

# VENERABILE VIEW

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The English College Rome

## FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

**Spring 2021**

This is the moment to say good-bye. After eight blessed years as Rector of the College, the time has come for me to move on. I am delighted that Fr Stephen Wang is to be my successor. He is another Westminster priest, currently working as chaplain to London University and already familiar to many of our students through the summer courses he has led at Palazzola. Many of the Friends will also be familiar with the truly inspiring Christian art given to us by Stephen's late mother, Elizabeth. Welcome, Father Stephen!

So this will be the last time I take a snapshot from the Rector's window to share with the Friends. Among the first things I see, of course, as I look out of the window, are the cars parked in the cortile. Here we owe a particular debt of gratitude to the Friends, because we now have a brand new student car, a Corolla, the most recent gift from the Friends. See elsewhere in this issue for more information on the car. Particularly in these days of health crisis, when we're encouraged to avoid public transport, our private vehicles are a real lifeline. So thank you, one and all!

There is never a comfortable time for moving on and there is much that I shall miss about the College and the community, both resident and non-resident. If I have a particular regret, it is that we are still in the midst of Covid restrictions and it would have been a great joy to be able to return to "normal" College life before leaving, not least to be able to welcome our guests once again.



After more than twelve months of restrictions, though, it is clear that the crisis is not going to lift in a hurry and in the meantime, life has to go on. I am by no means the only one who will be leaving the College in the midst of these restrictions.



We were pleased to welcome a new student in February - Hugh Donleavy from Liverpool. He is the first of our post-Brexit students from the UK, so the first who needed a visa to come and study here. It is a lengthy process, and it did slightly delay Hugh's arrival, but he was finally free to travel on Ash Wednesday, just three days into the second semester. Inevitably, fears concerning the UK variant of Corona virus meant that the Italian authorities imposed a strict quarantine for his first two weeks, but happily he tested negative before departure, on arrival and again at the end of the quarantine period, so now he is fully integrated into the community. Hugh had spent some years at Oscott and he transferred to us after his time in a parish in the Liverpool diocese. Welcome, Hugh!

Hugh Donleavy

We have done our best to maintain the rhythm of College life and the task of formation for the priesthood in spite of all the restrictions the health crisis has made necessary. So far only one case of Covid has been identified in our community and that was on 6 November. Any plans we had to leave the building had to be swiftly rearranged and we began a 10-day period of isolation. It was good to be able to keep our spirits up by celebrating the "new men's evening", already planned for 6 November. It is always an in-house event, and on that occasion it was vital for morale to prove we were able to keep ourselves suitably entertained. Happily, 10 days later we all tested negative and we were free to leave the premises once again. The Garden Room was turned temporarily into a swab-testing surgery. Even the Rector donned protective clothing, so that not everyone recognised him at first. The next Rector may wish to consider doing this kind of thing more often!



The Rector in disguise

Archbishop Paul Gallagher



Viktor Torres Airava



Joseph O'Brien

As Christmas approached, we found ourselves wondering whether it would be prudent, or even possible, to travel. The UK relaxed its quarantine requirement, so that visitors from abroad could take a test five days after arrival and, in the event of a favourable result, end their quarantine then. This meant our students would at least have the possibility of spending Christmas with families and friends and we realised that for some this would be important. Term was due to finish on 18 December, though: a little late in the day for Christmas hopefuls. Could we contemplate finishing early?



## Senior Student – Toby Duckworth

Greetings from the eternal city!

My name is Toby Duckworth and I'm a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Birmingham. I grew up in Sutton Coldfield, just a stone's through away from our sister seminary, St Mary's College Oscott and I can't tell you how surprised I still am to find myself here. Whilst I am a cradle Catholic I more or less lapsed in my teenage years until I met the Lord afresh through my Catholic Secondary School, the Diocesan Youth Service, our annual Lourdes Pilgrimage and then ultimately my parish. I felt so indebted to the help of the Youth Service that I felt like I had a lot to give back and thus soon became a full-time volunteer youth minister at Soli, one of our diocesan residential retreat centers working with 14-25 year old's.

There I began my undergraduate studies in Youth Ministry and Theology, not to mention grew in faith and to a deeper commitment to prayer. It was there also that I first felt the Lord was calling me to the Priesthood, and after an inspiring discernment year living and working in an inner-city parish, I made the leap of faith and applied to begin formation. What special years they continue to be here in Rome and how honoured I feel to serve the community as its Senior Student. This year I am set to finish my first cycle studies at the Gregorian University, and I look forward to further licentiate studies in Ignatian Spirituality in due course.



