

The FRIENDS of the **HOLY FATHER**

St Peter tops the list of Saints in England

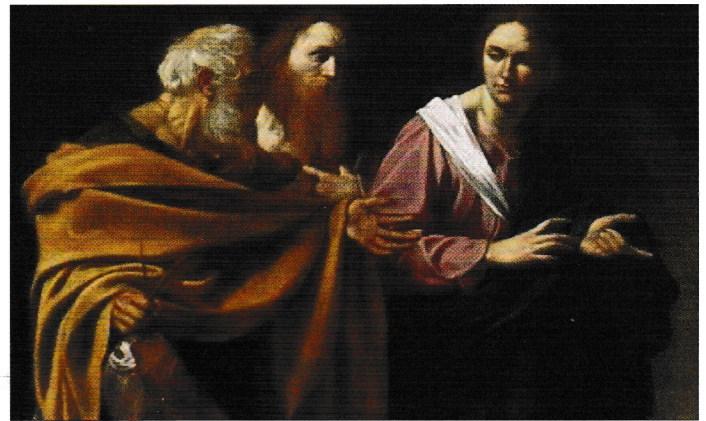
All over Christendom every church or chapel was and is consecrated to Almighty God and to his service, but in addition founders of churches gave prominence to some saint, sacred place or event. Many churches in England were dedicated to the Blessed Trinity in Unity, or the Second or Third Person of the Godhead, with the Holy Cross and the Holy Sepulchre totalling some 450 pre-Reformation examples.

Mary, Mother of God naturally has the greatest number of dedications with 2,335 pre-Reformation examples. Next to her comes St Peter and St Peter ad Vincula with 1140 who shares 286 with St Paul, followed by St Michael and All Angels with 687, then St Andrew with 637.

These church dedications have much to tell us of English Christian belief from the beginning of Church history to the present day. Despite the 16th century break with Rome when King Henry VIII repudiated the primacy of the Pope, our ancient churches still hold a greater number of dedications to the Prince of the Apostles than to any other individual saint. Great importance was and is attached to the intercessory power of the saints and in the belief of their efficacy of mediation, already to be found in doctrines and practice of the Church of the 4th century.

Pope Gregory the Great's mission to England came to Kent in AD 597. Ethelbert the King of Kent gave the monks land and their leader, Augustine, established a monastery outside the walls of Canterbury, dedicating it to St Peter. Shortly after, Ethelbert built a church on Ludgate Hill in London and dedicated it to St Paul. Not long after Edwin, the powerful pagan ruler of the north of England, then King of Northumbria, sought the hand of King Ethelbert's daughter, Ethelburga. The marriage was eventually agreed on condition that Edwin became a Christian. Paulinus, one of Augustine's companions at Canterbury, was consecrated bishop in 625 and travelled north as the queen's chaplain. The king was converted. He built a small timber oratory at York for his baptism which took place on the vigil of Easter in 627 and dedicated it to St Peter.

At the Synod of Whitby in AD 664, when the authority of St Columba paled before that of the champion of the



The calling of Peter and Andrew - Caravaggio

Roman party, "If St Peter is the doorkeeper", King Oswy of Northumbria exclaimed, "I will in all things obey his decrees, lest when I come to the gates of the kingdom of heaven, there be no-one to open them". The Roman practice was adopted and very soon church unity was established throughout the land.

York Minster was dedicated to St Peter early in the 7th century and Peterborough Abbey not long after. Ely, Exeter, Gloucester, Peterborough, Ripon, Winchester and York cathedrals have, or once had, dedications to St Peter. As for Westminster, where King Sebert of the East Saxons had built the first church in the 7th century, King Edward the Confessor in the 11th century replaced it with his great Abbey and dedicated it to St Peter.

Countless children have been named after the saint. The Pietro of Italy has been reduced to Piero or Pier, or amplified to Pietruccio or Petruccio. Devout Spaniards took to the name with many a Pedro, and the frequency of the surname Perez shows how full Spain is of the sons of Pedro. France has many a Pierre or Pierrot with Perrault a common surname. England had Peter and also borrowed from the French with Piers and Pierce. The Irish Paddys owe their name not only to their national apostle Patrick, but also to the Prince of the Apostles. There are many feminine derivatives such as Petrina, Petronella and Pernel in England, and Petronille, Nelle and Nillel in Germany. Place names too, abound.

