



POPE BENEDICT XVI - pilgrimage

At the Vatican General Audience following his State Visit to the United Kingdom in September, Pope Benedict XVI reflected that ... “it was an official Visit and at the same time a Pilgrimage to the heart of the past and of the present of a people rich in culture and faith, as is the British people... the crowning point of my visit to the United Kingdom was the Beatification of Cardinal John Henry Newman, an outstanding son of England... on this Visit to the United Kingdom, as always, I wanted first and foremost to support the Catholic community, encouraging it to work strenuously to defend the immutable moral truths, which, taken up, illuminated and strengthened by the Gospel are at the root of a truly human, just and free society. I also wished to speak to the hearts of all the inhabitants of the United Kingdom, excluding no one, of the true reality of man, of his deepest needs, of his ultimate destiny”.

In an in-flight interview with journalists on his way to Santiago de Compostela a few weeks later the Pope was asked to give some reflections on his feelings of this journey he replied that ... “... going on pilgrimage is part of my biography... you have made me think of the instability of this life, of being on a journey ... of course, some might criticize pilgrimages saying “God is everywhere, there is no need to go to another place”. But it is also true that faith, in accordance with its essence, ‘being a pilgrim’... sometimes means emerging from one’s daily routine, from the practical world, from utilitarianism, emerging only to be really on the way towards transcendence; to transfer oneself, to transcend daily life and thus also to find a new freedom, a time for interior re-thinking, of self-identification, of seeing the Other, God, and thus it is also and always a pilgrimage. It is not only coming out of oneself towards something greater, but is also travelling together. The pilgrimage unites: together we journey towards the other and thus we discover each other... the ways of St. James were an important element in the formation of the spiritual unity of the European Continent. It was here, on pilgrimage, that people found one another, they found their common European identity, and today too this movement is reborn, this need to be spiritually and physically in movement in order to find one another and thus also silence, freedom, renewal and to find God...”.

THE FRIENDS' PILGRIMAGE: 3rd to 9th October 2010 – in the footsteps of Newman in Rome

David Murphy writes:

We had a party (really a dinner party) in Vaughan House, Westminster two evenings before we actually set out. That's where we learnt that Mgr. Ralph Brown was not coming with us. Our replacement chaplain was Father William Wilby, now chaplain at St. Wilfrid's Convent nursing home in Tite Street, Chelsea where Mgr. Brown now lives. Fr. Bill said his first Mass for us in the Chapel at Gatwick Airport North, where we realized that tuneful and sturdy hymn singing was going to be a mark of the next few days.

The other mark was 'Adventure'. Dr. Michel Straiton, ever industrious and learned Hon. Secretary of The Friends, was our leader. He was ready at any opportunity to enhance the promised delights of the formidable programme, slotting in a visit to Vatican Radio here or a search for the birthplace of Blessed Dominic Barberi there, as the opportunity arose.

That was because the theme of the pilgrimage was to follow in the Rome footsteps of John Henry Newman, beatified only a fortnight earlier by the Holy Father as the highlight of his marvellously successful combined state and pastoral visit to our island

Monday morning saw us going through the security arches that our century has added to Bernini's colonnade in time for 8.00 o'clock Mass in the crypt of St. Peter's. We passed by the chapel where St. Peter's bones are almost certainly preserved as well as the new tombs of very recent popes to get to the striking new Hungarian Chapel of Our Lady with its statue of St. Stephen, the first King of Hungary, proffering his jewel-encrusted crown to the Mother of God. We learnt that the crown itself had spent the war years in safety at Fort Knox, but that before the Cold War was over it had been sent back. On the way to the Sacristy we saw Caravaggio's "The Deposition of Christ" on the initiative of Michael Straiton. Later on we visited the tomb of St. Gregory the Great, who sent St. Augustine to convert England, and had the chance to venerate the newly-restored Crux Vaticana, the jewelled reliquary of the True Cross given in 568 by the Byzantine Emperor Justin II to the people of Rome.

