

VENERABILE VIEW

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The English College Rome

FROM THE RECTOR'S WINDOW

Autumn 2015

Happily I can now report that the view from the Rector's window is quite magnificent. As I write, the last of the scaffolding is being taken away and the newly-cleaned façades are looking lovely. My own side of the cortile was cleaned between January and March of this year (hence the impoverished "view from the Rector's window" at the time of the last issue of *The Venerabile View*), the side furthest from the main College building was cleaned between March and June and the remaining two sides between June and October. The street front and the cortile are now pristine. Work will continue in due course on the Garden façades and on the street front from the Church towards Piazza Farnese.

Among the highlights of the second semester of last year was a visit to Turin to venerate the Holy Shroud. To mark the bicentenary of the birth of Saint John Bosco, the decision was taken to display the Holy Shroud from April to June 2015. We provided two opportunities for groups of students to sign up for a short visit to Piemonte to see it. A group of twenty signed up for the first trip, from 1 to 3 May, a long weekend by virtue of the public holiday on Friday 1 May. We boarded the 7am train from Termini and arrived in Turin before noon. We were taken straight to the queue where thousands were waiting to file past the Shroud. Even though it took two hours for us to reach the front of the queue, the time was well spent, with displays about local saints, opportunities to pray the rosary and a most instructive video explaining the marks on the Shroud that pilgrims would want to look out for. Our five minutes in silent prayer gazing at the world's most famous relic were profoundly moving.

If anyone feared that the rest of the weekend would seem like an anticlimax after the main purpose of the pilgrimage had been fulfilled, Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi proved them wrong. We were treated to an excellent weekend visiting sites of religious and cultural significance in Turin and the surrounding area, culminating in a pilgrimage on the Sunday morning to the Basilica of Santa Maria Ausiliatrice, where St John Bosco is enshrined, close to the site of the first Salesian school and the rooms where the saint lived and died. We shared a coach with a large group of Romans, mostly women, who seemed intrigued by the *giovani inglesi* towards the rear of the coach. Our guide addressed us at length in Italian and would then hand the microphone to the hapless Rector, as if he could be expected to remember ten minutes' worth of detailed guiding, let alone translate it. Nevertheless, it gave me a useful opportunity to make some announcements to the students. I was even asked to translate the evening's menu for them, although in my experience Italian menus are much the same whichever language one is speaking!



Another coach trip, of quite a different character, awaited us the following weekend. The annual College gita, when we invite the staff to join us - kitchen and domestic staff, administration team, porters and families - took us on a delightful and varied visit to the area just inland from the former Pontine Marshes. Mass was celebrated at the Cistercian Abbey of Val Visciola, which used to be linked with the community at Palazzola in its Cistercian days.



We then made our way to the famous gardens at Ninfa. After a wonderful picnic, prepared by our own kitchen staff, we were given a first-rate tour of the gardens, much to be recommended. Something completely different followed - a visit to the newly-opened theme park at Cinnecittà World. Roller-coaster rides, street theatre ranging from Roman gladiators to New York gangsters, and all manner of things to eat kept us fully occupied until the time came for us to return to Rome. Thanks are due to our Senior Student, Tom Cunnah, and to Father Vice-Rector for arranging such an enjoyable day out for us all.

It was a great joy to receive an invitation for servers and deacons to assist the Holy Father at the Mass of Pentecost Sunday in Saint Peter's Basilica. Two of our deacons (Rev. Tao Nguyen and Rev. Kevin Athaide) flanked the Holy Father throughout the Mass, to the delight of their families, watching on television from far away. Deacon Sean Crawley sang the Gospel. Indeed Deacon Matthew O'Gorman had done the same the previous Sunday, for a canonisation Mass, although we had been unable to join him for the occasion, as it coincided with our celebration of



Founders' Day. In addition to the deacons, 15 servers from the College took part in the liturgy, and all had an opportunity to greet the Holy Father. A day to remember!

Six new deacons were ordained at Palazzola in July: Guido Amari (Westminster), Phil Andrews and David Howell (Southwark), Tom Cunnah (Shrewsbury), Michael Deas and Richard Howard (Salford).