The Roman See of Peter

The term 'Roman Catholic', has vexed the faithful since it was coined by Anglican divines in the late 16th century. The problem was addressed and effectively resolved by Cardinal Vaughan a hundred and twenty years ago.

When the Cardinal planned to deliver public addresses to the Sovereign at the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 and again in 1901 when King Edward VII succeeded to the throne, the Home Secretary would not accept any other style for him to adopt for this purpose than 'the Roman Catholic Archbishop and Bishops in England'. Any alternative such as 'The Cardinal Archbishop and Bishops of the Catholic and Roman Church' was not approved.

On the first occasion no address was presented, but in 1901 the requirement of the Home Secretary as to the use of the name 'Roman Catholic' was complied with,

although the Cardinal reserved the right to explain subsequently, on certain public occasions, the sense in which he used the words.

At the Newcastle Conference of the Catholic Truth Society in August 1901, Cardinal Vaughan explained clearly to his audience that, "the term Roman Catholic has two meanings; a meaning that we repudiate and a meaning that we accept". The repudiated sense was that dear to many Protestants according to which the term Catholic was a genus which resolved itself into the species Roman Catholic, Anglo-Catholic, Greek Catholic and so on. But, as the Cardinal insisted, "with us the prefix Roman is not restricted to a species or a section, but simply declaratory of Catholic. The prefix in this sense draws attention to the unity of the Church and "insists that the central point of Catholicity is Roman, the Roman See of St Peter"

CARDINAL WISEMAN: Interred in Westminster Cathedral in 1907

Wiseman, the first Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, was the key figure in the revival of the Catholic Church in mid-nineteenth century England. His achievements were many and profound. He inspired the flood of Anglican converts including John Henry Newman and Henry Edward Manning. He helped in the relief and settlement of hundreds of thousands of Catholics who poured into England following the disastrous Irish Potato Famine of 1845-7. After the outcry following the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy to England in 1850, his reasoned argument on the public platform overcame the deep-rooted prejudice of the English people to the old myth of 'Papal Aggression'. He thrust aside the timid and apologetic attitude of the older generation and boldly proclaimed Catholic truth, which was to change the entire Catholic community in England.

Nicholas Wiseman was born into a family of wine merchants of Irish extraction in Seville on 2 August, 1802. As an infant, his mother placed him on the altar of Seville Cathedral, dedicating him to the service of the Church. In 1805 his father died and young Nicholas and his mother returned to Waterford, where the future Cardinal began his schooling, before going on to St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, Co. Durham.

While at Ushaw he became convinced of his vocation to the priesthood and was one of the first students to be sent to the English College in Rome when it reopened in 1818 having been requisitioned by the French in 1797. Before the age of 22 he took his doctorate in divinity and was



ordained a priest on 19 March 1825. He was by now a multilingual Oriental scholar of international repute and was appointed by Pope Pius IX to the professorship of oriental languages at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He was all set for a brilliant academic career.

Soon the young academic was appointed Vice-Rector and then Rector of the English College. By tradition it was the custom for the Rector to be the agent for the English

Bishops in Rome. He was busy receiving Catholics with official business in Rome and with entertaining non-Catholics from England, among whom were Gladstone, Macaulay, Newman and Manning. He was devoted to the papacy and deeply interested in whatever could further the conversion of England. He became increasingly convinced that controversy must yield to quiet, friendly exposition of Catholic teaching. In fulfilment of this principle, he brought gifts of mind and heart such as few have had, and a capacity for personal friendships and for writing and speaking, for scholarship, and for an enormous postal correspondence, which only a man of exceptional physical strength and love of his fellow men could sustain.

He became convinced that he should relinquish his work in Rome and devote the rest of his life to the service of the Church in England. Consecrated a Bishop in 1840

he joined the Vicars Apostolic and was appointed to the London District. Pope Pius IX appointed him the first Cardinal Archbishop of the new see of Westminster, when the English hierarchy was restored in 1850. Although the new Cardinal's pastoral letter "From without the Flaminian Gate" caused a storm of Protestant reaction, by the time of his death on 15 February 1865, he was so greatly respected that his funeral procession to Kensal Green was described in *The Times* as comparable to that of the Duke of Wellington.

