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## EDITORIAL

THE present number of THE AYLESFORD REVIEW is published to mark the re-dedication of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin and St Simon Stock at Aylesford after the completion of its restoration. The celebrations will extend over the three days July 16th to 18th, beginning with the celebration of High Mass on the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16th) by the Prior-General of the Carmelite Order in the presence of most of the brethren from the Order's houses in England and Wales and many of the Fathers from all countries who will have been attending the General Chapter of the Order in Rome.

Those chiefly responsible for the recovery and restoration of this house of religion are entitled to say, though a proper reticence would forbid them to do so, *Si monumentum quaeris, circumspice*; and we offer them our respectful congratulations. It is also fitting to record here the name of the gifted architect, the late Adrian Gilbert Scott, MC, whose vision of a great shrine for the worship of pilgrims has been brought to completion by his son Mr Anthony Scott, assisted by Mr Percy Kitchen, his devoted foreman, and a host of workers who would prefer to shelter under the anonymity that hides the church builders of former days. *Opera*

*illorum sequantur illos.* Four names, however, cannot be omitted: those of Mr Adam Kosowski and Mr Charles Bodiam, and Mr Philip Lindsey Clark, and his son Mr Michael Clark. Of these it may be said: *Nil tetigerunt quod non ornauerunt.*

## Carmelites in London: A Penal Times Mission

WILFRID MCGREAL, O. Carm.

WHEN JAMES II ascended the throne in 1685 there were high hopes that English Catholicism would recover its past glories; but James's lack of discretion wrecked these hopes and the Catholics enjoyed only a brief period of peace before the storm broke again. Among those who expected great things from the new monarch was the prior-general of the Carmelite order, Paul of St Ignatius Gambaldo, a native of Piedmont who had been unanimously elected to his office by the general chapter of 1686 at the age of 72. For some time previous to his election he had been living an eremitical life at the monastery of S. Maria del Pino near Turin. Despite his age and contemplative inclination he ruled the order with vigour, and took a particularly keen interest in the order's tenuously-existing mission to England. This English mission had first been mooted by his predecessor Angelo Monsignani, who had appointed the Flemish prior provincial as procurator of the mission, with the special care of admitting Englishmen to the order.

Since the Henrican dissolution of the monasteries various attempts had been made to re-establish the order in England, the most promising being that made by the German provincial Everard Billick during the reign of Queen Mary. From that time on there had been Carmelites in England for short periods, but Paul of St Ignatius was the first to try to organise the English mission thoroughly. However, it was 1687 before anything positive was done. By then Catholicism was out of the catacombs in

England; but many in Rome, including the Pope, Innocent XI, were uneasy at James II's over-zealous measures on behalf of his co-religionists.

Before the prior-general could send missionaries to England he had to obtain the approval of James's representative in Rome, the Earl of Castlemaine, and of the Cardinal-Protector of England, the Dominican Philip Howard, the former grand-almoner to Queen Catherine of Braganza and restorer of the English Dominican Province (cf. *The Life of Philip Thomas Howard, O.P., Cardinal of Norfolk* by Fr C. E. Raymund Palmer, O.P., London, Thomas Baker, 1888). We learn from the letters of Fr Paul of St Ignatius that the Earl was well disposed to the idea of sending a small band of Carmelite friars to England, in the hope of eventually restoring the former English Carmelite province and possibly of giving back to the order some of its ancient houses. The Earl of Castlemaine is an interesting figure, although in his lifetime he was inevitably overshadowed by his celebrated wife, Barbara Villiers, Duchess of Cleveland, to whose charm more than to his own merits he owed his earldom. His arrival in Rome had been marred by political manoeuvres, and in the Pope's eyes he was identified with the Gallicanizing policies of Louis Quatorze.

Cardinal Howard belonged to the great Norfolk family, and was the third son of the third Earl of Arundel. (The dukedom had been attained because of the family's adherence to the ancient faith.) He had entered the Dominican order at Cremona in 1645, and founded the convent and school at Bornhem in Flanders which became the nucleus of the restored English Dominican province. During the reign of Charles II, whose friendship he enjoyed, he resided for some time in London, where he was principal chaplain in the household of Queen Catherine of Braganza. He was created Cardinal-Priest by Pope Clement X in 1675. Appointed Cardinal-Protector of England, he was alarmed by the headlong conduct of James II, but was unable to persuade the King to greater moderation.