**Toby Duckworth**

## Deputy Senior Student – John O'Laverty

My name is John O'Laverty and I am the new Deputy Senior Student for the year ahead. I realise it may need a little explanation as to how an Ulster man wound up as DSS. Hopefully this brief biography will shed a little light on this happy turn of events. My home is the parish of Bright in the diocese of Down and Connor in the north of Ireland. The area has a rich ecclesiastical history beginning with St. Patrick. According to tradition the local townland of Saul is the site of the first church built by the missionary saint. Significantly, it is where St. Patrick retired to write his *Confessio* and indeed it is where he is buried. After completing university studies, I entered St. Malachy's seminary in Belfast in 2015. It is an elegant building in the north of the city that previously had been a Poor Clares' Convent from 1924-2012.

In the summer of 2017, I transferred to the Pontifical Irish College which is located on the Caelian hill near the Basilica of St. John Lateran and began theological studies at the Gregorian University. Just this year I have found myself parachuted into the seminary community at the VEC. I am delighted to have the opportunity to be a member of the community and I am thankful for the warm welcome I received when I arrived in the summer of 2020. I look forward to spending the next three years at the VEC as I complete my licentiate in Canon Law.



**John O'Laverty**

## CHAIRMANS REPORT

At first sight there seems little to report as we have all endured "lockdown" after "lockdown".

We had to cancel the 2020 Annual Meeting as well as the planned visit to Palazzola, but I am pleased to say that your committee have continued to meet, thanks to the internet and in particular to the ZOOM software.

These virtual meetings have not compared with the normal ones held in Clergy House, Westminster, but we have efficiently and successfully conducted our business in a two hour period which, for some committee members, is a considerable saving in time and indeed cost. In "normal" times I would leave home at 0630 to catch the train to London and would arrive back sometime after 1900.

### **It raises the question - should some of our meetings be held virtually?**

Late in Dec.2020 the committee agreed to provide the College with the funds to purchase a new car for the students (see page 6 for details). The new car was eventually supplied to the College on 5th March when the Rector (on behalf of the Friends) presented the keys of the car to the Senior Student.

We were pleased to hear that the College Community was able to decamp from Via Monserrato to Palazzola for the Christmas "lockdown" and indeed many of us were quite envious at their good fortune.

We are now waiting for the restrictions to be lifted so that we can plan for future visits to Rome, although the latest BBC News reports suggest we may have a long wait as yet another "lockdown" has been ordered in Italy.

And so finally I would like to raise my biggest concern, namely the reduction in the membership of the Friends. Membership has reduced over the years; in the early 2000's we had about 500 members

	2017_18	2018_19	2019_20	2020_21
Members Paid	346	366	350	347
New Members	9	26	16	10
No Contact	66	45	55	40
Resigned	0	0	4	8
Deceased	0	1	3	5

An interesting figure from the graph is the number of new members during 2018-19 (when we were planning the FOV visit to Palazzola). One long-standing member invited a group of her friends from the local Anglican community, all of whom became members!

Please – if we are to continue to support the College as we have done in the past then we need to recruit more members.

Since preparing this report a new Rector has been appointed, Fr Stephen Wang. I would like to thank Mgr Philip Whitmore for his constant support of the *Friends*, and wish him well as he returns to Westminster. Hopefully, one day in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to meet Fr. Stephen in Rome and share pizza and ice-cream together.

Mike Lang

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

Fr. John Flynn (VEC)

Mr G H Harris (Oakham)

## THE NEW STUDENT CAR



Dear Friends of the Venerabile,

Having just been appointed as the new Car Man of the Venerable English College, I am tasked with looking after the cars and organizing their use. One of the first things that happened for my part was that the new student car arrived. After many years of faithful service, the old Fiat Stilo has been decommissioned and we are delighted to now be back to having three student cars at our disposal.

The new car is a 2020 Toyota Corolla Hybrid and so far the experience has been very positive. Apart from being a beautiful piece of engineering and incredibly comfortable to drive, it brings with it many advantages. Hybrid cars in general have very high mileage so we expect that we will indeed be able to enjoy this car for many years. It enjoys a very large boot space, so this will be ideal for supply runs and for transporting all our sacristy equipment.