The translation of Cardinal Wiseman's remains to St Peter's Crypt beneath the high altar of Westminster Cathedral took place on 30 January, 1907. The Church in England owes him an immense debt of gratitude; "he found them a persecuted sect", wrote Wilfred Ward, "he left them a Church".

The role of the Pope – by John Henry Newman

There are kings on the earth who have despotic authority, which their subjects obey but disown in their hearts; but we must never murmur at that absolute rule which the Sovereign Pontiff has over us, because it is given to him by Christ, and in obeying him we are obeying the Lord. We must never suffer ourselves to doubt that, in his government of the Church, he is guided by an intelligence more than human. His yoke is the yoke of Christ, he has the responsibility for his own acts, not we; and to his Lord must he render account, not to us. Even in secular matters it is ever safe to be on his side, dangerous to be on the side of his enemies. Our duty is, not indeed to mix up Christ's Vicar with this or that party of men, because in

his high station he is above all parties, but to look at his formal deeds, and to follow him whither he goeth, and never desert him, however we may be tried, but to defend him at all hazards, and against all comers, as a son would a father, and as a wife a husband, knowing that his cause is the cause of God. And so as regards his successors, if we live to see them; it is our duty to give them in like manner our dutiful allegiance and our unfeigned service, and to follow them also whithersoever they go, having that same confidence that each in his turn and in his own day will do God's work and will, which we have felt in their predecessors, now taken away to their eternal reward

Occasional Sermons, p. 264

Friends of the Holy Father Pilgrimage to Rome – June 23-30, 2017

This was a very special pilgrimage; it had a specific objective, to visit places in Rome associated with St Peter's life, service and death in the city, and the bishops of the developing Christian community in the city who followed him.

The oldest church in Rome is that of St Pudenziana, built on the site of the house of the Senator Quintus Cornelius Pudens who had two daughters, Pudentia and Praxedes. It was in this house that St Peter resided and he converted the whole family to Christianity. At that time it was customary for the faithful to assemble in 'house churches' for the celebration of the sacraments and this was one of the first.

The Church of St Praxedes is nearby; She collected the remains of martyrs who had suffered in the arena and elsewhere and blotted up their blood on cloths and all these remains she kept in her well for safe keeping.

The Church of St Peter in Chains contains the Chains that shackled Peter in the prison in Jerusalem when an Angel appeared and released him and led him past the guards, the iron door of the Prison opened and he escaped.

Outside the Walls of Rome on the via Appia Antica is the little Church of 'Domine Quo Vadis' – Lord, where are you going? The Emperor Nero had been accused of starting the Great Fire of AD 67 that destroyed much of Rome; he put the blame on the Christians whom he killed with

great brutality. Peter was advised to leave Rome for a time for his own safety and set out along this ancient road.. A vision of the Lord appeared walking in the opposite direction who answered 'to Rome to be crucified a second time'. Peter took the hint, summoned his courage and returned to Rome to fulfil his destiny.

Peter was crucified in the Circus of Nero that ran east-west at the bottom of the Vatican Hill on the spina – the central reservation around which the chariot races ran, with the great Egyptian Obelisk in the centre.

They say 'Faith moves mountains' and this is what the Emperor Constantine achieved in AD 318. He saw the tiny 'aedicula' or 'little temple' erected over St Peter's grave in the Roman necropolis to the north of the Circus and resolved to build a Cathedral with the grave under the high Altar. This required the hill to the north being partially excavated to replace the steep slope by a flat platform for which 1 million square yards of soil and rock were moved down hill.

One can see St Peter's burial place in the Scavi – the exposed buildings of the Necropolis immediately below the High Altar of St Peter's. There is a niche in the Graffiti Wall – (picture below) so called because it is covered in graffiti written by pilgrims who had come to venerate the remains of St Peter in the second century AD. St Peter's bones were found in this loculus and are still kept there, the box in which the bones of St Peter are preserved can just be seen.



At the west end of St Peter's Basilica that replaced Constantine Old Basilica is Bernini's Chair of Peter that houses an ancient Chair.

In the Catacombs of Callixtus on the via Appia Antica is a little Chapel known as 'the Little Vatican' that houses the memorial tablets of nine early popes who were interred there.

