frequently at an annual cost of £100.00.

#### **MASS**

Mass was concelebrated in the side chapel of the Church by the three Priests aforementioned and assisted by Deacon Matthew who also gave the homily. Two gentlemen of the Parish also kindly came along to act as servers.

Following the Mass our final *PowerPoint* presentation was also given by Deacon Matthew, the theme being the lighter side of college life. Apart from all the studies and hard work, Matthew wanted to show us how the Students spent their leisure time. He told us about the College bar, cycling, football, cooking, car trips to Foligno, Norcia etc. and visits to the Opera for which they were able to obtain tickets for €10. They also decided to give their Lenten alms to the De Paul Society in UK and actually raised €1,000 for this organisation. The Students also had to practice for future pastoral work such as baptisms using a doll and performing marriages with Mgr. Whitmore acting as the bride!

Matthew wanted us to know how much the *Friends'* support, both spiritual and financial meant to the Students and, on their behalf, thanked us all.

He hoped to be ordained Priest on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015 by Archbishop Peter Smith at St. George's Cathedral, Southwark and all our prayers and good wishes go with him.

In spite of the low turnout, all agreed upon leaving that the day had gone well.

**Louise Sage  
Committee Member**

## Ordination of Rev. John Poland

My son, John Poland, was ordained to the priesthood at All Saints Church, Anfield, on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2014. It was a day of mixed emotions for me. Although I felt very proud, there were also elements of relief and anticipation.

Watching John being ordained made me very proud. It was wonderful to see him finally come to the end of a very long road and that all his hard work had paid off. It was incredibly moving to see so many people who had come to support John; family and friends who had travelled from all over the country (and the world) to join him and help him celebrate his special day.

After many months of preparations it was a relief to reach this momentous event. A lot of organising had to be done, not helped by the 900 mile distance between John in Rome and the 100 mile distance between Fr Stephen Maloney in Liverpool and us - thank goodness for email and mobile phones.

Looking back on years gone by I have to admit to having felt a certain amount of anxiety. If I am being honest, this career choice was not one I had envisaged for John when he was growing up.



Right from the start, when he first mentioned that he was thinking about becoming a priest, there were many questions in my mind: Was this the right choice for him? Would it be a lonely path? Would he be alright in Rome? I need not have worried. Any anxieties I may have had seemed to recede as the years went by, as he settled into the Italian way of life (when in Rome etc.) and all the friends he made in the English College. This was brought home to me when he was voted Senior Student by fellow seminarians at the college (another proud moment). On the day of the ordination, I was struck by how truly contented he was. It was a relief to see him so happy with his choice and to know that he had made the right decision.

I also felt anticipation of what his future would hold – wondering what interesting and exciting experiences that are ahead of him and what his next step would be. Knowing how he has handled things over the last 9 years has filled me with confidence that he will cope with, and look forward to, any challenges that may come his way.

Finally, it was a privilege to take part in such an important, emotional and extraordinary day. It was a beautiful occasion and even the weather behaved for us! We were welcomed with open arms by the parish of All Saints, who worked extremely hard for John - both for his ordination and for his first mass on Monday.

All in all, a very proud mum, dad (John), brother (James) and sister (Michelle).

Alison Poland

## When Ian Faulkner joined us in 2013 he offered to assist in promoting the Friends .....

In the morning, the alarm call of the Blackbird; the shrill chirp of the Robin, instantly bring our attention back to the self. It was such a day when I heard from the Committee; I was asked to use my best endeavours to "drum up" new Membership for The Venerabile in the Diocese of Clifton. Having paused for a few moments, taking in some steady breaths, I gladly took-up the challenge.

First of all, it has to be said that the Diocese of Clifton covers an alarmingly great geographical area. Starting in Dursley, South Gloucestershire, Father Alex Redman sharpened my focus by outlining the practical negatives of this endeavour; as well as stating the positives! For example, it transpires that for some 20 years, there was not a Clifton Priest that was educated at The English College in Rome! "Aaha", I thought. "Am I holed beneath the Plimsol Line"? I realised that, on the ground, few people from those two generations, will be conversant with all the rich history that La Palazzola stands for; an exemplary of which is the wonderfully detailed book, written by Judith Champ, and titled, *The English Pilgrimage to Rome : A Dwelling for the Soul*. Father Alex then went on to explain that one or two Priests-in-waiting are now in attendance in Rome; so the tide has turned again in our favour.

Our Chairman counselled me, and in true leadership style, sent me to see our Parish Priest, Father James - suitably armed with an application form for himself and his mother. Perhaps now I had two happy birds in the bag? At

least my confidence was suitably strengthened for the journey ahead. I am writing this short story from La Palazzola, and it is right here where the very essence of what we are endeavouring to achieve, can best be found. The Villa itself is an impressive construction, completely refurbished in recent years, with much help and support from the Italian authorities; they have achieved greatly! The atmosphere is wonderful, steeped in learning and reminds me of the Jesuit College that I attended in Oxford. I actually fell asleep in the Library yesterday afternoon - book in hand, just like the old days. Well, it was Sunday!