Furthermore, the car consumes considerably less fuel than did its predecessor, with fuel consumption being at approximately 4L/100km while the Stilo would consume above 7. Fuel consumption for the Corolla however can be further reduced with good economic driving. As a hybrid, it is powered by both a combustion engine and an electric motor which uses energy stored in the battery. The battery is charged through regenerative braking and by the internal combustion engine, and experienced drivers are able to drive very efficiently. On a recent drive to Palazzola, we managed to drive all the way up there and back using the electrical engine for almost three quarters of the trip. From an environmental perspective this also derives many benefits. Rome has had big problems with pollution, as you might imagine, and as such they have put in place a number of restrictions on certain days of the week and on which zones we are allowed to drive in. One Sunday a month they tend to enforce a total car block in the whole city in order to try to keep pollution levels down. The most notable difference to running costs with a hybrid, and the greatest opportunity to run in electric mode is in an urban environment where most driving is at low-speed, and there is a lot of stopping, as is usually the case in Rome. We have found so far that generally about half of a typical commute within the city of Rome can be covered on battery power.

So compared to the Stilo and our two other cars, the cleaner energy, good fuel economy and low insurance and tax costs makes the Corolla very cost-efficient. In short it is an ideal car for us, and we are incredibly grateful to the Friends of the Venerabile for making it possible for us to have these cars at our disposal.

With assurance of our prayers,

**Trym Hellevig**



On behalf of the *Friends*, the Rector presents the keys of the new car to the Senior Student

### Risotto alle Erbe

**Ingredients:-**

2 oz / 60g butter	1 small Onion (chopped )	12 oz / 350g Arboria or Carnaroli rice
10 Walnut halves	1 clove Garlic	3 pints / 1.5 litres Chicken Stock
Salt and freshly ground Black Pepper		2 oz / 60 g Freshly grated Parmesan Cheese

At least 8tbs finely chopped, **fresh**, herbs chosen from:  
mint, coriander, rosemary, sage, parsley, dill (use sparingly), basil, oregano, tarragon thyme.

**Method:-**

Lightly fry the chopped onion in half the butter over moderate heat. Add the rice and stir with wooden spoon, making sure all the rice is coated with butter. Add boiling stock, a ladle at a time, adding only enough for it to be absorbed by the rice.

Continue adding the hot stock—the grains of rice will absorb it as they cook—and keep stirring.

Meanwhile chop the herbs and walnuts and crush the garlic.

When rice is half-cooked add the chopped herbs and walnuts and garlic.

When rice is cooked completely, add the Parmesan cheese and the rest of the butter.

Add salt and pepper to taste and serve straight away.

### **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

## TALES FROM THE ARCHIVES

Durham University has been at the forefront in promoting virtual lectures on cultural themes. Recently these have included a discussion between the directors of the National Gallery in London and the Vatican Museums exploring the challenges and opportunities facing galleries during the current pandemic, and a lecture on the ‘cult of Raphael’. Earlier this month Professor Maurice Whitehead, Director of Heritage Collections at the English College, was invited to give a lecture. His lecture, which attracted an audience of over three hundred people, including numerous members of the Patrons of the Vatican Museums, provided a brief overview of the history of the English Hospice and the Venerable English College, from 1362 to the present day. It went on to highlight some of the artistic, archival and book treasures of the Hospice and College which still survive today, as well as important artefacts, such as the hugely important pentaptych, or five-panel altarpiece of circa 1390, which disappeared in 1798, following the French invasion of Rome. The lecture, which generated a great deal of interest, and numerous subsequent enquiries, was recorded and is now viewable at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqB2xB3XctU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqB2xB3XctU)



The English College now has an additional website [www.vecarchives.org](http://www.vecarchives.org) featuring regular blogs entitled *Tales from the Archives*: these may be subscribed to free of charge.

A new publication commemorating the 850th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket (c. 1118–1170), under the title *Memory, Martyrs, and Mission*, can be downloaded as a free e-book from [www.vecrome.org/college-life/publications](http://www.vecrome.org/college-life/publications)

## REPORT FROM PALAZZOLA

By the time you receive this issue of Venerable View, Palazzola’s new website [www.palazzola.net](http://www.palazzola.net) will be up and running. There is also a new email address: [palazzola@palazzola.net](mailto:palazzola@palazzola.net). Please only use this email as all previous ones have been discontinued. Last year Palazzola opened between mid-August and mid-October and by utilising simple and welcoming stay safe, stay happy, stay healthy protocols ensured that all guests had a wonderful time. Julie & Giuseppe are hoping to do the same later this year and on behalf of the English College would very much appreciate your continued support. A Palazzola Holidays newsletter will be issued to all Friends in mid-April when we should have further information on when and how we can resume travel to Italy. This will list availability at Palazzola throughout the summer and autumn. For further details you may contact Anthony Coles at [arctc@btinternet.com](mailto:arctc@btinternet.com) / 020 7431 3414

### 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](http://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 I suggest 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).

We have just received our first payment from Amazon so some of us must have used the facility.