

# VENERABILE VIEW

Published by The Friends of  The English College Rome

## The Chairman Writes:

In the winter edition I told you all about Harvington Hall and how we had celebrated there the Martyrs' Mass for the Midlands. It was then our venue for a Friends' outing in February. It was a day enjoyed by all in glorious weather. Many of the people who came will be on our Friends Pilgrimage in September, it will be great to meet them all again.

In early March, on your behalf, I went to the College to meet with staff and students, to hear of their needs and to reassure them of our prayers and interest. I arrived on the Feast of St Chad, Patron Saint of the Birmingham Diocese and found a note inviting me, a fellow of the Diocese, to a celebration in honour of the Feast. The Birmingham bunch are the most numerous in College at the moment. These include the Rector, seven Students, one of whom, Fr Gerardo Fabrizio, was to be 'Chef in Chief'. After Mass for the Feast, celebrated by Fr Pat, we went up to what was the snug. Of course I knew where it was! When I got to the second floor the door had gone! To comply with fire regulations the door had moved round the corner. We had a great evening of Feasting.

I was able to see all the works that had been carried out that Fr Pat had told us about in the last Venerabile View. The new kitchens, the impressive Roman Column, the Friends room in constant use and the little grey box which is a useful addition to the computer range. Andrew Pinsett explained its use to me. Because

### Summer 2000

we have helped the College to purchase sets of new vestments the mending has become less, but there are plenty of copes for me to work on. My visit would not be the same without my sewing sessions by the second floor window.

The alterations to the two shops and the creation of the reception area was well on the way, the whole area will be of great use to the College and to visitors. The Schola will have a room in which to practise and storage space. There will be plenty of toilets for able and disabled visitors and information about College life for the Students and info on the Friends on view.

We have been very fortunate to commission an excellent artist to paint Mgr Toffolo's portrait. At present Michael Noakes is busy with a book on the Queen so although artist and sitter have met on a couple of occasions the work is not yet really underway. My thanks to those of you who responded to my plea for extra funds to help with the College reception area. We have printed some leaflets about this but you have already given £800 over and above your subscriptions.

Whilst on the subject of money may I ask you all to respond to the letter and form which will be sent to you. We have changed our

Bank account so you need to change your Bankers Order as the form will show you, also the government has changed the procedure on getting tax back on donations to charity so please sign the form for gift aid which replaces the covenant scheme. If you have any problems with it do ask for help.

At our last committee meeting I asked if I could buy the remaining 160 pencils that we have not sold to send out with a container load to Monze in Zambia that our Parish supports. Sr Lucy is over here on a visit and went round our school and saw how well equipped it was and her children did not even have pencils. The committee, on your behalf, have donated the pencils to Monze. Very many thanks.

It is nearly time for our Pilgrimage to which those lucky enough to be going are so looking forward.

Our next date for everyone is the AGM on Saturday, October 14, at the Cathedral in Liverpool. I hope to see many of you there.

Jim Holroyd, from Ilkley, W. Yorkshire, phoned to say that his wife, Sue, had died peacefully on 28 July. The news will sadden the many Friends who met them at AGM's and other events. They were to have been with us on the September pilgrimage. Please remember both of them in your prayers.

**Jo Barnacle**



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had been asked to stay, so she hid him away from her family. He was able to devote his life to writing.

Anne Line, who along with her husband Roger and her brother William, converted to Catholicism in her teens, was happy to devote her life to the service of God. William and Roger escaped to the Continent, where William became a Jesuit lay brother. Anne could not afford to go, so she joined Fr John Gerard and dedicated her life to looking after priests arriving from the Continent. She was eventually condemned to death and on the scaffold she addressed the crowd: 'I am sentenced to die for harbouring a Catholic priest, and so far I am from repenting for having so done, that I wish with all my heart, that where I entertained one, I could have entertained a thousand.'

Anne Vaux, who had secretly taken vows, always had a group of single Catholic ladies to help her in her house in Hackney, including a young girl Frances. They were often raided by the pursuivants, suspecting Mass was being celebrated. Young Frances was often threatened by the pursuivants, but she never divulged any information. Anne eventually moved to Baddesley Clinton, where Nicholas Owen had built some hides. Later she moved to Enfield and then to Kent. Each move followed searches of her house and the fear of being found out. Anne arranged the 1605 Jesuit meeting to take place at Harrowden. They were discovered and the priests and Anne were taken to the Tower of London. On release she carried on with her work, moving on whenever necessary.

Stephen Usherwood concluded with these words: 'These are but a few examples of the heroism of our ancestors, whose constancy makes it possible for us to celebrate Mass here today without fear.'