And our five existing deacons have all now been ordained to the priesthood. Father Tony Rosso's ordination in Florida was reported in the last issue of *The Venerable View*. Father Tao Nguyen was ordained in Oslo in June, followed in July by Father Matthew O'Gorman in Southwark and Father Sean Crawley in Leeds. Finally, the Dominican Priory in Leicester saw the ordination on 12 September of Father Kevin Athaide, who remains with us in Rome for one further year in order to complete his studies. *Ad multos annos!*

During the summer months a number of changes took place both in the College and at Palazzola. Special mention must be made of the resurfaced tennis court at Palazzola, this year's bumper gift from the Friends. Back in the College, the student kitchen has been completely refitted, much to the delight of the culinary experts among the student body. But the most far-reaching change has taken place in the Refectory. The wall panelling has been replaced with darker wood, following the line of the walls where there are alcoves for the windows. And round tables have been introduced with new chairs that glide noiselessly across the Refectory floor. The dynamic of table conversation is now quite different, as every person at a table is within eyeshot and earshot of every other. While it is understandably something of a shock for anyone familiar with the older arrangement who walks into the Refectory for the first time, the residents have adapted quickly and happily the new arrangements seem to have won general approval.



Ten new seminarians joined the College community this autumn. Seven of them are in the first year, while three (including two Norwegians) have spent time in seminary before and accordingly have moved into higher years. Sean Elliott and Alan Wasowski from Leeds, Matthew Goggin and Oliver Welsford from Portsmouth, Joshua Dixon from Liverpool, Henry Woodhouse from Hallam and Andrew Coy from Northampton form the new first year, while Josef Ottersen and

Hai Nguyen (Oslo) and Steven Leightell (Middlesbrough) bring the number of new men up to ten. During their induction week it was sadly not possible to take them to the usual Papal Audience, as the Holy Father was in Washington that week. So instead we took them to the Crypt of St Peter's for a morning Mass followed by a tour of the Vatican Gardens.

There have also been some changes on the staff. We are pleased to welcome back Father Bruce Burbidge, our Academic Tutor, who had to spend much of last year in the UK in order to strengthen his claim for British citizenship. Happily, his application has been successful and he will formally become a British subject in November. We also welcome two new members onto the staff: Father Anthony Doe (Westminster) is our new Spiritual Director and Father John Metcalfe (Hallam) is the new Pastoral Director. It is good to be able to start the year with a full team.



As always, our thanks are due to all the Friends of the Venerable for their unstinting support, and for the prayers and encouragement they offer to our students. I would ask your prayers especially for the four men who are preparing for ordination as deacons and for the six deacons who are preparing for ordination as priests. It is a privilege and a blessing to be able to accompany these men in the final stages of their journey through formation.

Mgr. Philip Whitmore

Rector

Reunion of the Friends at Our Lady of Victories

Over 30 members attended the 28th Annual Reunion and AGM of the Friends, which took place on Saturday 10 October 2015, at the Church of Our Lady of Victories, Kensington. We are very grateful to the Parish Priest Monsignor James Curry for allowing us to use his excellent, very modern, parish hall for our gathering.

Although Monsignor Philip Whitmore was now in his third year as Rector of the English College, this was his first opportunity to meet with the Friends, to thank our association in person for our prayers, friendship and our financial contribution to the welfare of the College.

His presentation (and slide-show) started with an account of the pilgrimage to the Holy Land undertaken by the students and staff in September 2014. The pilgrimage had been made possible by the benefaction of Pamela and Nicholas Coote, and by all accounts it was a wonderful experience, taking in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, the Dead Sea and most memorably of all, the Sea of Galilee. Later in the College's year, students made another pilgrimage - to see the Shroud on display in Turin, to celebrate the bicentenary of the birth of St John Bosco.

The Rector reported on the changes that had taken place at the Venerabile since last year. Five new men had joined the College in September 2014, and no less than 10 had started at the beginning of this academic year, so that there were currently 39 seminarians in residence. We were shown photographs of numerous College occasions including the ordination of 6 new deacons this summer. On the staff front, Monsignor Peter Fleetwood had temporarily deputised for Fr Bruce Burbidge as Academic Tutor. Fr Anthony Doe and Fr John Metcalfe had recently joined the staff as Spiritual Director and Pastoral Director respectively.

There had been some significant changes to the fabric of the College in the past 12 months, most notably in the Refectory where the panelling around the walls had been replaced, and where circular tables had been introduced. All seminary rectors were being urged to encourage fraternity among students, and Mgr Whitmore hoped that round tables would facilitate social interaction at the Venerabile. The cleaning of the College's external facades was in progress, thanks to the generosity of the Schwarzenbachs.

