

# VENERABILE VIEW

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The English College Rome

## FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

**Autumn 2020**

*Ben tornati!*

It is always good to welcome our students back to Rome after their summer break, but never more so than now, when they have been away for over six months on account of the health crisis! It is a great joy to see the College full once again.

We began the long, slow return to “normal” on Saturday 12 September, when we welcomed our new men. We are blessed with nine new seminarians, together with an Anglican exchange student. Last year, prior to evacuation, most of them were in various other houses of formation. Ryan Hawkes and Jack Ryan (Portsmouth) were at the propaedeutic community Mater Sacerdotum in Shrewsbury; Jonathan Henry (Birmingham), Ben Sinclair (Hexham and Newcastle) and David Ottersen (Oslo) were at the Royal English College in Valladolid; William Meehan (Hamilton, Canada) was at Christ the King Seminary in Buffalo, New York State, and our two Irishmen, Mark O’Farrell (Waterford and Lismore) and John O’Lavery (Down and Connor), were at the Irish College in Rome.

Some explanation is needed here. It is a long time, probably about four centuries, since we had any students preparing to serve in Irish dioceses. The Irish College in Rome has existed for that purpose since 1628. Falling numbers of vocations in Ireland, however, have led to a rationalisation of resources and the Irish Bishops took the decision in June 2020 not to send new seminarians to the Irish College, at least for the time being. Meanwhile, the Irish College continues to facilitate ongoing formation for priests, whether on sabbatical or further studies.

This has meant that two Irish seminarians, already well advanced in their studies, have transferred to our College from the Irish College. Understandably their bishops wanted them to be part of a seminary community. We are delighted to have them with us, much as we regret the circumstances that brought them here. A hundred thousand welcomes! Already we sense that Saint Patrick’s Day may have a slightly different flavour next year...

### **The new men**



Jonathan Henry

Sion Hughes Carew

Mark O’Farrell

William Meehan

John O’Lavery

Ben Sinclair

Ryan Hawkes

Torbjorn Holt

Jack Ryan

David Ottersen

Our other new seminarian is a convert clergyman: for over twenty years, Torbjørn Holt was the Norwegian Lutheran chaplain in London. Having been received into full communion in January 2020, he is due to spend one year with us as he prepares to serve as a Catholic priest in the diocese of Oslo. Thanks to his background, he knows our country well, especially its ecumenical activities.

It is a happy coincidence that brings the first Anglican Exchange student we have had since 2017. Our community will have a distinctly ecumenical flavour this year. Sion Hughes Carew, of Westcott House, Cambridge, will be with us until Christmas. He has visited us before, having taken part in some ecumenical canon law conferences held at the College in recent years. Incidentally, "Sion" is pronounced "Shone" and is Welsh for "John".

Speaking of Sion, the Friends will be aware that we had planned to begin this year with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Sadly, the health crisis forced us to postpone until next year, but we are still very much looking forward to it. Thanks are due to the Friends for the generous support given to this initiative through the Pilgrimage Fund. As the Holy Land is in national lockdown at present, we realise it would have been impossible for us to make the pilgrimage this year: the decision to postpone was clearly the right one.

Our new men followed a slightly different programme from usual. Instead of a four-week language course in Tuscany, leading into an Induction Week in Rome, they had an Induction Fortnight in Rome, with Italian lessons each morning. We hope to complement this with further Italian study, probably in Tuscany, after they have finished their June exams. This choice was forced upon us by the health crisis, but if it proves to be a more effective way of learning the Italian language, we may retain it for future years.

At the end of the induction fortnight, on Sunday 27 September, we were joined by our remaining students. All manner of safety protocols and social distancing have had to be introduced in the Refectory, in the College Church, and in the various common spaces throughout the building. Our new students had grown accustomed to these by the time the others joined them. They were too polite to say, "This is how we do things round here" - but they generously helped their senior colleagues to learn the new ropes.

Among our returning students are our two newly-ordained deacons, Anthony Fyk (Portsmouth) and David Irwin (Shrewsbury), who are now the Senior Student and Deputy Senior Student respectively. Although it was sad that they could not be ordained at Palazzola with the College community in the usual way, the health crisis gave them an opportunity to be ordained in their respective dioceses, with their diocesan brethren present. Similarly, Deacons Andrew Coy (Northampton) and Albert Lawes (Plymouth) were ordained during the summer in their home dioceses and are now beginning their pastoral ministry. *Ad multos annos*, Deacons David and Anthony, Albert and Andrew!

