

presence was required in Rome to assist the Father General. The newly elected Father Provincial, Father Hilary Carpenter, will receive a special recognition and welcome from this review as he was for six or seven years its successful editor. Almost at the same time as this last event there died an old and revered Dominican—Father Hugh Pope—well known alike for his Scripture studies, his immense apostolic labours and his simple and profound spirituality which influenced many. Father Pope was himself a frequent and distinguished contributor to this review.

These domestic events therefore show the passing of an age and the beginning of new life, the reunion and the rebirth of an international religious Order. They point many morals and are consequently presented here with this explanation but without apology.

THE EDITOR.

ST DOMINIC IN MODERN ROME

MR G. K. CHESTERTON tells us in one of his essays of a man who went to Rome and missed seeing the Pope because he stood too long staring at the Papal Guard. We can have more sympathy with that sort of absence of mind than with the more serious kind of tourist who, Baedeker in hand, 'does' Rome dutifully and grimly and comes home exhausted and dazed with a blur of memories. Sight-seeing 'according to plan' is one of the penitential exercises of the pilgrim: much better to keep your eyes open and let the sights seek *you*, and you will stumble on surprises at every turn and be rewarded with thrills all the time.

When you go to Rome to attend a General Chapter there is not much time or opportunity for sight-seeing: in a sense you become part of the picture; for the time being you are one of the sights yourself. But even so, you can't help noticing things and there are wonders for your delight on every hand. When we came down from the sky it was a very abrupt change from the wet winds and cold rains of the North to the parched, dusty airfield at Chiampino blazing in the sun. The tropical dress of the R.A.F. men in contrast with ourselves dressed in the attire of a less torrid climate made us feel even warmer than we actually were; but we positively gasped and perspired when from the bus that took us to Rome we saw a football match being played before a cheering crowd at a terrific pace while the thermometer registered nearly a hundred degrees.

Rome itself after six years of war, seen through the memory of previous visits made at intervals during the last twenty years, presents a study in contrasts. The eternal city defies the changes of

time, it is physically and spiritually ageless and unchangeable; we recognise so many of our old favourites. Everything seems to have survived, thank God! That is one of the major marvels of the most devastating of wars: the city has come through unscathed. Yet at first sight it seems a very changed Rome; and so much is strangely new and unfamiliar. The spruceness, the order and mechanical neatness of the former regime have been replaced by a more happy-go-lucky drabness and there is the inevitable shabbiness to be expected in any post-war European city. It is like meeting some noble old lady in reduced raggedness and a bit down at heel, or some awesome pontiff minus the finery, whom we now confront in his shirtsleeves. Somehow we feel more at home. Our old friends, the beggars are still with us and the street boys a bit more ragged and making the very minimum of clothing suffice, and they all seem to be anxious to do currency transactions asking us in good American if we have any dollars to sell. They can give you a better rate of exchange than the bank. Traffic is more chaotic than it used to be: car-drivers have reverted to the old habit of incessant hooting of horns and restored Rome to the position it once held of being—after Oxford perhaps—Europe's noisiest city. Army lorries and jeeps add their quota to the prevailing din. The trams still run (though perhaps *run* is an overstatement), but they do not run for you and me: no use trying to board one; they are all packed beyond capacity, clustered around with pendent humanity, lumbering along noisily and looking like a moving swarm of bees.

Unless then you wish to squander your wealth recklessly on taxis with wads of the notes which bulge your pockets like salvage from the waste-paper basket, you must walk—even though the temperature is 103 in the shade. There is no need to carry a guide book. Every church and ancient place of interest has its inscribed board in English (devised by the Anglo-American committee) explaining what you are about to behold and why you are asked to admire.

Traffic directions in English everywhere; indications of the addresses of the various allied controls and authorities; American, English and Polish sentries outside buildings; a C.W.L. canteen (where real tea is to be had) in the Scots College; ominous warnings in places to the effect that *Trespassers will be shot*—all these are reminders that peace has not yet been officially signed. Abundance apparent in the shops at very inflated prices, black market goods and especially cigarettes sold couponless on doorsteps and the pavements: there is a good deal of poverty and one suspects much misery and hunger beneath so many apparently carefree externals.