Assured of Lord Castlemaine's support for his project the Carmelite prior-general himself wrote to King James in May 1687. A copy of his letter is preserved in the archives of the Carmelites of the Old Observance in Rome, and has not hitherto been published. It is typical of the period, flowery and even some-

what obsequious. In translation it reads as follows :

Your Majesty - -

Glory of the crown of Britain, which, when it was placed at God's command upon the head of your Majesty, seemed joined to heaven and all the heavenly host, so that it drew applause and congratulations from all who bear the mark of the true faith - -

In a very special way my own Order was also affected, an Order most fortunately transplanted from the east to the fair land of England where it flourished and grew fruitfully, so that from England many wise doctors, zealous prelates, and men of outstanding holiness spread the Order throughout the world.

We must also mention the bestowing of the singular privilege of the Scapular by the Mother of God on St Simon of Kent surnamed Stock, general of our Order, in this same glorious land. According to the Blessed Virgin's promise, to all those who wore it devoutly the Scapular would be a sign of salvation, of safety in danger, of peace, and of an everlasting covenant; all of which has been proved by countless miracles.

But this joy and exultation has long since been banished. For Carmel mourns for those forty splendid monasteries once so piously built, but torn down or put to profane use at the general violation of the Church. Now the only glimmer of hope of a restoration is that through the benevolent providence of your Majesty's command you should choose to be as it were a second Ezechiah, who made a pact with the Lord God of Israel to open and restore the gates of his house, and should bring back the priests and the Faith to the kingdom, lead the kingdom back to the Church, the holy ones to the Temple, worship to the saints, and honour to God in accordance with the prophesy of Isaiah: 'And thou shalt have a crown of glory.' And what wonder if God protected and exalted Ezechiah, when in exalting God's glory he promoted and increased his own.

I the least of Carmelites, and, though unworthy, called to be their supreme moderator, have already offered my con-

gratulations to your Majesty's envoy to the Holy See, and I now make bold to congratulate your Majesty and to testify to the heartfelt joy of my brethren in offering their good wishes and prayers for the success of your reign. I also make bold, prostrating myself at your feet, to beg your most gracious Majesty to deign to take my Order under your most benign and powerful protection.

Its members have long been in exile, and should be the first, or at least among the first, to be admitted as servants and workers in the cultivation of the vineyard of the Catholic faith. Those houses which once were theirs should, if it seems fitting, be given back; so that our religious may not be there just as visitors but as members of your family, and so be enabled, through their prayers, pious wishes, and supplications to obtain the divine protection for the lasting safety and prosperity of your Majesty, to whom with the greatest humility I devote and dedicate my Order.

The next step was to find suitable men for the English mission; in the first place English priests, and failing these, priests belonging to the French or Flemish provinces of the order whose outlook and temperament might fit them for life in England. In determining the qualities needed by the prospective missionaries the prior-general showed himself possessed of a very keen insight into human nature, and a gift for dealing with men. The provinces which could be expected to provide the Fathers required were those of Touraine (Brittany), France (Normandy and Ile de France), and the Low Countries (Flanders).

In 1687 the prior-general wrote to a certain Fr Damasus of St Mary, of the French province, at Caen. Fr Damasus was an Englishman, a Londoner by birth, and his name before entering the order was Samuel Fullbrood. At Cardinal Howard's instance the prior-general obtained further information from other quarters concerning Fr Fullbrood's character and abilities before deciding to appoint him to the English mission.

In the July of 1687 Paul of St Ignatius wrote to the French provincial, Fr Laurence of St Roch, and enumerated the qualities which were to be looked for in potential English missionaries. Such were to be learned and prudent men, of strong faith and blameless morals; they must be skilled in controversy, mature,

zealous, discreet, and ready to suffer, and even to die, for the Faith. By the end of July or soon after the prior-general had received all the information he needed about Fr Damasus, and was assured that he was well suited for missionary life in England.

The other provincials concerned showed themselves ready to co-operate. All were under the influence of the Reform of Touraine, and in the spirit of that Reform were well disposed to missionary work. The provincial of Touraine, Fr Mark of the Nativity, was warned by the prior-general that men chosen for this work must be able to speak English well and to withstand the dangers that would accompany work in a country given over to heresy. He also decided that religious from the Breton province would be more suited to work in Ireland, while those from the Low Countries would fit in more easily in England. This recommendation, however, was not to be taken as a hard and fast rule. In the province of Touraine there was an Irishman, Fr Patrick Henry of St Teresa, who had an influential kinsman at the court of King James II, and who for that reason was regarded as a possibility for the English mission.

In January 1688 Fr Paul of St Ignatius received Cardinal Howard's formal permission to go ahead. The Cardinal wrote to the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, Dr John Leyburn, bishop of Hadrumetum, recommending the Carmelites and asking him to give them all possible assistance. (This letter also has not previously been published, either in the original or in translation).

