

VENERABILE VIEW

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The English College Rome

FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

Spring 2017

Four years ago, the front page of *Venerabile View* showed a photograph of the then Rector receiving two members of the Royal Family - the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester - who represented the Queen at our 650th anniversary celebrations. This year we hosted a visit from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, surely the most senior royal ever to have graced the College in this way. (Apologies to any enthusiasts for the Stuart cause, who may feel that visits from 18th-century Pretenders ought to count!) The occasion was the Prince's visit to Italy in early April. The British Embassy to the Holy See asked if we could host a reception on 4 April at which the Prince would meet members of the British community working for the Holy See or for Church agencies in Rome. We were delighted to agree.

Security was a paramount concern. Representatives of the Embassy and the Prince's household came on a number of occasions to work out in detail what was to happen. One thing was made abundantly clear: the visit had to remain confidential until after it had happened. If the story found its way into the public domain and it became known that the Prince would be in the College at a particular time on a particular day, the visit would probably be cancelled, as the risks involved would be too great. The invitations were sent out just eight days ahead of the visit, and they studiously avoided naming the "Senior British Visitor". The students of the College were informed of the visit just two days ahead of time. Happily it was possible to include a substantial number of them in the group that met the Prince.



On arrival His Royal Highness was greeted by Cardinal Nichols and myself. We began by showing him the College Church and we took the opportunity to pay tribute to the generosity of the Prince's friends, our benefactors Urs and Francesca Schwarzenbach, who enabled us to restore the Church so beautifully ten years ago.

On the way upstairs we pointed out the Ralph Sherwin window and the list of College martyrs. At the Ambassador's request, we explained to the Prince that care was taken when investigating the causes of the martyrs to ensure that they had died for the faith and not for their political activities. We do not venerate Guy Fawkes!

The third stopping-point came on the Cardinal's Corridor, just outside my office, where Professor Maurice Whitehead was waiting with a selection of exhibits from the College Archives. The Prince was very interested to see the first volume of the *Liber Ruber*, listing the names of the very first students of the College, many of them martyrs - all written in the hand of St Robert Southwell, one of our most famous martyrs. We were honoured to obtain the royal signature for our Visitors' Book. Then the doors into the Salone were opened and the Prince entered to meet and greet the group gathered there. I must say, I was impressed at the way he managed to engage all 55 people in conversation during the allotted 30 minutes. He's had some good pastoral formation somewhere along the line!



Many will remember fondly the College's first female staff member, Sister Amadeus Bulger IBVM (1994-2002), who sadly departed this life last September. *Requiescat in pace*

In January 2017 we were able to welcome another religious sister into our resident community, albeit for just 6 months. Sister Margaret Atkins is a Canoness of St Augustine from Boarbank Hall in Cumbria and she has been a most inspiring Academic Tutor as well as a wise and perceptive presence in the College. She will be missed when she returns to her community at the end of June.

The cloud has a silver lining, though, in the person of Fr. James McAuley, a priest of Portsmouth diocese who will be joining us in the autumn as Academic Tutor for the longer term.

Another new member of our community is a Canadian student, Anthony Fyk, who joined us in February 2017. He had been studying as a lay student in Rome when he heard the call to the priesthood. Bishop Daniel Jodoin of Bathurst was happy to take him on as a seminarian and wished



him to continue his theological studies in Rome - so all that was needed was a seminary! We were happy to be that seminary and Anthony has settled quickly into his new home. One of the annual forms I have to complete for the Congregation for the Clergy asks how many countries are represented in the student body (the question refers to the sponsoring diocese, not the student's place of birth). The figure currently stands at 7.

Five new candidates were admitted just before Christmas by Archbishop Arthur Roche. They were Marco Egawhary, Ryan Service and John Waters (Birmingham), Ben Hilton (Leeds) and Francis Murphy (Southwark). Archbishop Arthur commented that it was a particular joy for him to accompany these men as they took this important step, since he had arrived here with them when he returned to Rome in 2012. Indeed, for his first year as Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship, he had lived here at the College with them.