Similarly, our three newly-ordained priests - Father Alexander Balzanella, Father Dominic Jenkinson and Father Peter Wagnanski - were ordained in the cathedrals of their respective dioceses over the summer with all manner of safety protocols in place and strict limitations on the number of guests who could be admitted. Now they are back with us for their final year of study. Meanwhile, Fr Matthew King, who has been serving as a deacon in Portsmouth diocese for the past year, was ordained a priest early in July. *Ad multos annos*, Fathers Alex, Matthew, Dominic and Peter!

Thanks are due, as ever, to our Friends for your constant support and encouragement, especially during such difficult times as the present. You will be glad to see that the work of forming priests for the future still goes on. Indeed, our world has a greater need for priests now than ever. Sadly we cannot admit guests to the College at present, as we have to prioritise the safety of our students. Palazzola, meanwhile, has opened its doors once again and has been able to welcome guests since the middle of August. We hope and pray that before long, we will be able to do likewise.

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

### **Pilgrimage Fund**

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.  
[mikelang537@btinternet.com](mailto:mikelang537@btinternet.com)

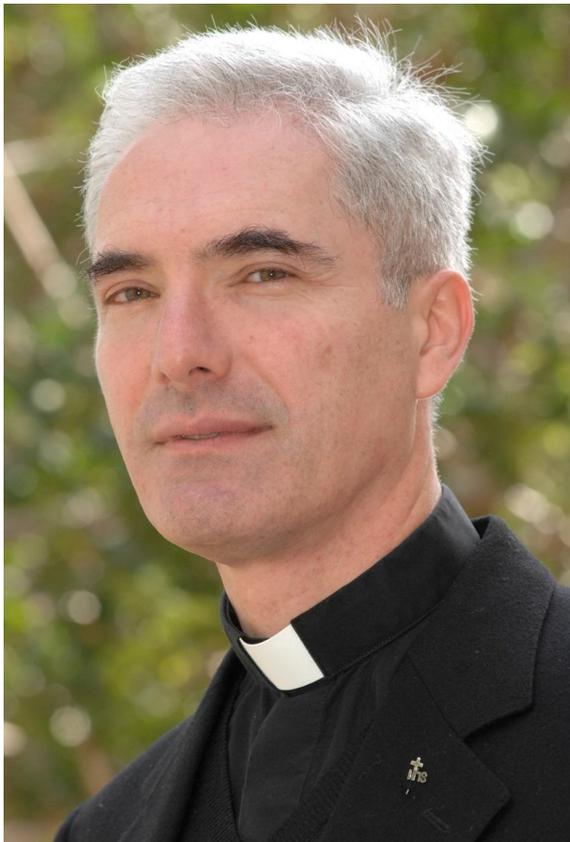
## Pastoral Director



Hello! My name is Fr Michael Doody and I am the new Pastoral Director at the Venerable English College. I was a student here eight years ago and it is good (if a bit strange) to be back in familiar surroundings. I have been a familiar face at the college (as well as at the other English seminaries) in recent times due to working as a Vocations Director for the Diocese of Leeds over the last five years. Since leaving the college I have had four different assignments, the most recent being a two year stint as Parish Priest at St Augustine of Canterbury in Harehills, Leeds. I am sure that these different experiences, especially my time working in the area of Vocations, will prove useful for the journey that lies ahead.

Dealing with a global pandemic means that these are strange times for all of us, but we are often at our best when we are faced with adversity. I think that the work that goes on in this College has never been more important than it is now. We need to form men ready for a time which is full of challenge but also full of opportunity. We need men who are hungry for God and not afraid to walk the path towards sanctity that each one of us is called to. We need priests with the heart of the Good Shepherd. It is your love, support and your prayers that will help make this possible, with God's grace. Thank you for all you do and please continue to pray for us as we do for you.

## Spiritual Director



I am Father Konrad Grech S.J. , hailing from Malta, and I am a member of the Euro Mediterranean Province of the Society of Jesus. I have been recently appointed as the new Spiritual Director at the VEC, after a long tenure as Church History Senior Lecturer and Head of Department at the Faculty of Theology, University of Malta.

I know how much your friendship is appreciated and valued here at the "*Venerabile*". I am therefore honoured to be included among those whom you have befriended, and I take this opportunity to ask you to kindly accompany my new mission with your prayers, as I shall do for you and your dear ones. May the Lord keep you and your families safe and I look forward to meeting you one day here in Rome.