Most Illustrious and Reverend Lord:

The Carmelite Order has always been highly thought of in England, so that to say the least it deserves all the praise it receives. Now I am going to add to that praise by signalling the zeal of their Father General, which I assure you could not be greater. In order that his religious should not be reckoned inferior to those of other orders in labouring in the Lord's vineyard he is sending you four workers. Their names are enclosed, and I strongly recommend them to your Lordship.

So if you will oblige me by helping them and being kind to them, and by giving them all they need, know that by so

doing you will be greatly obliging myself, &c.

Ever your devoted servant,

The Cardinal of Norfolk.

There were many reasons why such a letter as this was required. First of all there was the constant and regrettable friction between the secular and the regular clergy in England, which was such a disastrous feature of the penal days. If the Carmelites had arrived out of the blue, so to say, they would have been on a wrong footing from the start. Then there was the fact that in the group there would be priests from Ireland, and other countries; and these were never very welcome in the eyes of the English clergy, who regarded London in those years as over-stocked with roving priests, many of whom were more or less freelances and regarded themselves as independant of the authority of the Vicar Apostolic. (Dr Leyburn, who had formerly been President of the English College at Douay, and later was secretary to Cardinal Howard, was the first vicar apostolic of the London district—which included the North American colonies and the British West Indies!)

By January 12th the missionaries were in Paris, ready to leave for England when word came. They were four in number, as the Cardinal did not wish for a larger group for the time being. The little band of four comprised of Fr James Fortine (a Frenchman), Fr Damasus Fullbrood, another Frenchman, and a certain Fr Modestus (possibly an Irishman). The prior-general sent them a message of encouragement, hailing them as 'the hope and the honour of the order', and reminded them that Lord Castlemaine had already assured for them the King's favour. By January 27th news was received in Rome that the missionaries had reached London.

The newly arrived Carmelites must have found London hospitable, as the Catholic revival was at its height, with the Benedictines established in St James's Palace and at Somerset House, and the religious able to wear their habits in public. By September the Carmelites had a house and a chapel. A curious detail is to be found in a letter of the prior-general dated November 2nd of the same year, in which he gives Fr Fortine permission to celebrate

Mass according to the Roman rite instead of in the rite of Jerusalem proper to the Carmelite Order. Presumably this was to avoid confusing the people, most of whom might well never even have heard of the Carmelite or Dominican rites; and possibly also in order to avoid irritating the secular clergy.

In the same letter Fr Fortine is praised for having sent a young Englishman to the novitiate in Touraine; it was one of the prior-general's chief preoccupations that suitable English youths should be recruited in order to establish a supply of native-born priests for England. But only a few aspirants were ever sent to the continent. It was precisely this failure to build up the nucleus of a future English province that led eventually to the ending of the mission. Unhappily, there was no personality strong enough to provide the needed leadership and do for the Carmelites what Cardinal Howard had done for the English Dominicans. Another cause of failure lay in the fact that such few English aspirants as there were were not too well received by their French confrères. In 1690 the then superior of the mission, Fr Germain le Breton, complained that three promising young Englishmen had been expelled from Touraine, chiefly because they had not settled down to the French way of life.

The prior-general, who was normally quite mild in his letters, wrote a forceful epistle to Fr Mark of the Nativity, the provincial of Touraine, reminding him that candidates for profession are not to be expected to conform to national characteristics. It is the basic virtues that matter, he points out; and he warns the provincial that if another incident of this kind should take place the English students would be transferred to a more sympathetic environment.

By this time the early high hopes for the mission were no longer entertained. The Glorious Revolution had taken place, and English Catholics were once again on the wrong side of the law. Of the original group of missionaries one, Fr Modestus, seems to have abandoned his vocation under pressure, and the Londoner Fr Fullbrood narrowly escaped death, after having in some ways disappointed his superiors by proving himself more a hindrance than a help. By 1691 Fr Germain le Breton was writing to Rome from the Tuscan embassy where he was living as a chaplain to ask for a companion to be sent to join him.

We should not judge this failure too severely. It might have been wiser, in spite of the danger in numbers, if Cardinal Howard had allowed a rather larger group of missionaries to come in the first place; with so small a number as four, difficulties arising from the missionaries' differing national temperaments, English, Irish, and French, were almost certain to arise; in a larger group, with a preponderance of Englishmen, had that been possible, there might have been less friction. But in any case, a proper conventual life was impossible, and external circumstances presented overwhelming difficulties. (These can best be realized from the vivid pages of Fr Godfrey Anstruther's chronicle of the English Dominicans in penal times, *A Hundred Homeless Years*.)

The English Carmelite mission struggled on into the eighteenth century, though still beset with troubles arising chiefly from the incompatibility of the further Irish and French friars who were sent over, as well as from the difficulties of the times. The order itself was in a disturbed condition during the first half of the century owing to the regrettable controversy with the Bollandists, eventually terminated by papal decree. Then came the era of the French Revolution, which threatened the order's very existence.