In the afternoon we got down to serious tracking of Newman's steps. We went to the back door of the Chiesa Nuova where we found the building behind it in which St. Philip Neri had lived and died. He founded the Oratorian order and it was to the Roman Oratorians that Pope Pius IX had sent Newman and his colleagues to become accustomed to the ways of the Roman Church. So we saw St. Philip's own room and the oratory where he said Mass.

Tuesday was the day of our great adventure. We went by coach to Viterbo, some sixty miles north of Rome. We spent some time in a traffic jam because the road ahead of us was being washed away by a hurricane in Tuscany and when we got to Viterbo we had to trek through pouring rain up to the Cathedral, luckily past a well-stocked umbrella shop. It is a beautiful town, but wet cobblestones are much the same world over to a weary pilgrim. A moving mass in the plain Cathedral of St. Lawrence, where we

saw the tomb of Pope John XXI (1276-7), known as Peter of Spain, a distinguished physician who produced a book of remedies for the poor that was widely used for centuries; he also introduced a system of public health for Siena. We also visited the adjacent papal palace where the large consistory hall had seen the election of several popes.

A splendid lunch followed in a local osteria. This fortified us for the subsequent search for the birthplace of the Blessed Dominic Barberi, the Passionist priest who had received Newman into the Catholic Church at Littlemore outside Oxford. This search did not go well. Global positioning has its limitations. We gave up the coach when after a particularly difficult reverse it ended up with the driving wheels out of contact with the road and the back end hanging painfully on the reverse slope of the next upward hill. Kind locals provided necessary hospitality and gave lifts in their cars down to the village of San Martino for the more fragile. A single taxi took four stick-dependent pilgrims to Viterbo railway station where after an hour's wait they caught a very slow train back to Rome. Meanwhile the fitter folk, under the expert guidance of Jacqueline Joseph (thirty years in the tour-guiding business) had caught a local bus to Viterbo where miraculously we met up again with our original coach. It seems that yet another kind local had brought a tractor which had done the extraction job. So the coach party got back before the train party!

On Wednesday mass was in Santa Maria delle Grazie alle Fornaci, a little past the Holy Office and very convenient for the General Papal Audience. We had wonderful seats for this six or seven rows back from the front and were the first of the English-speaking groups to be named by the Master of ceremonies. At the end Dr. Straiton was presented to the Holy Father, who expressed his delight at the way his visit to our country had gone and his pleasure that we were following Newman on our pilgrimage.

In the afternoon we met the Director of the Vatican Museums, Dr. Arnold Nesselrath, who recently curated the exhibition at London's Victoria and Albert Museum where Raphael's tapestries from the Vatican were hung alongside his original cartoons. In our private tour we saw the laser machine that we had given for the restoration laboratories. This is used for the delicate cleaning of frescoes and even historic papers. In the Sistine Chapel we joined the crush to see the newly restored lower frescoes, and then had the privilege of seeing the much older tiny and precious Chapel of Nicholas V, not open to the public, with fresco cycles of the martyrs St. Stephen and St. Lawrence, painted by Fra Angelico in 1450.

In the evening we went to the residence of HE Francis Campbell, HM Ambassador to the Holy See, at the Palazzo Pallavicini on the Quirinal Hill for a reception in the open rooftop Cassino dell'Aurora that gave us a panoramic, and never to be forgotten view over Rome at sunset.

On Thursday morning we were driven to the Basilica of St John Lateran for our mass. This is where John Henry was ordained to the diaconate on 24 May 1847. We visited the Baptistery built under the Emperor Constantine c 315-24.

It was designed for total immersion and replicated in many baptisteries elsewhere. We then went on to the nearby basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme whose chapel of relics preserves pieces of the True Cross discovered by the Empress Helena. The attached monastery was the building used by Newman's nascent congregation of St. Philip Neri for the first part of their novitiate, from July to December 1847.

had been given to the English by Pope Leo XIII in 1890, and to Cardinal Hume as his titular church by Pope Paul VI in 1976. It now serves a largely Philippino community.