But the folk we really met and knew and talked with were the

Brethren—over ninety of them (apart from the community of the Angelico) who had come for the General Chapter. It was like being in a big happy family; and what struck everyone present surely was the genuinely fraternal atmosphere that pervaded the whole assembly. Without any strain or affected cordiality there was manifest a sincere spirit of unity. All the Provinces were represented and among them most of the belligerent nations. Such a gathering, met together after the world war, presents an excellent working model of what U.N.O. should surely strive to be. Here were all the nations and tongues, yet united in the things that really mattered—doing their best to speak a common language, brothers of one and the same religious family, a kind of miniature of the universal church. It did not mean that there were no difficulties or disagreements: differences there sometimes were, but they were differences that could be charitably composed not by resort to compromise and makeshifts, but by appeal to principles implicit in the faith and code of the church of God. The General Chapter was something more than an international convention or a meeting of a league of nations: those present could not but feel that they were members, not of some local or national unit, but of a real, religious family, formed on the traditions and examples of seven centuries and bound together by ties that transcend all differences of race and tongue and are more enduring than the bonds of earthly kinship.

After a very long and unforgettable journey by road, the kind of perilous trip that seems a nightmare in retrospect, we reached Bologna. And the following day, Sunday the 15th of September, will ever be memorable in the Order's annals for the magnificent celebrations in honour of St Dominic. St Dominic's dying wish was that his body should be buried beneath the feet of his brethren. Now, more than seven centuries later, his brethren from every corner of the world were to carry his body high above their heads in a triumphal procession amid the reverent applause of an entire city. This was the triumph of Dominic the preacher who had conquered men's hearts and left the imprint of his character upon the family that bears his name. One naturally thought of the former translation of these holy relics when the miraculous fragrance clung to the hands of Blessed Jordan. One loved to remember that one of Dominic's last acts had been to send friars to found the English Province which he did not live to see established, which he has blessed and prayed for according to his dying promise.

We left St Dominic's body and the glorious city of Bologna, taking with us, we hoped, St Dominic's spirit and influence to preside over our deliberations at the chapter. Back to Rome by road, with some

nightmare interludes, via Loretto where we saluted our Lady and then came the election of Father Emmanuel Suarez as Master General. May God watch over and prosper him in his weighty and responsible office.

The audience given by the Holy Father was an unforgettable experience. His allocution was a triumphant achievement indeed—an eloquent and moving address in faultless Latin without a halt or hesitation, truly an inspiration, in the literal sense of the word. To receive his blessing one felt one was being blessed indeed. Then each in turn, over ninety of us, knelt at the Holy Father's feet and received a few words and a little audience to ourselves in our own language each time. Then a separate blessing for each Father and a little medal handed to us by His Holiness—truly a Father.

The final and crowning message of the Chapter was an inspired impromptu from the Master General when he sounded the note that we all needed. He warned us against gloom and despondency. While avoiding groundless optimism, he said, we need not, we must not be pessimistic. May those words echo through the entire Order for our encouragement and to stir us to brave things for God's glory.

Father General has paid our Province a very great compliment, though at first sight the sacrifice demanded seemed to outweigh the honour paid us. He has taken Father Aelwin Tindal-Atkinson to high office in Rome as his assistant and counsellor and in doing so he wishes us to understand that he is rendering great honour to our Province and he assures us that such promotion will in the long run redound not only to the common good of the whole Order, but also to the particular good of the English Province. While we cannot conceal our very natural regrets at losing a good and wise Provincial we can congratulate ourselves that we still have in him one who knows and loves the Province and has its interests at heart. He takes with him the good wishes of us all, none the less sincere because of our unavoidable regrets.

So we came home without our Provincial. To console us we brought back the blessing of St Dominic and the Holy Father and experiences and precious memories which will remain with us while the power to remember lasts.

BERNARD DELANY, O.P.