

# VENERABILE VIEW

Published by The Friends of



The English College Rome

## FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

Spring 2022

It has been six months since I last sent news from the College to the Friends of the Venerable. As I write, in mid-May, we are coming to the end of the teaching period of the second semester. Rome has suddenly become incredibly hot, with highs of 29 degrees predicted for this week, and the city is heaving with tourists and pilgrims.

This is such a relief after the Omicron scare, when Covid restrictions tightened once more and impacted our life directly. For three months, from mid-December to the mid-March, we were not able to have guests in for meals or guided tours. It is a real joy to open up the College once more and remember that hospitality is as much a part of our spiritual DNA as priestly formation.

We had some very bitter-sweet news in February. Fr John Flynn, our Vice-Rector, had been nominated to take over as Rector at the Royal English College, Valladolid, from this summer. We are enormously sad that Fr John will be leaving us – but we are full of gratitude for everything that he has brought to the VEC, and very proud that he has been nominated for this important role. Please keep him in your prayers.



It was a real joy for us to welcome the Jubilarians to the seminary in November – twenty-seven priests and one archbishop from England and Wales who were celebrating significant anniversaries: 40, 50 or 60 years since their priestly ordination. In total we had 1,350 years of priestly service in the church together! Their faithfulness was such an inspiration to us here at the Venerable English College.

Fr Gerry Ewing gave us some advice: "Have a seriousness of purpose and a lightness of touch". Archbishop Bernard Longley pointed out how we see the future in each other: the Jubilarians see the priesthood of the future in the seminarians, and the seminarians see the priests they will become in a few years' time!

I spoke about the vision of Cardinal William Allen, who founded the English College as a seminary that would form missionary priests, when so many other voices wanted it to be a refuge where people could hide away until better times emerged in Elizabethan England.

We celebrated Mass together in the church. In the photo ~ (on page one) you can see everyone facing the Martyrs' Picture as we pray the Te Deum at the end of Mass. And then we had a delicious dinner in the refectory and toasted our Jubilarians.

Martyrs' Day, as always, was one of the highlights of the year, when we celebrated St Ralph Sherwin and his Companions on 1 December. The night before we had the Vigil of Readings; then Solemn Mass on the day followed by a delicious festive lunch; coffee and liquori in the Cardinals' Corridor; and in the evening the traditional Veneration of the Relics and singing of the Te Deum. It was a joy to welcome Archbishop Arthur Roche who presided at the Mass, and Archbishop Paul Gallagher who concelebrated - both alumni of the College.

We normally celebrate our ministries during the Villeggiatura at Palazzola in early July. This year, Diaconate will take place as usual at the Villa, but the three "ministries" have been brought forward to May so that they can be celebrated in the College church before the end of the semester. Please pray for our new Lectors, Acolytes and Candidates.



Some of you may remember Mary-Jo Lorello, who sadly died on 15 February. Mary-Jo was at the heart of College life for over twenty years from the early-1970s until her retirement to New Mexico in 1996. She looked after the College accounts and - perhaps more significantly - led the seminarians from the tired world of British pop music into the infinite and mellifluous expanse of contemporary jazz. We remember her very fondly.

May she rest in peace.



Everyone has been very concerned about the war in Ukraine. Some of us were able to visit the Basilica of Santa Sofia, to pray with and for the Ukrainian community here in Rome, and to unite our prayers with them for peace in their country. We have tried to help in small ways, by contributing from our Student Fund to support charities who are working in Ukraine, and by holding a prayer vigil each Tuesday evening before the Blessed Sacrament in the church here. Let us hope and pray that there is a just and speedy solution to this conflict.

There have been some very memorable community events: Fr Anthony Curren, who works at the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, came to talk to us about his experience of ecumenism in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; I celebrated Mass with the Poor Servants of the Mother of God at the Mater Dei house near Spanish Steps on their patronal feast day: Regina Prophetarum, Our Lady, Queen of the Prophets; the priestly ordination of Fr Sean Elliott in Leeds Cathedral; an inspiring Holy Week retreat at Palazzola led by the Dominican Fr Vivian Boland; a Nordic night – complete with plastic Viking hats (which apparently are not very authentic anyway), Nordic cuisine, Nordic nuns (a Cistercian from Norway and a Benedictine from Sweden - visiting Rome for a formation course), flags galore and even a shrine to the Nordic saints; and the Great Seminary Bake Off, when six competitors spent hours in the kitchen preparing their cakes.



One highlight was definitely the Seven Churches pilgrimage in March. The devotion was started by St Philip Neri and has been part of the English College tradition for many years. We started with Mass in the Confessio at St Mary Major and finished at St Peter's. We prayed the Divine Office through the day, and a seminarian shared a personal meditation at each church. And yes there was a hearty meal after church number 4 at lunchtime! We covered 7 churches and 22 miles in 14 hours of walking! The photo shows us in the courtyard of St Paul's Outside the Walls.