Father Bill said our last Mass in Newman's titular church



The Chapel of Nicholas V

A splendid lunch was followed by a visit to San Stephano Rotondo, the first church in Rome to have a circular plan, inspired by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. In 1130 Innocent II had three transverse arches added to support the dome. It is built over a Mithraic temple. Our expert guide, Daniela, then led us to the Basilica of John and Paul to which is attached the headquarters of the Passionist fathers, of whom Blessed Dominic Barberi was one. They were founded by St. Paul of the Cross and a most amiable American priest took us in charge and showed us the chapel and bedroom of St. Paul. He took us back through their pleasant gardens on the Coelian Hill and directed us down the Clivus Scauri, on which we could see the entrance to some Roman houses over which the basilica had been constructed. We passed the Basilica of St. Gregory the Great on our way back to our coach and a supper which many of us took as a restaurant run by some African missionary nuns.

On Friday we visited the College of the Propaganda Fide, situated at the foot of the Spanish Steps, for mass in the upstairs chapel of the Three Kings where Newman had been ordained into the Catholic priesthood. A notice at the entrance showed that we had been preceded by Archbishop Rowan Williams in his search for Christian Unity. St. Oliver Plunkett had been a professor in the College from 1667 for ten years before his appointment as Archbishop of Armagh. He suffered martyrdom at Tyburn in 1681. We then walked to San Silvestro in Capite, which



the Holy Father greeted Dr. Straiton

as Cardinal - San Giorgio in Velabro. This day, 9th October 2010, was the first feast day of the newly beatified John Henry Newman and so the first day on which he could properly be invoked in the canon of the Mass. Naturally he was. A visit to Vatican Radio, which the Friends have supported generously and over a long period, followed. We saw the chapel which is at the heart of the radio station's work.

A fitting note on which to bid farewell to Rome.



In the Chapel of the Three Kings at Propaganda

COLIN EDWARDS – our Chairman from 1980 - 2005

When a challenge appears some people rise to the occasion to meet it. Such a person was Colin Edwards who, in 1980, accepted the role of Chairman of the newly-founded association of Friends of the Holy Father and remained in the post for the next 25 years. Colin died after a short illness in September, leaving behind his wife Mary, three sons and two daughters. Amazingly, this took place on the very day of his son Gregory's wedding and he was able to speak to all close members of his family on the telephone until the very end of his life.

Colin was born in 1934 and was educated at Downside School in Somerset. He became a well-known and loved figure in many Catholic circles. He served as Accountant to the Papal visit in 1982 for which he was appointed a Knight Commander of St. Gregory. He had been a Catenian for nearly fifty years and a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre who served as President of the Southern Section from 1993 to 1997. He was past Chairman for the Catholic Institute for International Relations and in 2004 became an Affiliate of the Franciscan Friars of the Atonement.

Colin guided the Friends of the Holy Father through those years with the help of his wife Mary whose assistance is still invaluable. Their son Gregory is our Honorary Treasurer. Colin was an expert in the correct procedure of meet-



ings and gatherings and was the warm and humorous host who welcomed prelates, ambassadors and others to our gatherings, making them invariably enjoyable and memorable occasions. His jolly presence will be sadly missed, but he will always remain close to our hearts.

FIRST ENGLISH AMBASSADOR, and the FIRST CARDINAL PROTECTOR

The first resident **English ambassador** to the Holy See was **John Shirwood**. He was a graduate of University College, Oxford where he obtained his MA in 1450. He studied Greek and assembled a prestigious classical library and gained a reputation as a leading churchman and diplomat. He served under three successive English kings during the time when warring factions were competing for the throne.

In 1479 King Edward IV appointed Shirwood as his representative to the court of Sixtus IV (the pope who rebuilt an old chapel in the Vatican that was re-named after him – the Sistine Chapel). The new ambassador took up residence in Rome. In July 1483 King Richard III was crowned in Westminster Abbey and in his coronation procession Richard walked between ambassador John Shirwood, whom the King had nominated bishop-elect of Durham, and Robert Stillington bishop of Bath and Wells. In 1484 Shirwood returned to England to take up his appointment as Bishop of Durham. Following King Richard III's death at Bosworth in 1485, he was succeeded by King Henry VII, who dispatched Shirwood again to Rome.

