

Ferlo on Furlough

Roger Ferlo reflects on sabbaticals in Rome



A rector of a parish in lower Manhattan, I found myself cut off and far away in the days after the World Trade Center attacks. September 2001: my first time in Rome. How grateful I was for the companionship and understanding I found at the Anglican Centre for a wandering Episcopal priest and his family.

Returning eight years later on sabbatical, now as a seminary professor, I was delighted to discover a completely renovated space carved out of that huge and elegant ancient palazzo, with an expanded and beautifully appointed library, a comfortable seminar and study room, and a new chapel where a fascinating range of people gather every Tuesday for Eucharist, followed by a simple lunch in the *salone*. That gracious dining room forms part of the apartment occupied by Dean David Richardson and his wife Margaret. Under their leadership the Centre has emerged as one of the few places in the Anglican world where Anglicans who might differ with each other deeply on important issues can nonetheless come together for worship, fellowship and civil conversation.

The Centre's convening authority

The Anglican Centre's convening authority was much in evidence when I visited last October. I arrived at the Centre just a few days before the Vatican issued its new Apostolic Constitution establishing a kind of refuge for Anglicans unhappy with current developments in the church. The move from the Vatican took many people by surprise, not only Anglicans, but many Catholic leaders in Rome who were deeply committed to ecumenical dialogue. As it happened, Archbishop Williams was scheduled to be in Rome the following month, and would use that occasion to offer a tactful but firm counter-response to what looked to many of us like an unprecedented intervention into the life of a sister church. I was invited to attend a reception for the Archbishop and for Cardinal Kasper at the Centre following a joint Evensong at a nearby Jesuit oratory, and was struck by the genuine display of affection and mutual respect evident at that gathering in spite

of the tensions that the new Constitution had created. It was a privilege to be in the room; it was a true sabbatical moment, one in which I had to rethink my own relationship to my Roman roots (I grew up as a Roman Catholic) and to renew my own commitment to the Anglican way of being a priest.

For all the recent tensions in our ecumenical relationships, there remains a strong desire in many Catholic circles for connection and a continuing search for common ground. It is a desire felt also by those of us Episcopalians who support the work of the Anglican Centre in Rome, and admire the ministry that David and Margie share. I join with many others in gratitude to them for their transformative hospitality and welcome.

Consider a sabbatical in Rome, and plan a visit to the Anglican Centre!

The Revd Roger Ferlo is Associate Dean and Director, Center for Christian Formation and Leadership, and Professor of Religion and Culture at Virginia Theological Seminary. He is a Board Member of the American Friends of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

More about sabbaticals and courses

The Anglican Centre can help your sabbatical by

- offering our library resources
- putting you in touch with other research libraries
- putting you in touch with the Pontifical Universities
- telling you about Anglican parishes and institutions
- offering use of the library and seminar room
- sending you a list of places to stay

www.anglicancentreinrome.org/sabbaticals has more information and a longer version of Roger Ferlo's article.

Course information

For all information about courses, you should contact the Administrator.

administrator@anglicancentre.it

Tel: (+39) 06 678 0302;

Fax (+39) 06 678 0674.

www.anglicancentreinrome.org/courses has more course details.

Bursary Scheme for courses

Bursaries may be available for participants from developing countries to cover their course fees and accommodation, as well as a grant towards the cost of approved transport. Accredited Anglican ordinands may in certain circumstances be offered courses free of charge, but must pay for transport and accommodation.

Courses in 2011

Popular and innovative courses continue as a major feature of the Centre's life

HARVESTING THE FRUITS: NOW THE NEW WINE Mon 14 – Sun 20 March

The deepening relations between the Roman Catholic Church and Anglican Communion over the past 40 years provide the backdrop for the breakthroughs of the ARCIC conversations. There will be a chance to exchange stories of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in our different contexts, to discover where we are today, and explore outstanding issues for future dialogue. Identifying new directions will include future practical steps in our journey together. The group will attend a Papal audience, get to know something of the work of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and Vatican Radio, as well as visit sacred sites to deepen their experience of faith.

The key leader throughout the course will be Dame Mary Tanner, OBE, the well-known Old Testament and Hebrew scholar and ecumenist.

Cost: 500 €

INSIGHTS FROM THE BENEDICTINE TRADITION FOR MODERN CHRISTIAN LEADERS Mon 9 – Sun 15 May

Tough times call for exceptional qualities of leadership and moral courage, and this is precisely what the Benedictine tradition offers. The Rule that St Benedict wrote to govern the life of his monasteries speaks across the centuries about the personal and moral qualities necessary for effective leadership and co-operative working. His down-to-earth, practical approach resonates with many people today in the Church and in business, who have found in his wisdom a way of addressing the ethical and personal challenges that they meet. In particular Benedict has much to offer the Church which has often looked to business for its models of leadership, overlooking its own rich resources. The course will include visits to significant Benedictine sites in and outside of Rome. It is designed for parish priests, archdeacons, bishops, as well as laity in leadership roles in the Church and in the business world.

The course leader, Canon Dr Peter Sills, taught law before ordination and parish ministry. He founded the Ely Business Ethics Forum. Now retired, he continues his Benedictine work from his home in Sussex.

Cost: 500 €

TRUTH, LOVE & BEAUTY IN THE ETERNAL CITY Mon 20 – Sun 26 June

Rome offers the ideal context for exploring three ways humanity has discovered for communion with God: the way of Truth, the way of Love and the way of Beauty. This year's popular Rome Summer School (ROMESS) focuses on how this communion with God may be perceived through the art, architecture and history of Rome as both an eternal and contemporary city landscape. Current relationships between the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Communion will also be explored. A series of guided visits and lectures will enable participants to connect with this rich heritage, enhance their insight into the opportunities and challenges facing Christianity today, underpin their knowledge of Christianity and ecumenical relations, and challenge and deepen their personal faith.

The Venerable Jonathan Boardman, Archdeacon of Italy and Malta and author of a popular guide book to the city, will be part of the teaching team.

Cost: 500 €



ROMESS Eucharist in the Catacombs

NAMING & BLESSING Tues 4 – Thurs 6 October

An "Expert Seminar" for invited participants to explore the depiction of nature and its diversity in art, the understanding of the environment through naming in science and the blessing of the gifts of creation in the liturgy and life of faith. The seminar will consider a series of prepared papers, circulated in advance, and presented and discussed at the meeting. The coordinator will be Canon Prof John Rodwell, until recently Professor of Ecology at Lancaster University, UK.

EXPLORATION IN ROME Mon 17 – Thurs 20 October

A 'mini-pilgrimage' designed to enable independent travellers to explore their faith in the context of Rome and its centrality in Christian history. The course contains introductory talks on aspects of Rome, guided tours of San Clemente and the excavations under St Peter's, attendance at the weekly Papal audience, guided reflections, corporate worship and several shared meals. Many of those attending may wish to extend their stay with further exploration of Rome.

Cost: 200 €