One way of bringing the Roman seminaries together is football! The annual 5-a-side inter-seminary football tournament took place at the Irish College. It is called the Fr Ragheed Ganni Cup - named after a former priest student of the Irish College from Iraq, who was martyred in 2007.

We were almost/not-quite/not-nearly the victors in this mighty competition. In the end it was the Collegio Lombardo that claimed the cup.



The College Schola has been very active over these months. They led our Advent Meditation and sang at the annual Lenten “Station Mass” in our local parish church of San Lorenzo. In this photo you can see our Schola Master leading the full College Schola (plus a few guests) as we sang in St Peter’s Square on Easter Sunday morning for Pope Francis and the hundreds of thousands of people gathered for the Mass. We are traditionally one of the few choirs that is invited to sing here for the liturgy each Easter Sunday.



We have had some notable visitors over these months: Dr Anabel Inge, Deputy Head of Mission at the British Embassy to the Holy See, who discovered that she had a possible ancestral connection with a certain Hugh Ing who ran the English Hospice in the early 1500s; two former rectors, Bishop Nicholas Hudson and Mgr Pat Kilgarriff; Archbishop Rowan Williams; seminarians and formation team from St John’s Seminary, Womersley (which sadly closed last summer); Anglican ordinands from St Mellitus College in London; our three episcopal visitors (Archbishop-elect Mark O’Toole, Archbishop Bernard Longley and Archbishop John Wilson), together with members of the VEC Trust; a number of other bishops from the UK and beyond; the FOCUS lay missionary team from UCD in Dublin; and young leaders from the CAFOD “Step Into the Gap” programme.

It's good to end with prayer! The last photo is a beautiful image from Maundy Thursday, with Fr James McAuley, the deacons and the servers praying before the Blessed Sacrament at the Altar of Repose in the Martyrs’ Chapel. We pray for all the Friends of the Venerable; we thank you for your friendship and we ask you to pray for us.



**Fr. Stephen Wang  
Rector**

## Words from the new Senior Student and Deputy Senior Students

My name is Hugh Donleavy, I am 26 years old, and I'm a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Born in Warrington, into a Catholic family, I am the sixth of eight children. From what my parents and siblings tell me, I've wanted to be a priest even since before I could talk. I had a growing desire to be a missionary, and so after sixth form I started training for the Paris Foreign Missions, a missionary society who are based in France, and who work mainly in the Far East. After some discernment, I decided to come back to Liverpool, to be a diocesan priest, but I still have a desire for mission.



I arrived at the VEC last year, and am currently studying in third year theology at the Angelicum. It has been an interesting time to arrive, with Covid-related restrictions coming and going throughout the last year, but everything has settled down a bit now. It is somewhat daunting to be elected Senior Student after just a year here, but I am looking forward to the new job.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of all of us, to thank the Friends for their prayers and support - we are very grateful, and want to assure you of our prayers.

My name is Edward, I'm a fifth-year seminarian for the Diocese of Portsmouth. I was born in Poole and grew up in Hampshire before reading Law at the University of Durham (St John's College). Although I grew up as a Catholic, it wasn't until late in my time at university that I started seriously thinking about the priesthood, and it took another four years (during which time I worked as a manager in various different parts of the NHS) before I approached the diocese to actively discern a priestly vocation. I was somewhat surprised to be accepted, and even more surprised to have been sent to Rome!



Life in Rome over the last five years has been a joy and a struggle in equal measure. There is something special about studying for the priesthood in the heart of the Christian world, so close to the successor of St Peter, and it is the inspiring witness of centuries of Catholicism which is written into the fabric of this city that makes every struggle bearable. Whenever I am feeling particularly sick of anything (the climate, the Greg, Italian Bureaucracy) I make a pilgrimage of sorts around several monuments (the Colosseum, the Trevi Fountain, Piazza Spagna, and the Pantheon ending at St Peter's Basilica) to remind myself how lucky I am to be living in a place like this!

In my spare time, such as it is, I enjoy cooking and painting and going for brief (very brief) jogs along the banks of the Tiber.

## CHAIR REPORT

For me, the last six months have been a difficult time during which I have had to spend a period in hospital and although I am back at home I am not very mobile. I am also well aware that as I write this many of you will be preparing for the June visit to DOP and I am very guilty of the sin of envy. Secondly it has normally taken me about two days to insert the Rector's piece into the format for printing but this time it has been over a week—old age has its effect!

Let us look at some positive happenings:



We had a good response to the purchase of the Jubilee Venerabile which should be arriving with you direct from the printers in Italy.



The requests for you all to use SMILE-AMAZON and to collect used stamps were quite successful and continue.

Whilst reflecting on the past and looking forward confidently I would like to thank a few people for their constant support and assistance over the decade.

There are the two ladies who send packets of stamps, one has even persuaded her Parish Priest to put a box at the back of the Church and the other who works in a Diocesan Office. But of course, I must not forget the widows' mite, so please keep sending stamps. I would also like to thank the two ladies, Mary and Tina, who have done the tedious job of proof-reading and correcting my terrible English. And to Louise Sage who has provided so many interesting articles and reports.