**Catherine Menezes**

# An Old Roman Villa

by  
**Elizabeth Usherwood**

Friends, especially those fortunate enough to visit Palazzola, will be aware that, before its acquisition by Rector Hinsley in 1920, the students had spent the *villegiatura* at Monte Porzio, a villa purchased from the Jesuits in 1708, which had been rented by the College for the greater part of the preceding century.

What is less well known is that before either of these, the Venerabile had, within a few years of its opening, owned a villa just outside the walls of Rome, where many happy days were spent tending vines.

Pope Gregory XIII, whose pontificate lasted from May 1578 to April 1585, was concerned that the Roman climate had such an adverse effect on the health of English students that some were forced to abandon their studies and return home, so he gave to the College a villa on the Palatine which had been part of a palace built by the emperor Septimus Severus (AD 193-211).

After the move to Monte Porzio this property fell into disrepair. A book published in London in 1840 gives an atmospheric description of the impression made by the ruins on an English visitor: 'Among other strange vicissitudes which have been witnessed by those now silent halls and roofless temples amid which we stand [on the Palatine] not the least interesting is the fact that the splendid palace of the Caesar who despoiled Caractacus and his countrymen of their humble cottages in Britain, at length became the inheritance of their exiled descendants in the sixteenth century; and the *Triclinium* of mighty Emperors was recently used as a refectory for meek and unambitious students. In the vestibule leading to the College dining room I observed some interesting portraits, and in spite of the dust and the cobwebs which now overshadow them, I was able to decypher the following names: S Gregorius Angliae Apostolus; S Thomas Cantuariensis Archiepiscopus; Jacobus Tertius Rex Angliae; Henricus Cardinalis Eboracensis. The painting, however, which more particularly attracted my attention, represented, over the entrance to the chapel, a youth in the collegiate uniform holding a scroll whereon was inscribed: "**O Bon Jesu! converte Angliam; humiliter supplicat collegium Anglicanum de Urbe**", but hither alas, the studious youth of Albion's isle no longer come to pray for their country's conversion. Even the comparatively modern chambers and convivial halls have become the confused store rooms of a poor gardener and his family, and the desecrated oratory is now the squalid retreat of the birds of the air and the beasts of the fields.'



## Martyrs' Day Masses

Holy Mass will be celebrated at Tyburn Convent on December 1st at noon. It is hoped that there will also be Masses in other venues.

For details of these please contact Fr Philip Gillespie, Christ the King, 78 Queens Drive, Liverpool L15 6YQ. Tel: 0151 7222231 nearer the time.

**Elizabeth Usherwood**

## In Memoriam - Bishop John Brewer

With the recent death of Bishop John Brewer of Lancaster the Roman Association and the Friends of the Venerabile have lost a loyal and active supporter.

Educated for the priesthood at Ushaw College, Durham, he then went to the Venerabile for further studies, gaining a licence in Philosophy at the Gregorian University.

After ordination in 1956 at Rome's church of the Twelve Apostles, Fr John remained in Rome for a further three years studying theology and Canon Law before taking up parish work on Merseyside.

In 1964 he returned to the College as Vice-Rector, and the following year was appointed chaplain to Pope Paul VI, and Cardinal Heenan (the then Archbishop of Westminster, an Old Roman) suggested that he might like to celebrate a mass for Mother Teresa's Indian sisters who were working among the poor in a shantytown outside Rome. He did so for three years, becoming very popular both with the nuns and the shanty dwellers. One mother described him as, "an ordinary good man who we love very much". At the time he also served as an officiating chaplain to the Royal Navy.

His stay in Rome ended when, in 1971, he was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Shrewsbury, although his love of the City and the College lasted for the rest of his life.

May he rest in peace.

**Stephen Usherwood**

## Congratulations

The Friends of the Venerabile offer their congratulations to:

### **Most Rev Cormac Murphy-O'Connor**

upon his appointment as 10th Archbishop of Westminster. A former student and later Rector of the English College, and since 1977 Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, Archbishop Cormac has been President of the Friends since we were inaugurated in 1985.

### **Most Rev Vincent Nichols**

upon his appointment as Archbishop of Birmingham. A contemporary of Mgr Adrian Toffolo when they were both students at the Venerabile, Archbishop Vincent was for several years General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales before being ordained Bishop in North London in 1992.

### **Rev Nicholas Hudson**

upon his appointment as Vice-Rector of the English College as from September 2000. Fr Nicholas trained at the Venerabile and was ordained in 1986. A regular attender at Friends' events over many years, he is currently Director of the Christian Education Centre in Tooting, which serves the Southwark Archdiocese.

**Jeremy Hudson**