Another change was the new statue of Our Lady in the College Church. This statue had been for many years at the English College in Lisbon, and latterly (after the college closed) at the British Embassy there. Bishop Tom Williams, who dedicated the statue in May, after it had undergone some restoration, had arranged its translation to Rome. The statue replaces that of Our Lady of Walsingham, which is now located in the corridor leading to the Salotto, behind the portinaria. Last but not least, a new portrait of Cardinal Nichols would soon be joining those of his predecessors in the Cardinals' Corridor.

This excellent presentation was followed by the Annual General Meeting, chaired by Mike Lang. He started by expressing thanks to Jim Holroyd for arranging today's reunion, to Louise Sage for all her work arranging the Friends' stall at the annual 'Towards Advent' festival at Westminster Cathedral, and especially to Hamish Keith who was retiring after 24 years as Hon Treasurer of the Friends. The Chairman was delighted to announce that Adrian Rogers had agreed to stand for election as our new Treasurer.

The principal event for the Friends this year had been the weekend at Buckfast Abbey, which nearly 30 members had attended, many of them staying at the brand-new Visitor Centre. A highlight of the weekend had been the excellent after-dinner speech given by former MP Ann Widdecombe.

The Chairman reported that the Friends had received a legacy of £25,000, which the Committee had decided to offer to the College to pay for restoration of the tennis court at Palazzola. He very much hoped that other members of the Friends might similarly decide to leave legacies to the Friends for the College's benefit, in their Wills.

He expressed concern at the net decline in overall membership of the Friends, and led a discussion about how best to recruit new members. The main sources of new members are visitors to Palazzola, and the families and friends of students at the College. However, it was felt that perhaps more could be done to encourage both groups of people to join our association.

In the absence of our Treasurer, Mike Lang presented the Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2015. Income for the year totalled £18,082 while expenditure amounted to £9,033. After donations to the College (the cost of a new car) our total funds stood at £10,145.

We then elected a new Committee as follows: Chairman Mr. Mike Lang, Secretary Mr. Jim Holroyd, Treasurer Mr. Adrian Rogers. Members - Mrs. Louise Bradley, Mrs. Mary Ewing, Dr. Leo Gooch, Mrs. Sarah Gough, Miss. Louise Sage. Mrs. Barbara Smith and Mr. Paul Smith.

After an excellent and very convivial lunch, the Director of Palazzola Joyce Hunter gave a presentation, illustrated with lots of excellent photographs about all the facilities available at the Villa, including the tennis court, newly refurbished with help from the Friends.

After a brief hiatus, while a number of members were freed from the lift leading up from the parish hall, our reunion concluded with Mass, celebrated in the Church by the Rector. The theme of his homily was bringing Jesus Christ into our World. He lauded the work of the Friends in helping the work of the Venerable English College to bring new Priests into the World, in order to perform that mission.

Chairman's Report

As I sit down to write this report, I note that the grass is covered with leaves and the trees are very bare. The cold weather makes my thoughts return rapidly to Rome, making me wish my life away as I long for next year and another visit to Palazzola.....

To return to reality - six months ago I was anticipating the Buckfast visit as I wrote. In retrospect, I feel it was a great success - indeed, as members departed, there was a general mood of "where shall we go next time?" (You will find a suggestion elsewhere in this Newsletter).

We received notice of the death of one of our members who had left us a legacy. Our heartfelt sympathy went out to his family, but at the same time we were very pleased to be able to tell the Rector that we could support a much larger project than usual this year - and you can read in the Rector's Newsletter contribution that the tennis court at Palazzola has been resurfaced.

I was able to attend the three ordinations held in England this year. Two of the homilies are attached but the third is not available as the Bishop spoke without notes. However my recollection of his homily was that the Bishop started with the statement "Kevin, up until now you have been able to say 'I' but from now on I suggest that you should say 'We'" and he then developed this theme throughout the remainder of the homily.

Our London AGM was a great success, as is reported above. However, we would much appreciate your comments on the suggestion that a future AGM be held in Palazzola as part of a *Friends* holiday.

In the last Newsletter, I asked for your thoughts on how to increase our declining membership - this is now becoming urgent as I suspect that by next year we will be down to about 400 members. Sadly, there have been no suggestions from our membership, and our only initiative to date on this has been the campaign to get Vocations Directors in the Dioceses with students currently at the College to foster interest in the College among the students' parishes of origin. Please, please do put on your thinking-caps and come up with some ideas as to how we can raise awareness of the College and its needs among the general church membership as well as those who might have a particular interest in supporting the *Friends*.

