

VENERABILE VIEW

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The Rector Writes:

During the summer months work was going on in the College church to restore the mosaic pavement, which is such a striking feature for visitors. The main corridor smelled of ammonia as the whole floor was cleaned. If you have been to Mass in the College, you might have noticed that the pavement had many damaged areas. Some of these had been crudely repaired, in other places there were small holes where the *tesserae* had worked loose and had been lost.

Skilled technicians have made good the holes, large and small. They have copied the pattern with carefully matched marble *tesserae* and have inserted them, taking care not to damage the floor where it was fragile. The work was slow and painstaking. It involved making a pattern for the missing area and fitting the new mosaic together, like a jigsaw, on a sticky-backed template. It had to fit and the pieces had to be the same size as the original. This was then inverted onto the prepared section of the floor and the transparent backing removed. When the work was finished it was gently waxed to seal it and give it lustre. An exciting discovery is that the pavement is much older than the Church. We have no details yet, but it is possible to see where the central 'carpet pattern' has been

Winter 2003/4

cut away to allow the insertion of the marble pillars in the 1860s rebuilding. Some of the floor space, notably in the corners of the church and along the aisles, are older still with a simpler design of green and red squares. The restorers told me that here the material is different too, being limestone instead of marble. We hope that we can find some answers to our questions in our own and other archives. Parts of the pavement would have belonged to the Hospice Church and would be familiar to the first students of the College.

We have had damp rising from the crypt for a few years now. The south wall has been damaged along its full length and there were signs that it was spreading below the Martyrs Picture. Over the years a lack of proper ventilation has meant that the walls held the moisture and it began to rise and cause the plaster to flake. The walls are now dry and have been 'marbled' to match the older work.

Our crypt has now been paved and lit, the air circulates freely and we will be able to use it in the future. This is significant for the College as many of the people associated with the Hospice are buried there, along with Cardinal Bainbridge and Mary Ward's first companions

in the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Napoleon's troops took the lead coffins for bullets and scattered the bones. As the College was re-established, these were interred in the crypt wall. When we pray and celebrate above, we will remember them.

This important restoration is being paid for with the help of a generous grant from the *Lazio Region*. This body would have a similar function to English Heritage. The College has had to match the grant with a third of the cost.

There have been many priestly ordinations this year, as a large year moves on into parish ministry. There were two ordinations in Westminster earlier in the year. Mark Vickers and Nicholas Schofield are assistant priests in Kingsbury and Willesden. In July Simon Hall in Epsom and David Panniter in Brighton were ordained for Arundel & Brighton; Paul Keane was ordained in Upton Park (Brentwood); and Adrian Tomlinson in Sheffield (Hallam); David Gnosill in Bloxwich (Birmingham); and Ivor Parrish in Northampton. At the end of August many of us went to Copenhagen where Gregers Maersk-Krinstensen was ordained by Bishop Kozon.

continued on next page:

Continued from previous page:

In September we celebrated new priests, in Nottingham Peter Vellacott; in Birkenhead Paul Simmons (Shrewsbury); and in Liverpool Andrew Robinson. I know that you will remember to pray for them, as they begin their life's work in the service of Christ and his Church.

You can see that in September we needed a good intake to keep up our numbers. In addition to those to be ordained to the priesthood, we also said good-bye to Michael Docherty, who is having a pastoral year as a deacon in the Lancaster diocese, and to Antonio Wakim from Beirut, in Lebanon. Antonio has been with us for three years and will be continuing his studies for the Maronite Church.

New Seminarists

At present we have six new English seminarists. Two French students from *Point Coeur* studying theology have joined us. They are a welcome addition to the House. We also have three priests beginning Licence courses. One is from Malta and two are from opposite ends of Italy, Aosta and Sicily. Fr Patrick Mileham from Birmingham has resumed his Scripture studies and Nell Patterson, our Anglican student, has joined us from Cuddesdon. This gave us thirteen new people, which means we have the same number in the seminary as last year. For this we thank God.

I wish you the peace and joy of Christ.

I thank you all for your generous support of the Venerable English College.

**Mgr Patrick
Kilgarriff
Rector**

Building up

This year's Annual Reunion of the Friends took place in London on Saturday 13th September at the Church of St John the Evangelist, Islington, by kind permission of the Parish clergy, Frs Shaun Lennard and Gerard Skinner. On a very hot day it was quite a relief to have our meeting in the cool of the church's crypt.