Here is a unique opportunity to both meet and talk with other people, who are searching out answers to our perennial problems, such as, "Why am I here?" and, "Who am I?" perhaps followed by, "Why do I have so many challenges?" and even more taxing, "Why am I meeting them?" Well, I do not have either the time nor the space to deal with all that just now. Yet tonight, when I lay down on the wonderful cotton sheets and pillow-cases, and listen to the crickets chirping into the night air, and hear the wise old owls bidding one another greeting from on high, I will think through these answers before drifting off into a deep sleep.

In the meantime, may I suggest that you might all consider becoming recruiting agents for this wonderful organisation to which we belong.

**Ian Faulkner**

## Chairmans Report

This last few months has passed very quickly. In May, as Teresa and I drove from Royal Wootton Bassett to the airport en route to Rome (yes, another trip to Palazzola) the mobile rang to say "your offer for a property in Buckfast has been accepted" so immediately upon return from DOP it was a case of packing packing ....

Moving date was set for 11<sup>th</sup> July (but delayed by the removal firm until 14<sup>th</sup>). So no time to settle in, simply pack a case and set off to look forward to the ordinations of Stefan, Anthony, John, Colin and Marc. Sadly the ordinations of Colin and Marc were at the same time, Colin in Clifton and Marc in Leeds, and so I was unable to attend all five.

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> we started the journey in the magnificent splendour of the recently restored Our Lady of Victories in Kensington where Cardinal Vincent ordained Fr. Stefan, onto the small Parish Church in Sale where Bishop Brian ordained Fr. Anthony and then onto the even smaller Parish Church in Anfield where Archbishop Malcolm ordained Fr. John and finally to the concrete simplicity of Clifton Cathedral where Bishop Declan ordained Fr. Colin.

The buildings were so different but the homilies all presented the same story from different perspectives to the man about to be ordained—Cardinal Vincent presented the joy of being a Priest but pointing out the responsibility of serving God's people; Bishop Brian presented the Eucharist as the centrepiece of a Priests life stressing the responsibility of adhering to sacred liturgy and demonstrating devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; Archbishop Malcolm in his homily told Fr. John that his responsibility was to travel lightly and to teach the people; Bishop Declan used the responsibilities of a Shepherd as the focus of his homily to Colin and the two other priests who were ordained at the same time.

To me the great joy of attending this series of ordinations was to witness the visible peace, tranquillity and joy which was apparent in the new priests, to witness the support they received from their families, parishioners and also from the vast number of students of the college who travelled to be present at each ordination.

It was also good to meet up with a goodly number of former students (now Priests) and also FOV members (usually detected by the ties or lapel badges).

At each ordination the new priest went to great lengths to thank those who had supported him with prayer during the long years of training. I would like to thank those of you who have managed to recruit new members but will repeat my appeal – please try to interest your friends and relations in the *Friends* always bearing in mind the needs of the students.

Having settled in Buckfast, I look forward to welcoming many of you to the beautiful Abbey for our "away day/weekend" which is now provisionally set for 5th /6th June 2015.

**Mike Lang**

## TOWARDS ADVENT 2014

Annual Festival of Catholic Culture

**Saturday 22nd November**

Westminster Cathedral Hall

**10.00 am - 4.00 pm**

Choir of John Fisher School, Purley.

Opening Ceremony at 10.30 am with

Mgr. Keith Newton

Displays by Catholic groups,  
organisations and charities

Refreshments available all day

Play corner for children

Books, DVDs, CDs and cards on sale

### ENTRY FREE

Mgr. Keith Newton  
of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of  
Walsingham on 'Anglicans and  
Catholics - a way forward'.

Canon Luiz Ruscillo, Director of  
Education Services of Lancaster  
Diocese on 'Teaching the Faith'.

Latin Chant Workshop run by the  
composer and musician  
Joseph Estorninho.

Tickets for talks and workshop  
£2 from the Welcome Desk

As in the previous three years  
*Friends of the Venerable* will again be  
taking a stand at this Festival

If you are in the area on that day, do  
please call in and meet us  
We would be delighted to see you

In association with the *Friends of the Venerable*,  
we offer you the opportunity to purchase sterling  
silver hall-marked jewellery relief engraved  
bearing the details of the shield of the *Venerable*.

Cheques (payable to Rev Thomas Wood) with  
order to Fr Thomas Wood, LACE, Croxteth  
Drive, Sefton Park, Liverpool, L17 1AA. Prices  
include UK P&P. Profits to the *Friends*.



Cuff links - £55



Ornate lapel badge £30



Pendant with College  
crest £40.  
22" silver chain £22



Ornate Pendant with  
College shield £35  
22" Silver chain £22



Plain lapel badge £25

### We welcome the following new members (since March 2014)

Mrs. P. Barrett (Heaton Moor)  
Fr. A.B.X. Behrens (Northampton)  
Mrs. T. Carpenter (Royal Wootton Bassett)  
Mr. M. Concannon (Bury)  
Mr. D. Crowley (London)  
Mrs. M. Douglas (Santon)  
Mr. A. Fenwick (Towcester)  
Miss J. Mackay (Oxford)

Dr. G. Mercer (Bath)  
Rev. J.J. Nichols (Newport)  
Rev. D. Pick (Nafferton)  
Mr. W.G.L. Rigby (Southport)  
Miss S.M. Smith (Stockport)  
Mr. & Mrs. R.C. Urwin (S. Holmwood)  
Mr. S. M. Nicholas (London)

Compiled by Mike Lang. Many thanks to all who have contributed text and photographs.