He made two further visits as English ambassador to the papal court: first in 1487 when he was accompanied by another Greek scholar, the physician Thomas Linacre (who later founded the Royal College of Physicians in London), and again in 1492, remaining there until his death in 1494.

The first **cardinal protector** of England was **Francesco Piccolomini**, the future Pope Pius III, the first officially approved cardinal protector of any nation whatsoever. At the end of the Wars of the Roses, after the Yorkist Richard III had been killed and replaced by the Lancastrian pretender Henry Tudor who took the crown as King Henry VII, the new king considered that good relations with Rome were important to him as a protection against domestic and foreign enemies. In 1492, fearing that many of the English bishops would support his opponents to whom they owed their appointments, he sent a letter congratulating the newly elected Pope Alexander VI, also requesting that Piccolomini be created cardinal protector of England. The request was granted.

POPE PIUS IX – THE Friends' gift to the Birmingham Oratory

Extensive preparations took place at the Birmingham Oratory before the beatification of John Henry Newman at Cofton Park on 19th September. A shrine for the newly-blessed had been constructed and decorated to the highest standard. A picture of Cardinal Newman was hung over the altar and it was decided to hang a portrait of Blessed Dominic Barberi, who received Newman into the Church

in 1845, on one side and to find a portrait of Blessed Pope Pius IX who had greatly assisted him, as a companion on the other side.

Dr. Straiton was told of this and, on behalf of the Friends of the Holy Father and in honour of the historic Papal Visit and the beatification, he gave the large portrait of Pius IX, painted in Rome in 1860, to complete the por-

traits in the Newman Shrine.

Beneath Pius IX hangs a small picture of the Blessed Virgin, and below that is a note written in Newman's own hand telling that it had been given to him as a memento by Pius IX himself.



Portrait of Pope Pius IX in the Newman Shrine

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH – worldwide

The latest available statistics from the Vatican on February 2010 give the number of baptised Catholics worldwide as 1.166 billion, or one in every six people walking the earth - an increase of 1.7% from 2007. Around six million live in Scotland, England and Wales.

There is a slow but steady rise in the number of priests and seminarians worldwide. There are 409,166 priests, an increase of 1142 from 2007, serving 219,655 parishes; the

number of seminarians worldwide increased from 115,919 in 2007 to 117,024 at the end of 2008.

Across the world the Church runs 67,264 kindergartens with 6.38 million infants; 91,694 primary schools with 29.8 million pupils; 41,210 secondary schools with 16.8 million pupils, and also cares for 19million high school students and 2.8 million university students.

VACITAN LIBRARY RE-OPENS

Rome soon became a ghost town after the pope's departure from Rome in 1309 to take up residence in Avignon; buildings fell into disrepair, many collapsed and cattle roamed throughout the ruins. It was not until after Pope Gregory XI returned in 1378 that the city slowly recovered with the popes making strenuous efforts to restore it as the fitting centre of Christendom.

The papacy had held collections of books from early times. In the Avignon period there was a considerable growth in book collection and record-keeping, but on the return to Rome books had been scattered far and wide, some in Rome, some in Avignon and many elsewhere.

Pope Nicholas V (reigned 1447-55) realised the importance of the written word and dispatched agents across Europe to rescue ancient manuscripts that were in danger of being lost. He managed to assemble 5000 volumes that became the nucleus of his new Vatican Apostolic Library. Pope Sixtus V went further and in 1587 commissioned the architect Domenico Fontana to build the new larger library that we know today.