Spiritual Director

The meeting began with a report on the English College given this year by its Spiritual Director Mgr Anthony Philpot. He gave us what he termed an 'impressionist' view of events at the Venerabile over the past year, starting with the weather. For much of the summer Rome had been unbearably hot. According to Mgr Chestle it was the hottest since 1782. This was particularly trying for those studying for exams, who had to develop strategies to cope, for example avoiding trying to work in the middle of the day.

It had been harmonious in the College with a good atmosphere. Despite the universities' increasing emphasis on writing essays, the students had plenty of opportunity for extra curricular activities. Many were involved in music-making, guided and enthused by Fr Whitmore. On official occasions at St Peter's two-thirds of the students would be in the VEC element of the massed choirs. The Venerabile Christmas concert was one of the highlights of the year.

The past academic year had started with a pilgrimage to

the *Divino Amore* basilica, a favourite place for Romans, at which the coming year was dedicated to Our Lady. The exercise would be repeated next month with a College pilgrimage to the *Tre Fontani* shrine, site of St Paul's martyrdom. The College was also planning a history week, when students would be taught by Eamon Duffy and Judith Champ, about the history of the Catholic Church in our country.

As to College personnel, Mgr Philpot reported that 9 students were ordained to the priesthood this summer, really a 'bumper crop'! Some 12 students would be starting at the Venerabile this autumn, 6 of them new seminarists, and the remainder further on in their training. Another leaver, sadly, was Joseph Coughlan who had served the College as Administrator for the past 13 years, and who was moving with his young family to Ampleforth. In that time Joe had done a huge amount to sort out the fabric of the College, and would be remembered especially for his help during the 'exile'.

Palazzola

At Palazzola much work had been done over the past year. The rock-face had been made safe and the swimming pool had re-opened. Extensive drainage works, linking the Villa to the main sewer, were nearly completed. Mgr Philpot had been very interested by our photographic display, showing the many projects sponsored by the Friends. These included the minibuses, which he said, were an invaluable resource.

the Body of Christ

The College was looking forward to several momentous events this autumn. The new Archbishop of Canterbury would be staying at the Venerabile while visiting the Pope. Soon after this all the Bishops of England and Wales would be making their *Ad Limina* visit to Rome, and the College would be welcoming them during their stay. Their visit would coincide with the Pope's Silver Jubilee and Mother Teresa's beatification.

Mgr Philpot urged the Friends to continue to pray for the students, and for vocations. He expressed the College's great appreciation for all our prayers and encouragement. An excellent lunch set us up nicely for a talk given by the Senior Student, Andrew Pinsent. He spoke of his own path towards priesthood. Recently he had given a presentation to the new seminarians as part of their induction course, and he repeated this for our benefit using his PowerPoint skills.

The Chairman reported on activities in the past year, in particular the very successful visit to Ingatestone Hall in April, which had been over-subscribed. It was planned to do something similar next year, with a trip to Arundel Castle being mooted. October 2004 would also hopefully see another Friends' pilgrimage to Rome and Palazzola.

Increase

The Accounts prepared by our Treasurer, Hamish Keith, showed that our income in the year to August 2003 amounted to £15,939 an increase of nearly £3,000 over the previous year, reflecting the rise in subscription rates.

Expenses totalled £5,802 giving us net income of £10,137. Of this sum £10,000 had been donated to the College pool project. Our reserve carried forward stood at £6,894.

Committee

Our Committee were re-elected as follows:

Chairman: Jo Barnacle
Secretary: John Braun
Treasurer: Hamish Keith

Members: Nicky Dillon, Jeremy Hudson, Tanis Kent, Ivan Kightley, John Oyler, Elizabeth Usherwood, Yvonne Veale, and Mark Woods.

Our reunion concluded with Mass celebrated for us in the church by Mgr Philpot. This was the Feast of St John Chrysostom, bishop and doctor of the Church. He lived in the 4th century and was revered for his preaching. He lived an austere life, striving to reform the morals of clergy and people. Mgr Philpot regarded him as an excellent role model for all at the English College.

Our celebration included the reading from St Paul's letter to the Ephesians, which seemed apt for our gathering: 'each one of us has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. To some his gift was that they should be apostles, to some prophets, to some evangelists, to some pastors and teachers, so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ.'

With that another convivial evening came to an end.

Jeremy Hudson

Congratulations to 'Old Roman' Archbishop

At St George's Cathedral, Southwark, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Archbishop Michael Bowen handed the crosier to his successor, and fellow 'Old Roman', Archbishop Kevin McDonald.