By the time you receive this Newsletter, Advent will be upon us and Christmas preparations both secular and spiritual well under way. I wish you a happy and holy Christmas season.

Mike Lang



CELEBRATE HOLY YEAR AT PALAZZOLA

This is the perfect opportunity to be part of this extraordinary event in the life of the Church. Staying at Villa Palazzola you'll have the best of both worlds: the excitement of participating in the ceremonies of the Holy Year in the great city of Rome while returning at the end of each day to relax and enjoy the beauty and peace of Palazzola. We can also assist with airport transfers, transportation to Rome city and return, and packed lunches.

INDIVIDUAL guests can take advantage of the offers below.

Between **8 November** and **20 December** 2015 and **10 January** and **31 March** 2016- €45 per person per night in standard rooms, €55 in en-suite rooms (minimum stay 3 nights).

Between **10 April** and **27 April**, **15 to 26 May** and **04 to 21 June** - €65 per person per night (minimum stay 4 nights) in standard rooms only.

Both offers include full board with wine. No reductions for meals not taken.

For further details, please contact Palazzola directly at palazzola@palazzola.it or tel: 0039 06 9474 9178.

25 JULY to 01 AUGUST 2016

Special group week for members of the *Friends of the Venerabile* and *Palazzola Holidays*. For further details of this week and of parish and diocesan groups using Palazzola next year, please contact Anthony Coles at 18 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3 5SX or at arctc@btinternet.com or tel: 020 7431 3414.

Have you ever wondered...?

Every day people use picturesque phrases without always realising their origins. Have you ever wondered where some of the sayings come from? Below you will find some everyday sayings which are actually quotations from the Bible.

Made the scapegoat... When someone is punished for an offence for which others are no less responsible, it is said that he or she has been made a scapegoat for the rest. The word is really "escape goat" and recalls the early Hebrew custom of driving a goat into the wilderness, in the belief that it carried away the sins of the entire nation (Leviticus 16:20-22)

The salt of the earth... Salt was formerly highly prized, on account of its scarcity and its many uses. When Jesus called his disciples "the salt of the earth", he was paying them a great compliment and the words are still used of someone who deserves our highest praise (Matthew 5:13)

Bricks without straw... People who have been asked to carry out a job, but have not been provided with a means of doing it, may complain that they cannot make bricks without straw. The Hebrew people, when slaves in Egypt, were in fact ordered to find straw for themselves when making bricks for their Egyptian master (Exodus 5:11-15)

Louise Sage

TOWARDS ADVENT 2015

Annual Festival of Catholic Culture

Saturday 28th November

Westminster Cathedral Hall

10.30 am – 4.00 pm

Opening Ceremony

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

Music from the choir of

St James RC Primary School

Twickenham

ENTRY FREE

Workshops (@ £2.00 each)

11.30 am Singing Gregorian Chant

1.00 pm Christians, militant Islam,
and the Middle East

2.30 pm Friars for the Future

Displays by Catholic groups,
organisations and charities

Refreshments available all day

Books, DVDs, CDs and cards on sale

As in the previous four years

Friends of the Venerabile will again be
taking a stand at this Festival

Martyrs' Day Celebrations 2015

South West

Monday 30 November

**Holy Mass: St Mary's, Julian Rd, Bath BA1
2SF at 12 noon.**

following a recent fire in the church

Mass will be held in the Hall,

North West

Monday 30 November

**Holy Mass: Our Lady of Grace, Fairfax Rd,
Prestwich, M25 1AS at 12 noon.**

South East

Tuesday 1 December

**Holy Mass: Tyburn Convent, 8, Hyde Park Rd,
W2 2LJ at 12 noon.**

Principal Celebrant: H. E. Cardinal Nichols

Midlands

Tuesday 1 December

**Holy Mass: SS. Peter & Paul,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RJ at 12 noon.**

East Midlands

Wednesday 2nd December

**Holy Mass: English Martyrs' Church,
Alvaston, Derby DE24 8QU at 11.30 am.**

We welcome the following new members (since April 2015)

Mr. M McEnvoy (Gretton)

Mr. D Baker (Cambridge)

Mrs. A Lawrence (Rotherham)

Mr. A Rogers (Bristol)

Dr. M Remnant (London)

Dr. C Farey (Buckfast)

Mr. C Pearson (Wrexham)

Mr. A Smith (Hove)

Mrs. A Schneider (London)

Mrs. L Knoth (Bidborough)

Mrs. L Barrett (West Wickham)

Compiled by Mike Lang. Many thanks to all who have contributed text and photographs.