We have had occasion to mark some significant anniversaries with two of our most eminent former students. I refer to the 60th anniversary of Cardinal Cormac's ordination to the priesthood (October 1956) and the 25th anniversary of Cardinal Vincent's ordination to the episcopate (January 1992). Happily both are frequent visitors to the College and we were delighted to be able to celebrate with each in person.



As summer approaches and exams loom large on the horizon it is good to be able to look beyond to the ordination season. Four men are due to be ordained priests during the summer, the same four whose diaconal ordination was reported in the last issue (Andrew Bowden, Mark Paver, Peter Stoddart and Elliott Wright). Please keep them in your prayers, and likewise the seven men who are due to be ordained deacon (Joakim Breeding, Tristan Cranfield, Richard Marsden, Francis Murphy, Josef Ottersen, Antonio Pineda and Michael Rakowski).

After our summer break, we plan to go on pilgrimage once again. Many of you will remember our visit to the Holy Land in September 2014, led by Canon Mervyn Tower. We are delighted that he is once again able to lead us, this time on a pilgrimage to the Churches of the Apocalypse in what is now Western Turkey. Recently the Friends have started contributing to a "Pilgrimage Fund". It is hoped that funds will suffice for two students to be paid for by the Friends on our forthcoming pilgrimage. Other expenses will be met by the Coote benefaction, and our hope is that Pam Coote will once again be able to accompany us on our journey to these New Testament sites.

It remains only for me to wish all the Friends of the Venerabile a blessed and peaceful summer. Please keep us in your prayers as we keep you in ours.

Mgr. Philip Whitmore

Rector



Introducing the new Senior Students



Richard Marsden

Francis Murphy

Following recent elections involving a strong field of candidates with many qualities, myself and Francis Murphy have become this year's Senior Student and Deputy Senior Student. It is a privilege to be able to write these few words of introduction to you, the Friends of the Venerable, to whom the students are very grateful for your constant practical and prayerful support to our priestly formation.

To continue a recent (and perhaps unexpected) trend, I become the third Senior Student in a row to have a degree from the University of Sheffield. I hail from another Yorkshire city – Hull (or ‘ull as the locals call it) which is part of Middlesbrough Diocese. I graduated in Journalism Studies but don't worry, they didn't teach us how to hack into telephones! I was a news reporter for the Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph for three years before entering priestly formation in Valladolid and then at the VEC. I've also contributed a little to the Catholic press over the years and am currently doing my pastoral work in Rome at the English Section of Vatican Radio once a week. This academic year, I began a license at the Angelicum University in Moral Theology.

It is great to have a good friend as Deputy Senior Student. Francis is a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Southwark and comes from Dulwich, south London. His father is British (the “Murphy” is from his Irish grandfather), and his mother is Italian - which gave him a head start on communicating with locals! Before coming to Rome he studied in Oxford, as well as spending a year teaching in Ecuador. For his pastoral work he helps with first communion classes in a Roman parish.

Recognising the great blessing it is to be able to undertake our formation in Rome, we continue to thank you all for your help in making the students' time here as fruitful as possible to prepare us in taking up the mission to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in a country that so desperately needs to hear it and live by it.

Richard Marsden



Queensland to Rome

Life as a priest has no shortage of surprises and one of the biggest for me was being asked by my bishop to come to Rome to study for a Licentiate in Theology. For a young parish priest from Central Queensland, Australia,



the prospect of several years studying in the eternal city was both exciting and more than a little daunting. It was a big decision to make – I had been four and a half years as pastor of four parishes in South Mackay and was very much at home in those Catholic communities – but it seemed that God was calling me to a new path so I said yes.

And so in July 2013 I flew half way around the world and landed in Rome. To say that my first few months were a shock to the system would be a huge understatement! Not only did I have to come to grips with a whole new language in which I would have to pursue my studies, but I had to familiarise myself once more with the life of a full time student and deal with the sometimes baffling Italian system. Being so far from family and friends was a real challenge especially in my early months and there were times when I longed to be back amongst the people of my parish.

But one of the great blessings in that time of getting used to a whole new lifestyle was being able to do so in the community of the Venerable English College. As challenging as those first few months were, I found a great sense of support and friendship amongst the staff and students here. It was this support that made the rather steep learning curve of my first few months manageable, and I soon felt at home here.