And finally, Jim, who on so many occasions, has put his hand on my shoulder and simply said "Calm down" and who many a time has reminded me of something that I had missed.

My deep thanks to you all and especially my wife, (see Page 7)

**M. A. Lang**

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Jim Holroyd, 11 Fairfax Road, Bingley, West Yorks, BD16 4DR

Cheques payable to Friends of the Venerabile

## TERESA

I knew Teresa's family from the late 1960s when the Parish Priest asked me to drive two parishioners, Robbie and Gladys, to Mass each Sunday. Robbie had lost a leg in the 1939-45 war and was unable to drive. I agreed, and each Sunday provided a door-to-door service. At the end of the year, my wife Anna and I were invited to a New Year's Eve party hosted by Teresa and her first husband, John. During the following year Robbie and Gladys left Brixham and moved nearer to Teresa, in Buckfastleigh.

30 years passed by; Anna had died, and a mutual friend began inviting me to visit him in Brixham. This became a monthly occurrence and one weekend he mentioned that he had seen Teresa, who was quite lonely; her husband John had died many years ago. From then on we would take Teresa out for dinner with us, until one weekend Frank went to visit his daughter and Teresa and I went for dinner on our own. I suggested lunch the following day - and thus my trips to Devon became more frequent!

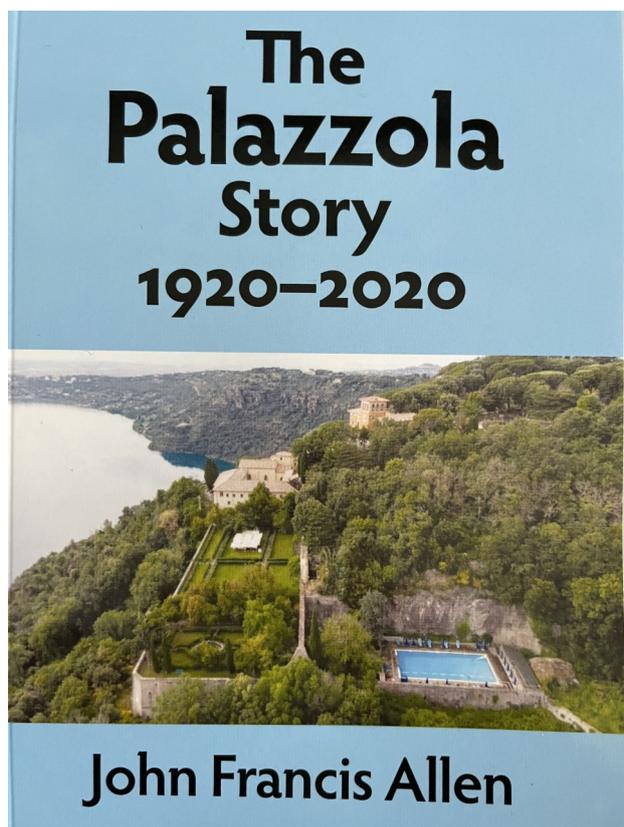
When I asked Teresa to marry me in November 2006, I do not think she realised that our relationship would in fact be a 'threesome' – Teresa, the VEC and me! At our wedding reception I joked about marrying a nurse who had eventually specialised in the care of the elderly ...

We went to Rome for our honeymoon and we much enjoyed exploring this beautiful city together. Teresa was also overwhelmed by the kindness shown to her by the VEC staff and students, and particularly the then Rector, Father, now Bishop, Nick Hudson.

She has done, and continues to do, an excellent job in supporting me in all things FOV, and not a week passes without her visiting the local Post Office - which of course is now our entry point to the banking system.

In short, Teresa is a wonderful wife, a wonderful nurse and I know full well that I could not have continued my work for the FOV without her, and her constant support.

**Mike Lang**



## The Palazzola Story

was written by

Mgr. John Allen

to celebrate

Palazzola's centenary.

It is available from

Our Lady of Grace (Ref: Palazzola)

11 Fairfax Road, Prestwich

Manchester M25 1AS

Price £7.00

Includes P&P. Cheque payable to *Our Lady of Grace*. [All proceeds to the *Venerable English College*.]

Another new book which you might like to read is available from [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)

The author's name should be familiar by now (so this is a chance to kill two birds with one stone).

<https://www.smile.amazon.co.uk/Sycamore-Catholic-Explained-Stephen-Wang/dp/1784696161>

### A REQUEST

Modern banking regulations require the bank to check that the payee on the cheque is the same name as the account into which it is to be paid. The tightened procedures mean that the Banks will only accept cheques made out to either "Friends of the Venerable" or "FOV".

### USED POSTAGE STAMPS (both British and Foreign)

Thank You - Thank you - Thank you

Fifteen or so members (and non-members) have collected the stamps from their mail and the FOV funds have benefitted to the tune of some £50-00. Please keep collecting stamps and also encourage your friends to do assist you and then send them to me.

Mr M A Lang, St Angelo, Grange Road, BUCKFAST, Devon, TQ11 0EH