## **Senior Student – Anthony Fyk**



With so many unexpected events unfolding, I have been somewhat surprised to take the ‘mantle’ of Senior Student after Reverend Andrew Coy was asked to do a pastoral year this coming year in his Diocese of Northampton. We are grateful to Reverend Andrew for his tenure as Senior Student when the College was in ‘exile’. He will be missed by the student body and we wish him well this coming year. I am pleased to welcome and work with Reverend David Irwin as Deputy Senior Student from the Diocese of Shrewsbury.

Thank you once again for all the work the Friends do for the Seminary community.

Be assured of our prayers,

**Rev Anthony Fyk**

## **Deputy Senior Student – David Irwin**



My name is David Irwin and I am from Hale Barns, a small village in north Cheshire. Currently, I am a deacon in my sixth year of priestly formation for the Diocese of Shrewsbury. I was ordained to the diaconate on 25 July 2020, the Feast of Saint James the Apostle, at the Cathedral of Our Lady Help of Christians & Saint Peter of Alcantara in Shrewsbury by Bishop Mark Davies.

Prior to beginning my seminary studies, I went to school at Saint Bede’s College in Manchester. From there, I then read Philosophy and received an MA (Hons) degree at the University of St. Andrews. After obtaining my PhB in Philosophy at the Angelicum and my STB in Theology at Santa Croce, I am currently undertaking second cycle studies for a Licentiate in Moral Theology, again at Santa Croce. The Friends are such a vital support to us at the college – please do continue to keep all of us in your prayers and be assured of our prayers for you.

**Rev David Irwin**

## **We welcome the following new members**

Dr. Alejandro Lopez Llosa (Barcelona)

Mgr. Daniel McHugh (Solihull)

Rev. J Forde-Johnson (Oxford)

Mr M Danvers (Peterborough)

Dr M Fernando (Canterbury)

## Chaplain to the Friends



While I am glad to already know many Friends of the Venerable well, I'm writing these few lines at the Chairman's request to introduce myself as I take on the responsibilities of Chaplain to the Friends.

Having grown up in Dulwich, south London, I spent spells in Oxford and Ecuador before heading out to Rome to start studies for the priesthood. Between 2012 and 2019 I was resident at the English College (for the final year as a priest), making some great friends while growing in my sense of vocation. I am fortunate in having family in Rome – my mother is Italian and grew up in the city – and I valued the opportunity to spend time with them when the College timetable allowed. Many of my earliest memories are of visiting grandparents in Rome, and my love for the city has not diminished.

Since September 2019 I have been Assistant Priest at St John the Baptist, Purley, having succeeded the outgoing curate, Fr Matthew O’Gorman. Fr Matthew – who will be familiar to many Friends – organised a “handover week” when I arrived, showing me where the care homes were, how to navigate the hospital chaplaincy, and who I’d be working with in our local secondary school. This gave me a rather more confident start to ministry than curates are usually afforded. Although this first year in a parish has been anything but normal, opportunities for ministry were not wanting even at the height of lockdown. Calls to anoint the sick and dying continued, and we were frequently conducting funerals; with a number of local clergy required to shield themselves, Purley found itself taking on some of the work of other parishes.

Being at times unable to receive the sacraments, and faced with one gruesome headline after another, many Catholics – perhaps even some of those reading – have struggled at times to discern God’s presence. Many have felt their spiritual and mental health fraying. A work I have found it profitable to revisit under the shadow of current events has been Jean-Pierre de Caussade’s *Abandonment to Divine Providence*, in which we read: “There is not a moment in which God does not present Himself under the cover of some pain to be endured, of some consolation to be enjoyed, or of some duty to be performed. All that takes place within us, around us, or through us, contains and conceals His divine action”. God has not abandoned us; He is in control. In recalling His loving presence in our lives, we can find peace even in times of challenge.

Do please continue to pray for all those at the VEC, and for more men – young and old – to hear and answer the call to priesthood. I look forward to getting to know many of you better in the coming months and years, and shall seek to support you in your important work by my prayers and in any other way that seems useful. In the meantime, I wish you every blessing.