My time at the VEC has taught me a lot about the similarities and differences between British and Australian culture. There is definitely a common thread to many of the things we value and even our style of humour. I have to confess to an exquisite delight that just a few months into my time here Australia won the 2013-14 Ashes series, a delight that would have been hollow if I weren't surrounded by Englishmen! Unfortunately I still haven't managed to draw anyone over to an appreciation of the sublime delicacy that is Vegemite, but each year I hold out hope that one of the new students may have an epiphany and be converted!



When my bishop asked me last year to stay on in Rome for doctoral studies, it was again a tough decision – it meant three more years away from family and friends. But ultimately I was happy to say yes, not only because of the great educational opportunity but because I knew I had a good foundation for the studies living here at the VEC. I am blessed to have the great resources of our college, the support and friendship of staff and students and all the opportunities that living in Rome can offer.

I will always be very grateful to the Rector and the college for welcoming me here. I know that when my studies here are finished I will go home not only with a bit of Rome in my heart, but also a bit of England. And hopefully I will have been able to leave a bit of Australia here as well.

FESTIVAL OF CATHOLIC CULTURE

Many of you will have seen advertisements in various Venerabile View Newsletters for this Festival known as 'Towards Advent' which takes place each year at Westminster Cathedral Hall, usually on the last Saturday before the First Sunday of Advent. I thought it would be of interest to give some background information on this Festival.

Its origins lay in the realisation that lots of Catholic groups and organisations needed an opportunity to display their work to show everyone what they do and the message that they offer and this event was launched in the year 2000. The Festival - which is free - follows a tried and tested format: the doors open at 10.00 a.m., with a formal opening by a guest speaker at 10.30a.m., people are then free to wander around the various stalls until the close at 4.00 p.m.

During the day various workshops are held in the Hinsley Room around the corner from the Hall. There is always a music workshop, and various guest speakers give talks on their particular interest, e.g. The National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Aid to the Church in Need, the Latin Mass Society and other religious organisations. A small charge is made for these workshops. Also during the day, tours are offered of the Cathedral giving its history and information regarding the Chapels, marbles and mosaics.



Approximately 35 stalls pack the Hall each year and are manned by various organisations such as Tyburn Convent, SPUC, Knights of St. Columba, The Ark, Catholic Concern for Animals, Catholic publications and booksellers. Fresh tea/coffee, sandwiches and cakes are served throughout the day by the Association of Catholic Women.

The *Friends of the Venerable* have participated at this event for six years, the stall being manned by members of the Committee. We are kept busy during the day talking to people about the *Friends*; we have visits from Old Romans, many Members of the *Friends* and from those who have spent holidays at Palazzola.

The Festival in November 2016 was formally opened by our old friend, Bishop Nick Hudson, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster who was formerly Rector of the Venerabile 2004-2013. He welcomed each and every person attending the Festival and spoke for a short while about the message and meaning of Advent. Following his talk Bishop Hudson visited all the stalls and spent quite a time talking to those attending.

This talk was preceded and followed by a selection of religious songs sung by a Polish Children's Choir from St Andrew Bobola Church in Hammersmith. The singing was extremely good and a number of the children came round during the morning visiting each stall and chatting to the stallholders.

The Festival in 2017 will be taking place on the 25th November when we will again be manning a stall. We would be delighted to see even more of you on the day.

Louise Sage

Chairman's Report

The late publication of our last two issues meant that several items I expected to be discussing at this time were able to be included in my previous report. The Advent Festival did post-date our last issue, and you will find an article on Page 6 about our successful participation, and plans for this year's Festival. Special thanks, are due to Jim and Susan Holroyd for going to London to augment the "staff" at our stall – if anyone feel inclined to emulate their example this year, we will be delighted to hear from you.

Early in May, twelve members of the Friends, resident in the South West, gathered together at Buckfast in the company of two past Rectors (Mgr. Adrian Toffolo and Mgr. George Hay). Mgr. Adrian celebrated Mass in St Michael's Chapel and after lunch we attended the delayed presentation on Christian v Muslim Art given by Dr. Caroline Farey (Director of Studies at the School of the Annunciation).