The Domus Aurea is a vast palace built by Nero as his second abode; this has been stripped over the years of its marbles and decorations but is still an impressive reminder of the enormous scale the Roman Emperors could build.

We visited the Mamertine Prison (below) near the Roman Forum where both St Peter and St Paul were briefly incarcerated before being led out to martyrdom in AD 67.



In addition to visiting these places we had several kind invitations: Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Cardinal Secretary of State, received us in the first floor of the Apostolic Palace with his secretary Mgr Robert Murphy, where we discussed the donations which we have been honoured to make to previous Popes in the past, and to receive ideas of what could be done in the future. Archbishop Sanchez, the Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, invited us to visit him in the exquisite Casina of Pius IV in the Vatican Gardens. He was called away to a conference in Germany so John McCaffrey kindly showed us around in his place; The British Ambassador to the Holy See, H.E. Mrs Sally Axworthy, kindly held a reception for us on the roof terrace of her Residence in the Palazzo Palavicini in central Rome.

We attended the Conclave in St Peter's where Pope Francis conferred the ring, hat and pallium on five new Cardinals. A member of the Pontifical Swiss Guards took us on a tour of their barracks where we saw the armoury and the gymnasium for which we were able to provide some equipment.

We were particularly indebted to our chaplain Father Guy Sawyer who conducted our spiritual guidance with inspiration throughout; to Anthony Cole who organised everything and ensured that all our visits went smoothly without a hitch; to the family who run the Hotel Lancelot who made us welcome and gave us great food, wines and accommodation that made the visit so memorable. (Full details of the pilgrimage with photographs are available on the website, thefriendsoftheholylater.org)

Anglo-Saxon Kings who visited Rome

It was a little over fifty years after the landing of St Augustine in Britain (AD 597) that for the first time in history Anglo-Saxons made a pilgrimage to Rome.

In the year AD 648 St Wilfrid at the age of 13 entered the monastery of Lindisfarne in Northumbria. After a few years there he had a strong desire to make a pilgrimage to Rome as a penitential exercise and to receive the Pope's blessing and study the Roman monastic observances.

With the approval of his Abbot, Finan, Wilfrid set out for Canterbury armed with a letter of commendation from Queen Eanfled, wife of King Oswy of Northumbria to her cousin Erconbert of Kent. Wilfrid spent a year in the Kentish city studying the customs of the Roman colony there. A companion was found for him in the person of Benedict Biscop, a youngthane of twenty-five years, who decided to renounce his considerable possessions and embrace the religious life.

In September 655 Wilfrid and Benedict Biscop left Britain for Rome. Wilfrid stayed a while in Lyons but Benedict Biscop pressed on, arriving in Rome before Wilfrid, and was therefore the first Anglo-Saxon to complete the pilgrimage.

Wilfrid stayed in Rome many months making friends with a learned deacon named Boniface who taught him the disciplines of the Church. He returned to Britain about 660.

In about 665 Benedict Biscop began his second pilgrimage to Rome remaining there for several months. First he went to the monastery of Lerins near Nice, staying there for two years as a member of the community. From there he discovered a merchant ship that took him to Ostia arriving in Rome at the same time as his compatriot Wighart, Archbishop-elect of Canterbury who had come to Rome for consecration at the instance of Kings Egbert of Kent and Oswy of Northumbria.

The plague was raging in Rome at the time and Wighart and most of his companions contracted it and died there. Pope Vitalian then chose Theodore of Tarsus as the next Archbishop of Canterbury and it was at the express command of Pope Vitalian that Benedict Biscop accompanied Theodore as his guide and interpreter on his journey to Britain. The party went by sea to Marseilles, by land to Arles then continued to Paris



where they were welcomed by Archbishop Agilbert before travelling on to England where they arrived on 27 May 669.

Benedict Biscop built a monastery at Wearmouth in Northumberland which was to become the cradle of culture, not only of Britain, but ultimately the whole of Europe. His next initiative was to build the Abbey church of St Peter nearby with the assistance of masons he had hired in Gaul. Then he obtained Pope Agatho's permission to take back to Britain with him John, the arch-cantor of St Peter's and Abbot of St Martin's in Rome, to teach his monks in Britain Gregorian plainsong, psalmody and Roman ritual. Benedict Biscop undertook a total of six pilgrimages

to Rome where he acquired books, vestments and liturgical objects for his monastery.