Three years ago one floor was in danger of collapse under the weight of thousands of books and necessitated a major rebuild. The Library has recently reopened, with great improvements including enhanced security of the collections with electronic tagging to ensure that each item is accounted for and is returned to its proper place.

by Constantine the Great himself. Another ancient volume is the *Vergilius Romanus*, the Roman Vergil - of 309 velum folios, each about 14 inches square, with 19 surviving illustrations. It contains the Aeneid, the Georgics and some of the Eclogues and is one of the few surviving classical manuscripts with illustrations.

Experts believe that the *Vergilius Romanus* was produced in Britain in the late-fourth- or early fifth-century, around the time of the withdrawal of the Legions in 410, as there are marked similarities between the pictures and script of the codex and features in certain artefacts found in Britain; if so, it would make it the country's oldest book.



Vergilius Romanus - the author

The Vatican Library holds the oldest known complete Bible, from around 325, believed to have been commissioned

THE POPES AND SCIENCE

The only physician ever to have been elected pope - Pedro Julião, known professionally as **Peter of Spain** - was born in Lisbon in 1215 in the territory that is now known as Portugal. Peter began his studies in Lisbon and later joined the University of Paris where he studied medicine and theology. In 1245-50 he taught medicine at the University at Sienna, at which time he pioneered a system of public health for the city. He wrote a famous book entitled the *Thesaurus Pauperum* that contained simple medical remedies that would be readily accessible to the poor. This enjoyed wide popularity throughout Europe for 300 years: an original copy is kept in the Vatican Library, and an English translation, published in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I in London, can be seen at the British Library. Peter became physician to Pope Gregory X (1271-6) who created him Cardinal Bishop of Frascati. After two very short pontificates, Peter he was elected at Viterbo in 1277, to become **Pope John XXI**. The new pope added a new wing to the Papal Palace in Viterbo in which he could continue his studies. It had been poorly built and one night the roof fell in, badly injuring the new pontiff. He died eight days later and was buried in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo next to the Papal Palace, where his tomb can be seen to this day.

Visitors to the Vatican may have spotted the beautiful Renaissance villa in the Vatican Gardens, the Casina of Pius IV, that since 1936 has been home to the **Pontifical Academy of Sciences**. The Academy was founded in 1603, then called the Academy of Lynxes, after the animal that was believed to have exceptional vision. Today's Academicians are chosen for their outstanding contribution to science, irrespective of their race, religion or creed, and are appointed personally by the Pope. They are eighty in number, three of whom are from Great Britain: the astrophysicist Stephen Hawking, the physicist Raymond Hide and Martin Rees, the Astronomer Royal and President of the Royal Society.

In 1939 **Pope Pius XII** addressed the Academy: "...We are not creators: we create neither the world nor truth. They are the standards to which our minds must conform.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Secularists have often portrayed religion as the enemy of science, but the truth is that many of the world's greatest discoveries were made by people of faith who were seeking to honour God and his Creation; they can be found in every discipline. **Sir Francis Bacon** (1561-1627), who established the scientific method of enquiry based on experimentation and inductive reasoning, wrote: "it is true, that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no further; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate, and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity".

The pioneers of electricity whose names are in the very terminology of science - the units in which electricity is measured - bear the names of distinguished investigators,

Nature stands between God and ourselves, and truth is inseparable from nature. God, nature, and truth, those are our masters; we are their humble servants, pilgrims to God through nature and truth, the agents of a joyous adventure. Your task is to know and to increase humanity's treasures of knowledge. It is a work of love, not of dissension, akin to the work of the Church, which throughout the centuries has proved to be the mother of science and progress ...".