I was invited to the Roman Association's AGM at Palazzola in the spring; it was a great privilege to be in the company of over thirty alumni whose time at the college covered the last thirty to forty years, and it was interesting to sit back and just listen to their comments about the changes which have taken place in that time. On the Wednesday afternoon, the whole group decamped by coach to the Via Monserrato for a celebration of Mass followed by a superb supper. After the Rector's talk, Mgr Bruce Harbert gave a most interesting and challenging talk on the universal nature of hierarchy, after which, by kind invitation of the Senior Student, most of us moved on into the Students' Bar.

On arriving back in Devon, I was sorry to hear that the proposed visit to the Marian Shrines of North London had had to be postponed until 2018, but, by happy coincidence, Anthony Coles was able to suggest that we might like to go instead to a presentation at Westminster Cathedral (see below).

I look forward to seeing some of you at the July ordinations (see list on Page 8), and, of course, even more of you at the Annual Meeting at Palazzola on October 1st - 8th.

Mike Lang

Presentation by Curator of Stonyhurst College Friday 7th July

Friends are invited to a presentation by Jan Graffius, Curator of Stonyhurst College about the many relics and recusant objects from their collections.

This presentation on Friday 07 July at Westminster Cathedral in London is being organised in conjunction with the Guild of Saint John Southworth (the Saint's mortal remains dressed in red vestments rest within a glass and bronze case in the Martyrs Chapel at Westminster Cathedral).

For further details and booking please contact Anthony Coles at arctc@btinternet.com or 020 7431 3414 (leaving your name and address if requiring details by post).

Pilgrimage Fund

As mentioned in my last report, one member suggested at the last Annual Meeting that we set up a fund to enable students to go on College Pilgrimages similar to the Holy Land Pilgrimage of 2014.

The Rector has now approved this scheme, and so the Fund is now open and will be supporting two seminarians on this year's Pilgrimage: we will ask them to give us a report for the next VV.

Members wishing to contribute to this Fund should send their donations to the Chairman, Secretary or Treasurer and mark them clearly "For Pilgrimage Fund".

If you would like to make a Standing Order, please ask for a special Standing Order Form.

POSSIBLE GROUP MEMBERSHIP OF FRIENDS OF THE VENERABLE

We are thinking of introducing Group Membership options in 2018. This might, for example, be the choir or music group, the ministers of the Word, liturgy group, catechists, a school attached to the Parish, chaplaincy team, seminary, Union of Catholic Mothers, Cana Group or the Parish as a whole. We propose three levels of group membership and people will be able to choose which is most appropriate for their particular circumstances.

Option 1. For small groups - £50 p.a.

The group receives one copy of each issue of Venerable View and one copy of the Venerable.

Option 2. For medium groups - £65 p.a.

The group receives three copies of the above.

Option 3. Larger groups - £85 p.a.

To include four copies of above.

All copies to be sent to one designated address to be distributed amongst members of the group.

We would love to hear your opinions, approval or otherwise on this matter so that we can decide whether to introduce this or not.

Please contact our Chairman, Mike Lang, on mikelang537@btinternet.com with your comments.

Many thanks.

Louise Sage

Ordinations to the Priesthood

We have received notification that the following students from the VEC will be Ordained as follows:

Sat 15th July 2017

Rev. Andrew Bowden

Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St George, Enfield. at 1100

Rev. Elliott Wright

The Cathedral Church of Saint Anne, Leeds at 1100

Sat 22nd July 2017

Rev. Mark Paver

St. John's Cathedral, Salford at 1200

Rev. Peter Stoddart

St. Mary's Cathedral Church, Newcastle at 1100

May God bless them and remain with them

We welcome the following new members

Mr T Tindal Robertson (Exeter)
Miss M Hawkins (Ashburton)
Mr & Mrs W Wygnanski (Cambridge)
Ms T Gowenlock (Manchester)

Mrs M Jones (Preston)
Mrs P Bretherton (Cambridgeshire)
Mr & Mrs K Jenkinson (Worksop)

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