The Northumbrian historian Bede wrote circa 730 that the Anglo-Saxons regarded themselves as being one people. There was even a title for the paramount ruler, Bretwalda, with a vague primacy which was largely personal. Roughly, the settlement in Kent emerged as the strongest kingdom by the late sixth century, the Northumbrians and East Angles in the seventh, the Mercians of middle England in the course of the eighth, while the ninth century was dominated by the kingdom of Wessex.

The first Anglo-Saxon monarch to set foot in Rome was Caedwalla, King of the West Saxons, in 689. Bede tells us that having most vigorously governed his nation for two years, he quitted his crown for the sake of the Lord and an everlasting kingdom, and went to Rome when Sergius was Pope. He was baptized on Holy Saturday, 689 and being still in his white garments he fell sick, and died on the 20th April. He was only 30, and in baptism had taken the name Peter.

Ina succeeded Caedwalla as King of the West Saxons. He reigned for 38 years before following the example of his predecessor and, with his queen, Ethelberga, went off to Rome in 726. The holy couple lived unrecognised, serving the poor and waiting on pilgrims.

Realizing that many of his fellow countrymen were lodging near St Peter's, Ina established a hospice for them there and bought a piece of land where they could own property and help one another. This has always been known as the Saxon Borgo. The Hospital of the Holy Spirit now stands on the site of the Saxon hospice and the



nearby church of St Maria in Sassia stands on the site of the first church where King Ina and his Queen are buried. Furthermore, Ina started 'Peter's Pence', the annual gift from every household to the Pope that has survived to the present day. Ina is depicted in the glass window at Church at Curry Rivel examining the architect's plans for the new Minster at Glastonbury.

Offa, King of Mercia seized the throne and established supremacy over many lesser kings. He consolidated his position by marrying his daughters to the kings of Wessex and Northumbria, and was the first ruler to be called 'king of the English'. By the end of his reign, Offa was master of all England south of the Humber. He had Offa's Dyke built, a frontier barrier of a continuous ditch and



bank that ran 149 miles along the frontier between the Mercian and Welsh kingdoms 'from sea to sea'.

Offa had dealings with the emperor Charlemagne and he visited Rome in 792 to strengthen his links with the papacy. The English penny (silver currency) was introduced during Offa's reign.

In the first recorded coronation in England, Offa's son Ecgrith was consecrated in 787 during Offa's lifetime in an attempt to secure the succession. However, Ecgrith died childless, months after Offa. Offa's success in building a strong unified kingdom caused resistance in other kingdoms. The Mercians' defeat at the hands of Egbert of Wessex at the battle of Ellendun in 825 meant that supremacy passed to Wessex.

In 798 Sigeric, king of the East Saxons, made a pilgrimage to Rome and entered a Roman monastery.

In the year 874, when the Danes entered the valley of the Trent and burned the minster at Repton that had become the burial-place of the Mercian kings, King Burhed fled to

Rome where he died soon after arrival. He was buried in the Scola Saxonum, the territory between St Peter's and the Ponte Sant'Angelo where there was a settlement of houses, a hospice and church dedicated to the Virgin Mary that is still there but has been rebuilt many times.

The most important city in Wessex was Winchester, a day's march inland from the south coast. King Alfred's grandfather, Egbert, entrusted the education of his son and heir, Ethelwulf, to Swithin, Bishop of Winchester. Ethelwulf was deeply religious and had a particular devotion to the Holy See and his sons grew up in this atmosphere. Ethelwulf's youngest son, Alfred, was born at a royal residence at the foot of the Berkshire Downs at Wantage.

In 853 King Ethelwulf of Mercia sent his infant son Alfred to Rome with an honourable escort of nobles and commoners. (Ethelwulf's ring pictured left in the British Museum).



Two years later the royal party with Alfred returned to England whereupon Ethelwulf himself set out for Rome in great state taking his son back with him. The royal party remained in Rome for a complete year and Ethelwulf astonished the Romans by his lavish largesse.

Matthew Paris wrote in the 13th century

When Ina arrived in Rome he built a house with the approval of Pope Gregory II which he called the School of the English (Schola Saxonum). This he did in order that the kings of England and the royal family with bishops, priests and clergy might come to it to be instructed in learning and the Catholic faith, lest anything might be taught in the English church that was heterodox or opposed to the Catholic church. Thus they would return home thoroughly strengthened in the faith.