**Fr. Francis Murphy**

### Aubergine bake with Mozzarella

**Ingredients:-** Aubergines, Olive Oil, Mozzarella, Tomato and Thyme leaves.

1. Halve aubergines lengthways and drizzle with olive oil.
2. Bake at 200 deg. C / Gas Mk 6 for about 25 minutes until tender.
3. Top with slices of mozzarella and tomato. Sprinkle with thyme leaves.
4. Put back in oven until cheese has melted.

Editors note:- **Enjoy with crunchy bread and a glass of dry white Wine**

## PALAZZOLA REPORT



Dear *Friends*,

I am sure you will all be aware that Joyce Hunter has now retired, but we are still 'smelling the smoke'! You might well meet up with her during one of your next visits. We all owe her a big thank you, and huge debt of gratitude, for all her hard work over the last 14 years.



It has been a terrible spring at Palazzola; the Villa was closed and Julie and I were here alone. For 40 days (something quite biblical you might say) we did not see anyone, and had only the wild boar for company.

We have missed all the groups that wanted to help celebrate the 100 years of Palazzola. However during the weekend of 15 th August, we reopened with a 60th Wedding Anniversary celebration of two of your members – Peter & Joyce Clarke . It certainly was a great occasion!

Since re-opening many guests - all following the strict COVID rules and recommendations - have stayed with us. However, in the weeks to come we have very few bookings so **THERE IS PLENTY OF SPACE** if you wish to visit. The routine has changed slightly as we follow the COVID restrictions. For example: breakfast now starts with Julie measuring each guest's temperature as they enter the dining room and lunch and dinner are served in the garden, weather permitting, with each table laid out to seat only four (instead of six), in line with social distancing rules.

Please do come and visit - we would love to see you. Email us at [bookings@villapalazzola.it](mailto:bookings@villapalazzola.it) or phone us on 00 39 06 94 74 91 78. Julie and I send you our greetings and best wishes and look forward to seeing you in the near future.

Together we must keep PALAZZOLA alive!

**Julie and Giuseppe**

Anthony Coles writes:

Palazzola re-opened on Saturday 15 August (Feast of the Assumption) with Mass celebrated by the English College vice-rector Fr John Flynn . The first group - a diamond wedding celebration - have returned home long ago having had a wonderful and safe holiday, as have many families and individuals over the past two months. The sensible procedures put in place by the staff, with the strap line - **stay safe, stay happy, stay healthy** - have ensured that Palazzola is just a great and safe place to stay as always.

Central Rome has been empty. In early October a parish pilgrimage from Kendal found themselves as the only group visiting the Catacombs on the day they did - we had the place to ourselves! Imagine St Peter's being empty of visitors and ours being only one of two groups scheduled for Mass one morning. The Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel were a joy to visit - only a few individual visitors and ourselves and the Pope's General Audience was basically a large private one. If travel is slow to take off in 2021, help yourselves to a change of scenery and help Palazzola to keep going at this difficult time. Giuseppe , Julie , Filomena , Beatriz and Giorgia will be there to welcome you.



Besides contacting Giuseppe directly (as above) for individual bookings, there are a number of more organised occasions when you might like to join us this or next year. These include dates within the following periods:

Christmas and / or New Year [850th anniversary of martyrdom of Thomas à Becket] (21 December to 06 January), Holy Week & Easter at Palazzola (30 March to 06 April), Friends of the Venerable Centenary celebrations at Palazzola (11 to 21 April) and extra days (21 to 22 April), Ancient Rome & Palazzola (14 to 25 June) with Fr Tony Convery, Assisi & Palazzola (26 August to 03 September) and Rome & Palazzola (20 to 28 September). For details of these occasions, please contact [arctc@btinternet.com](mailto:arctc@btinternet.com) or 020 7431 3414 for initial information.

## Peter and Joyce Clarke - Our Diamond Wedding



Well, I suppose it all started in 1994. Our Parish Priest Father Marcus Stock, organised a pilgrimage to Rome, Assisi and finally Palazzola. Honey was tasted, and we fell in love with the place. Whilst not as frequently as some of our friends we returned a number of times.

Now fast forward to 2010, our Golden Wedding. Somehow Father Marcus enabled me to take my family there, accompanying us as well. A magic experience.



One had no idea if we would still be around ten years later, but as time rolled by then the prospect became a real possibility. Marcus was now Bishop of Leeds, and far too busy to be involved yet again. So, I called in the services of that doyen pilgrimage organiser, Anthony Coles and the process was set in motion.

