

PAST NATIONAL EVENTS

2016

London Newman Lecture, Thursday 10 March

The 2016 London Newman Lecture was given by the Rev Dr Giles Fraser at Heythrop College. His topic was ***Augustine and Freud: autobiography and grace*** and he drew the parallel between Augustine's idea of original sin and Freud's theory of unfulfilled need. We cannot be perfect, especially by keeping a set of rules. Augustine says we are in need of God's help and are fundamentally dependent on His grace. We are not 'self-sufficient', we are vulnerable and we need each other and God. Freud agrees that we are born vulnerable and dependent and not in control and if we are not prepared to show this vulnerability then no one will help us. We can only be satisfied and have our needs met if we are prepared to show our need of God and others. Giles seemed fully relaxed with the audience of over 80 members and responded readily to questions. It was an evening to remember and was exemplified by Giles's description of Luther as *Augustine on steroids!*

Pax Romana European Assembly 11 to 13 March

The European Assembly of Pax Romana was held in Reggio di Calabria in March. Delegates from seven federations were present although there was no Newman delegate. The programme consisted of lectures, discussions visits to the Cathedral etc. and preparation for the Plenary Assembly in Barcelona in October. Phillippe Ledouble, the General Secretary of Pax Romana, had collected some interviews in advance of the meeting about the refugee crisis in Europe, including a submission from the Newman Association. These interviews formed the basis of discussion and shared experiences amongst the delegates.

Andante General Assembly 14 to 17 April

(Andante is an alliance of European Catholic women's organisations) The High Leigh Conference Centre in Hertfordshire was the venue for Andante's General Assembly in April. It was preceded by two study days and a party for Andante's tenth birthday. The General Assembly was a formal affair but the topics chosen for further study were Migration, Modern Slavery, Women in the Church, Poverty, Education and Diversity & Difference. A full report on the conference is available in the May Journal and by clicking on the following link, '[What is andante?](#)'.

Manchester Newman Lecture Monday 25 April

The Second Manchester Newman Lecture was given by Paul Vallely in a talk entitled *Pope Francis-reform and resistance*. An audience of about 60 enjoyed a superb lecture at the Friends Meeting House, Manchester. Paul Vallely outlined the opposition to actions and writings of Pope Francis. Critics called *Evangelii Gaudium* Marxist for its critique of capitalism and they told him to stop meddling with science when his landmark eco-encyclical *Laudato Si'* was published. With the two synods on the family and the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*, Paul claimed that these actions

amount to the first practical application of the Second Vatican Council's call for a return to a more collegial church. This Pope is no longer monarch but a bishop among bishops. As *primus inter pares* he does not judge (or fudge) but rather is content to nudge. With this document Francis has shown himself to be the first true Vatican II pontiff. An edited version of this talk is available in the May Journal and by clicking on the following link, [Pope Francis – Reform and Resistance](#).

AGM 2016

The well attended 2016 AGM was held at The Friends Meeting House, Manchester in June. At the AGM the various working groups set up after the Assembly, gave their interim reports. The AGM was followed by an excellent and entertaining talk on Newman's letters by Mgr Roderick Strange (the former Principal of the Beda College in Rome). Mgr Strange explained the daunting task he had faced in making a selection from the 32 volumes of Newman's letters. His aim was to produce a portrait of Newman the man and he included letters ranging from Newman as young man to Newman in his old age. Throughout the AGM and the talk we had been aware of the Manchester rain and now we had to face the downpour on a walk to the historic St Mary's (Hidden Gem) where Mass was held. (A summary of Mgr Strange's talk is printed in the September Journal)

Newman Reading Group

The first meeting of the group took place in July at Newman House Catholic Chaplaincy in Birmingham. The topic was *Newman's Idea of a University*. Ten association members were present from North Staffs, Birmingham, Coventry and Rainham. A report of this first meeting is in the January 2017 Newman Journal.

Pilgrimage 16 to 21 September

The twelfth Newman pilgrimage returned to Rome in September and was based at the Palazzola in the hills outside Rome. Over 40 Newman members enjoyed a memorable pilgrimage which included spiritual, social and sightseeing elements. A report on the pilgrimage is in the January 2017 Newman Journal.

Pax Romana 28 October to 1 November

The Plenary Assembly of Pax Romana was held in Barcelona, a report of the Assembly will appear in the January Journal. Kevin Ahern (USA) is the new President, Philippe Ledouble (France) continues as Secretary General and Fr Luis Maria Goikoetxea (Basque Country) will be the International Chaplain. The Vice-President (Europe) will be Nuria Sastre Domenech.

Two European Assemblies are planned for Paris in March 2017 and Lviv (Ukraine) in September 2017. A report on the Plenary Assembly is in the January 2017 Newman Journal.