The English mission of the Discalced or Teresian Carmelites was more successful, but it had been founded as long ago as 1613. It lingered on until the death of Fr Francis Brewster (who described himself in an official return to the Government as having 'No superior, no inferior, being the last man') in 1849.

Then for some years the order was completely unrepresented in England, except for the nuns of the Discalced observance, until Cardinal Wiseman established the Discalced friars in Kensington in 1862. A little later came the fiasco of the Old Observance's foundation at Merthyr Tydfil. Finally Irish Carmelites of the Old Observance took charge of the two Kentish parishes of Paversham and Sittingbourne in 1926.

To end on a happier note, one Carmelite missionary of the Old Observance who deserves remembrance is Fr Victor of St Cecilia, a native of Touraine, who is described in the *Bibliotheca Carmelitana* of Cosmas de Villiers (1722, new edition Rome 1927) as 'pneumaticorum organorum pulsator peritissimus, sed neque ad animos piarum mentium mystice instituendos minus expertus'.

In 1702 this good Father was prior of one of his order's convents in Brittany; in 1713 he was sent on the English mission, where he died in London ten years later. He was the author of a work entitled *Le Chemin du Ciel, ou Règles pratiques qui conduisent les âmes à une haute perfection*, and it is on record that while in England he won many converts while outwardly living and supporting himself as a practising oculist. Regrettably, no further record exists of his hidden apostolate.

Another of the French Carmelite missionaries in London was Theodoric of St René, who was born at Poitiers and joined the Touraine Province of the order and taught for some time as professor of philosophy and theology. He was in England from 1694 (?) to 1701, and he also worked in Scotland and Ireland, and died at Paris in 1728.

Theodoric of St René was a man of some distinction. Cosmas de Villiers in the *Bibliotheca Carmelitana* gives almost five pages to him, a large part of which is taken up by a summary of his work *Justification de l'Eglise Romaine sur la Réordination des Anglois Episcopaux, ou Réponse à la Dissertation sur la validité des Ordinations Angloises*. Id est Latine: *Justificatio Ecclesiae Romanae circa Reordinationem Anglorum praetensorum Episcoporum* &c. 2 volumes, printed by Paul du Mesnil, Paris, 1718.

There is no copy of this book in the library of the Carmelite International College in Rome, but there is one in the British Museum. A critical study of Theodoric's work on Anglican Orders would make a good subject for a doctoral thesis by a Carmelite university student, and might be of great value at the present time.

## The Carmelite Mission at Merthyr Tydfil: 1864-1879

PETER O'DWYER, O. Carm.

THE RESTORATION of the Carmelite Order in England had been desired by the Priors General of the Order ever since Reformation

times. An attempt was made in the closing years of the 17th century (as described in the present number of *THE AYLESFORD REVIEW* by Fr Wilfrid McGreal), but came to nothing. During the early and middle 19th century an occasional solitary Carmelite might be found living and working for a time in England, one such being Fr R. J. Colgan of the Irish Province of the Order.

Round about 1860 Dr John Spratt, the Vicar Provincial of the Irish Province, was in touch with some of the English bishops, and he was a personal friend of the Bishop of Southwark, Dr Grant. About this time Fr Savini, the Vicar General of the Order, wrote to Dr Spratt expressing the hope that some means would be found to restore the Order in England. In his reply Dr Spratt said that this was a project in which he was very much interested, and which in fact he had discussed in a general way with the bishop of Beverley. But the fact was that the Irish Carmelites had not the men to spare to start a mission in England.

Fr Savini then approached the Commissary General of the Dutch and German houses of the Order, Fr Augustine van Uden, who thought that he could undertake the mission provided the work was done in slow stages as he too had very few men whom he could spare. In January 1864 Fr Savini asked Fr van Uden to appoint a suitable man to begin the work, and he chose Fr Elias van der Velden, who had previously held the office of novice master.

Fr van der Velden set out from Holland on January 28th 1864 and arrived in Leeds about the 8th of February. There he received instructions from the bishop of Beverley to present himself to the parish priest of Middlesbro'-on-Tees, in whose presbytery he would live until such time as he had acquired a sufficient knowledge of English. He was given faculties to hear confessions in Dutch, French, and German; but the Middlesbro' parish was too poor to allow him any salary and he had to look to Holland for Mass stipends and other means of support.

Efforts to find a place where the Order could build a small monastery and church did not prosper, and there was a divergence of points of view between the bishop and the Carmelites as to whether the Order should buy a site outright or merely rent it. In this predicament Fr Elias consulted some Capuchin Franciscan