The Academy's 2008 Plenary Assembly chose the topic *Scientific Insight into the evolution of the Universe* and was addressed by **Pope Benedict XVI**: "...questions concerning the relationship between science's reading of the world and the reading offered by Christian Revelation naturally arise. My predecessors Pope Pius XII and Pope John Paul II noted that there is no opposition between faith's understanding of creation and the evidence of the empirical sciences. Philosophy in its early stages had proposed images to explain the origin of the cosmos on the basis of one or more elements of the material world. This genesis was not seen as a creation, but rather a mutation or transformation; it involves a somewhat horizontal interpretation of the origin of the world... In order to develop and evolve the world must first *be*, and thus have come from nothing into being. It must be created...in other words, by the first Being who is such by essence. A decisive advance in understanding the origin of the cosmos was the consideration of *being* and the concern of metaphysics with the most basic question of the first or transcendent origin of participated being. To 'evolve' literally means 'to unroll a scroll', that is, to read a book. The imagery of nature as a book has its roots in Christianity and has been held dear by many scientists... it is a book whose author is God in the same way as Scripture has God as its author. .. the world, far from originating out of chaos, resembles an ordered book; it is a cosmos... matter as such is 'legible'. It has inbuilt 'mathematics'... and thanks to the natural sciences we have greatly increased our understanding of the uniqueness of humanity's place in the cosmos".

many of whom were devout Christians.

Luigi Galvani (1737-98), a deeply religious man and a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, was a physician and physicist who spent his life in Bologna. While conducting experiments into static electricity his assistant touched the exposed sciatic nerve of a dissected dead frog with a metal scalpel which had picked up a charge. At that moment Galvani saw sparks as the dead frog's leg kicked, as if in life. He was the first investigator to appreciate the relationship between electricity and animation - of life.

The Italian physicist **Alessandro Volta** (1745 -1877) who discovered current electricity was a devout Catholic. When one day in 1800, after years of study, Volta stepped into his laboratory and built up his voltaic pile out of pieces of zinc silver and moistened cloth, his first battery that pro-

duced a steady electric current, no other physicist except himself could have foretold the consequences. He conducted an experiment sending this current across a 30-mile-long wire from Como to Milan suspended on wooden boards that set off a pistol at the other end. This discovery led ultimately to the creation of the electric telegraph. Throughout his professorship at Como, Volta attended daily Mass and showed himself as ardent as the humblest of his fellow townsmen. He had over his door a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and, when entering, invariably raised his hat in salutation.

André Marie Ampère (1775-1836) took up Volta's work on electricity and developed it. His fame rests on his establishing the relations between electricity and magnetism. At the time of his great discoveries he was a zealous and convinced Christian and of him Frederic Ozanam wrote: "Over and above his scientific achievements there was something more to be said: for us Catholics, this rare genius has other titles to our veneration and love. He was a brother in the Faith ... Religion presided over the labours of his mind, shed its light over every field of his thought: and it was from this sublime point that he judged all things, even science itself... that high scientific probity, eager not for glory but after truth alone.

The English chemist and physicist **Michael Faraday** (1791-1867) invented electromagnetic rotary devices that formed the foundation of electric motor technology. He was a member of the Sandemanian Christian sect, an offshoot of the Church of Scotland. In a lecture on Magnetism, delivered before Prince Albert in 1849 on the wonderful diffusion of magnetic energy throughout the universe, Faraday concluded: "What its great purpose is, seems to be looming in the distance before us; the clouds which obscure our mental sight are daily thinning, and I cannot doubt that a glorious discovery in natural knowledge, and of the wisdom and power of God in the creation, is awaiting our age..."

In the fields of chemistry and microbiology, **Louis Pasteur** (1822-95) the French chemist, is best remembered for his remarkable discoveries into the causes and prevention of diseases. In 1875-6 he was engaged in investigating the chemistry of fermentation, and his discovery in 1877

that certain diseases are due to the presence of minute organisms – bacteria or bacilli – won him world-wide renown. His research that showed that micro-organisms were responsible for spoiling beverages such as beer, wine and milk, led him to invent a process by which these liquids were heated to kill these bacteria and moulds - pasteurisation. This led him to conclude that micro-organisms infecting animals and humans caused diseases and to propose the prevention of entry of micro-organisms into the human body. This inspired Joseph Lister to develop anti-septic methods of surgery. When Pasteur was elected to the French Academy he took the opportunity to proclaim his Christian convictions, that humanity as a whole had always believed in God and found its support in religion: "...it is no use to say: out beyond there, there is time, there is space, magnitude without limit. It is impossible to rest content with such phrases. The mind that confesses consciousness of the idea of the Infinite – and no mind can fail to be conscious of it – accepts more of the supernatural than is contained in all the miracles of all religions. For the idea of the infinite has two characteristics; it imposes itself on the mind, and it baffles the mind's effort to comprehend it. When the idea takes possession of the intellect, nothing remains but to go down humbly on one's knees".