In 1015 King Cnut, king of Denmark and Norway, invaded England and defeated Edmund, son of Ethelred. On Edmund's death he was proclaimed king of England. In 1027 Cnut made a trip to Rome to attend the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II. He was warmly received there and went again in 1031.

Following the Danish invasion of 1013 Ethelred and his family spent several years in exile in Normandy whilst England was ruled by Cnut. After Cnut's death in 1035 Ethelred's son Edward the Confessor tried to take the crown of England but failed. He made a vow that he would

make a pilgrimage to Rome if he managed to return safely to his kingdom.

In 1042 Edward's dream became a reality when he succeeded Cnut's son to the throne of England, but he found it impossible to leave his subjects to make the pilgrimage to Rome. The Pope released him from the vow on condition that he founded a monastery at Westminster and dedicated it to St Peter. A church had been built on Thorney Island by St Mellitus, bishop of London in the 7th century. In accordance with the Pope's wishes Edward built a new cathedral on the site in the Norman style to replace

the old Saxon church at Westminster to be known as the Collegiate Church of St Peter but which later became known as Westminster Abbey.

St Peter's Church Westminster depicted on the Bayeux tapestry at the time of Edward the Confessor's funeral

Pilgrimages after this time became hazardous with the presence of hostile Saracens who controlled the land-routes to Rome. Efforts were concentrated on re-capturing the Holy Places in Palestine with the advent of the Crusades; the royal pilgrimages to Rome came to an end.

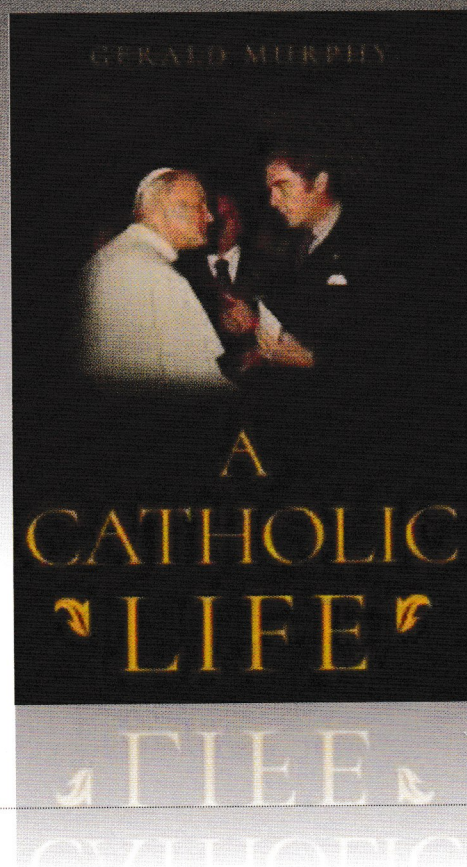


A Catholic Life

A CATHOLIC LIFE – the autobiography of Gerald Murphy (1931-2015) – gives a fascinating insight into many Catholic organisations with whom he was associated.

An architect, who built or re-ordered many Catholic churches around the country, Gerald was responsible for the structures built in Wembley Stadium in 1982 for the Pastoral Visit Mass celebrated by Pope St John Paul II, under the guidance of Mgr. Ralph Brown – the National Coordinator of the Visit - to accommodate a congregation of 100,000. It was a difficult project to undertake as the F.A. Cup Final was being held at the time.

Gerald worked tirelessly for vocations through the international organisation SERRA for whom he became international president aged 50. The book is full of good stories, making it a funny, inspiring and intriguing read. Highly recommended. His wife Fiona is our F.H.F. membership secretary.





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We are a national charity (no. 280489) so your bequest is exempt from inheritance tax. It can be included in a new will or added in a codicil to your existing will.

Please do not forget to let us know if your contact details have changed or if you learn of the death of a member.

As usual we are greatly indebted to our Vice-Chairman, Dr Michael Straiton, for compiling this Newsletter.

Save the Date: Our AGM will be on **Monday 4 June** at Westminster Cathedral, where the Papal Nuncio will celebrate our AGM Mass. More information in our next Newsletter.

*We wish you a Blessed Christmas
and a Happy New Year*



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HOLY FATHER

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