In those far off pre-Covid days he wrote to family and friends inviting them to join us at Palazzola. So long as Joyce and I survived the necessary time then the Diamond Wedding was on. 2020 started and all looked increasingly possible.

Then it started – for the whole World. In Europe the virus began in Italy, and the prospect of getting there looked grim. Lock-down proceeded, and literally for the next four months we had no idea if anything would be possible.

In early August, Italy was cleaner than UK and the sun broke out. Flights were booked and cash paid out. We suddenly discovered that Palazzola was to open on the day we arrived. Of course, in “normal“ times the place would be packed with Catholic families. Nothing normal about 2020!

On 17<sup>th</sup> August Joyce and I enjoyed what must surely be the peak of sixty years of a very happy marriage. Surrounded by family and friends it was a never to be forgotten day. As winter approaches I look daily at a magnificent photographic record we have of the time. I attach four of them whose location will be recognised by readers.

How right Cardinal Cormac was when he described the place as *Di Anticamera del Paradiso*. It certainly seems so to us!

**Peter Clarke**



### **Tailpiece**

Returning to UK and as Autumn rolled on suddenly the complacency of it all was rudely shattered. Our daughter Melanie, working in a Care Home, suddenly became tested positive. Now fourteen days later, with God's grace we have emerged, both she and ourselves without symptoms, but it has proved a chilling experience. The kindness of others has been directly expressed on our doorstep in a myriad of ways.

As winter approaches there is the feeling of resignation that Covid-19 will extend well into 2021. One can but pray that Palazzola will nevertheless have a better year. We are indeed, as ever, in God's hands. He knows what he is about.

Peter



## **Chairman's Report**

As I sit down to write this report, we await the “new rules” which will relate to Phase 2 of the Pandemic. We have already heard that the great city of Liverpool will probably be under lockdown for a further period and so I wish our many members from that area a safe, and we hope brief, period under the more rigid rules.

Since the July ordination “season” I have received many emails and cards from the new Priests and Deacons and without exception they thank the *Friends for our support and in return I have wished them a happy and holy period in their new appointments.*

We also heard that the College had reassembled at the beginning of October (see Rectors report on pages 1 and 2) and as you will see from Peter Clarke's piece on page 7, Palazzola reopened even earlier to host a very happy family gathering.

As Palazzola starts another new phase in its contribution to the life of a large number of us, let us all pray that Julie and Giuseppe will continue the great work started by the Piacentini family way back in 1920. It used to be said that Palazzola was the great secret of the region south of Rome and that it should be kept a secret (for obvious reasons) but may I suggest that now might be the time to show our thanks by letting all of our friends and fellow parishioners know the delights which are available in the Alban Hills. You can, of course, guide your friends to the website or indeed get a few copies of the CD and pass them around your Parish.

If we cannot shop, fund-raise, or exercise, we can at least pray to that wonderful God of ours, of whom our latest English Saint John Newman reminds us that "He knows what He is about".

We pray that life will soon return to normal, international travel will resume and that the Friends will be able to celebrate the 101<sup>st</sup> year at Palazzola during April 2021.

May I remind you all about a new FOV initiative in raising funds by collecting used stamps. So far I have received two packets of stamps from the College (both of which contained Vatican stamps which are exceptionally valuable). I will be sending these off to the dealer later in the year. Please collect used Postage stamps and send them to me.

I have also made sure that the “Friends of the Venerable” is included in the list of charities held by Amazon. If you are a user of Amazon may I ask that, instead of using “amazon”, you use “smile.amazon” and select the Friends as your favourite Charity. We will then receive a 0.5% donation on your purchases. Please see block below.

Finally, may I remind you that as we have sent the money from the Pilgrimage Fund to the College for use on the delayed 2020 Pilgrimage (now 2021), we now need to start building up the Pilgrimage Fund for 2022 or 2023,

### **How to select your charity from the Amazon Smile program.**

You can change your preferred charity by selecting the “Change your charity” link from the dropdown next to the charity you are currently supporting in your “smile.amazon.co.uk” selection.

You can also visit this link: <http://smile.amazon.co.uk/gp/charity/change>

If you make a change, only AmazonSmile purchases after the change count towards your newly selected charitable organisation. Your change will not affect any AmazonSmile purchases made prior to the change.

Please note that “smile.amazon” has exactly the same stock as “amazon” so if you wish to support the Friends in this way it is suggested that you use [www smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) whenever you would normally have visited [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).