To the end Pasteur remained a fervent Catholic. A student once asked him how it was that after so much reflection and research, he could remain a believer. "It is just because I have thought and sought so much" replied Pasteur, "that I believe with the faith of a Breton peasant. If I had thought more and studied more I would have come to believe with the faith of the Breton peasant's wife".

One of the world's most influential and best-known theoretical physicists, **Albert Einstein** (1879-1955), was once asked his views on religion; he replied: "I do not think that it is necessarily the case that science and religion are natural opposites. In fact, I think that there is a very close connection between the two. Further, I think that science without religion is lame and, conversely, that religion without science is blind. Both are important and should work hand in hand".

Dr. Michael Straiton

BATTLE OF THE MILVIAN BRIDGE – October 28, 312 : soon the 17th centenary

It will soon be 1700 years since an event took place that was a turning point in the history of Christianity. Before engaging in battle fought against his rival Maxentius, the Emperor Constantine had a vision of the Cross in the sky – the symbol of Christianity – with the words *in hoc signo vinces* – in this sign, conquer. He put his trust in the true God, battle was engaged between the opposing forces on the banks of the Tiber outside the Milvian Bridge in Rome. Constantine was victorious and gained control of Rome and thence the whole of the Western Empire. He

embraced Christianity as the official religion of the Empire and the centuries of the persecution of Christians soon came to an end.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The 2011 Annual General Meeting will take place on **16th June 2011** at Vaughan House, Francis Street, Westminster following Mass in the Cathedral beforehand at 5.30pm. Archbishop Peter Smith will celebrate the Mass and attend the Meeting afterwards.

The 2011 Pilgrimage to Constantinople will take place **from 5th to 11th October, 2011**. The Friends' next pilgrimage will take us to the former imperial city of Constantine the Great, Turkish Istanbul. This will include visits to places of outstanding historical interest and beauty. Our four- star hotel is in the Taksim district, the old European sector with easy and comfortable access to all places we will be visiting in the Old City.

The Emperor Constantine moved his capital to the east, to the old Greek city of Byzantium on the Bosphorus. After considerable rebuilding work the city was consecrated in 330 and the Emperor renamed it after himself. Further construction was later undertaken by the Emperor Justinian who built the great basilica of Hagia Sophia – Holy Wisdom. At its dedication in 537, Justinian exclaimed: "Solomon I have surpassed thee!". The vast dome is one of the great architectural wonders of that period: it seems to hang in space as if suspended by a golden thread. We will visit the Phanar district where the Church of St. George is situated in the precinct of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The Church of St Saviour in Chora contains the most beautiful and numerous Byzantine mosaics and frescoes that now exist, created at the time when Giotto was painting his frescoes in Italy. The Ottomans built their Topkapi Palace on the site of the Greek acropolis overlooking the Golden Horn, at the time when Cardinal Wolsey was building Hampton Court Palace, but it is many times larger. The view from the white marble pavilion in the centre of the Palace is stunning as is the Treasury, packed with priceless objects accumulated by the Ottomans over the years.

For further information please write to Mgr. Ralph Brown, St. Wilfrid's Convent, 29 Tite Street, London SW3 2QR



Hagia Sophia

Subscriptions

A subscription renewal notice is offered to those who do not renew by Banker's Order. Please act on it **now**. If you would like to renew by Banker's Order in future, please ask for a form. We would also be very grateful if taxpayers could complete a Gift Aid Form if you have not already done so. We are currently raising funds for the Pope John Paul II Peace Centre in Jerusalem.

Please remember that leaving a **legacy** to the F.H.F. is a way of continuing your support for the Holy Father well into the future. 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.

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