Born at Stoke-on-Trent in 1947, from 1965-68 Kevin read Latin at Birmingham University, and then studied for the priesthood at the Venerabile. Ordained in 1974, he remained in Rome for a further year to complete a Licence in Moral Theology.

After a short period of parish work at Stourbridge, he taught Moral Theology at Oscott until 1985, when he returned to Rome to serve on the Pontifical Council for Church Unity with special responsibility for Anglican/Catholic matters, at the same time completing a doctorate.

By 1993 he was back in England, as Sparkhill's parish priest. There he became involved in inter-religious dialogue with the Moslem community.

His next appointment was the Rectorship of Oscott, then, in 2001, he was ordained Bishop of Northampton, a diocese he led until his elevation to the Archbishopric of Southwark.

The Friends of the Venerabile extend to Archbishop Kevin their congratulations.

Elizabeth Usherwood

The Chairman's Report

There seems to have been a great deal happening recently. The Annual Meeting went well this year. Mgr Tony Philpot's talk was really great; it was so good to have him at our Meeting. Andrew Pinsent's talk too was stimulating. Andrew had brought his own Powerpoint projector with him to present his talk. You may remember that the students had asked us to finance one for them but we were unable to this year. One of the Friends at the meeting very generously paid the £1,200 needed to buy the projector. Andrew was able to purchase one and take it back to College for the start of the term.

We sent the College £10,000 this year towards renovating the pool at the College (the 'tank') and will contribute more next year. The work should start very soon. People have got mixed up about the pool at the College and the pool at Palazzola. We, the Friends, have contributed towards the pool at the College in Rome. Palazzola is running a fund-raising for the pool and surrounds there. This fund still needs £60,000 although the work has been completed.

Mgr Pat Kilgarriff is returning to his diocese in the New Year and Fr Nick Hudson will be the new Rector. Fr Andrew Headon will be Vice-Rector. We offer Mgr Pat our very best wishes for the future and our thanks for all his past help. Joe Coughlan has been succeeded by Barbara Donovan.

We are having a special Friends Pilgrimage from 14th October to 21st (details enclosed) I hope that many of you will join me.

At the time of going to press our Annual Meeting 2004 will be on September 11th in Manchester so note the date in your diary.

Jo Barnacle

Martyrs' Day 2003

The Midlands

The Midlands Martyrs' Mass in honour of St Ralph Sherwin and the 44 English College Martyrs was held on Wednesday December 3rd at St Austin's in Stafford where Fr David Evans is the Parish Priest and Fr Robert Murphy the Assistant Priest, both 'Old Romans'. Fr Robert in giving the homily spoke about St Ralph Sherwin and the contrasting receptions he had received from the Bishop of Milan, the Calvinists in Geneva and the English, who executed him. 15 priests and I sat down after Mass to an Italian style lunch with Italian Wines. Thanks go to Fr David and Fr Robert for their hospitality.

Jo Barnacle

Tyburn

At the Tyburn Martyrs' Mass, concelebrated on 1st December by Bishop Longley and 33 'Old Romans', Sr Amadeus read from Hebrews, Mgr Mark Langham was cantor, and Elizabeth Usherwood lead the Prayers of Intercession. In his homily the bishop called attention to the problems facing priests in the world of today, which although very different from those of their predecessors, have equal compensations. The sweet voices of the Tyburn Community singing the Offertory chant, contrasted wonderfully with the other parts of the Mass rendered by priests and the lay congregation, which included a number of Friends of the Venerabile, for which organisation a special prayer was offered.

Elizabeth Usherwood

Arundel Castle

It has been suggested that a day at Arundel Castle might be arranged. Although the castle is normally closed to visitors on Saturday, the Duke of Norfolk has agreed to open it for the Friends of the Venerabile on 8th May at a reduced rate (£10 less) provided our group numbers at least 40. There is no upper limit.

The proposed programme is for Mass in the chapel; visit to the gardens; lunch; followed by a tour of the castle to include memorabilia of Cardinal Howard, builder of the present Venerabile.

Parking is provided. Trains for Arundel leave from London (Victoria). The cost for the day, including lunch, would be £25. To ensure that the chosen date may be quickly confirmed, will you please let me know, if possible by the end of January, if you are interested.

Write to me at 24 St Mary's Grove, London, N1 2NT

Elizabeth Usherwood

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