

## In this together

FOR IMPORTANT Masses it is normal for VIPs to be seated in special reserved rows. Not so for Cafod's fiftieth anniversary Mass at Westminster Cathedral last week.

Key donors, heads of other aid agencies, MPs and celebrity supporters including television actors Ben Price, from ITV's *Coronation Street*, and former *Brookside* actress, Kazia Pelka, sat among the so-called ordinary Cafod friends, volunteers and staff members. This was quite deliberate as the charity decided to mix the seating so that no one was given pride of place.

"The idea was that it was a people's Mass," said Cafod's chief executive, Chris Bain. "It didn't matter if you were a lay Catholic from Bolton, or a bishop, everyone was treated equally. There was no VIP area."

However, this equality theme appeared to go too far when Mr Bain was forced to sacrifice his words of welcome to the 2,000 strong in attendance, explaining: "The rehearsal took a little longer than expected, so I decided if anything could be missed it was my dulcet tones."

## Ad multos annos

AS THE Venerable English College, Rome, was once described by King Henry VIII as "our hospice", it was fitting to have a royal presence at the institution's 650th anniversary celebrations.

Lord and Lady Nicholas Windsor and their two children were both at a large gathering of cardinals, bishops and seminarians the weekend before last to celebrate the founding of the college, which started life as a hospice.

Lord Nicholas and his family have a home in Terni, central Italy, and are friends with the current rector, Mgr Nicholas Hudson. Lord Nicholas, who was received into the Church in 2001 after renouncing his place in the succession to the British throne, is the first royal to have had their nuptials in the Vatican. In 2006 he married the then Paola Doimi de Lupis Frankopan, a member of the Croatian nobility.

Also present during the celebrations was Urs Schwarzenbach, the Swiss financier, who has been a generous donor to the refurbishment of the college: in recent years this has included the reordering of the chapel and the rebuilding of the college's library and archive.

Those at the three-day "triduum" of celebrations commented on the excellent parties after Masses on Friday night and Sunday lunchtime, the joyful atmosphere, and how generations of Old Romans were well represented. One of those was Mgr John Allen, of the Diocese of Salford, who had been present at the 600th anniversary.



## Sensitive snapper

HE HAS been photographing the royal family for more than 30 years. Now, a selection of Arthur Edwards' photographs of the Queen has been chosen for an exhibition to mark her Diamond Jubilee. Among them is a picture of Her Majesty visiting Pope John Paul II in the Vatican in 2000; it was the last time they met. Photographing the Pope with the royal family had a personal poignancy for Mr Edwards as he is a Catholic.

"He [Pope John Paul II] was very ill and he couldn't receive more than the official party," the *Sun's* royal photographer told us. "He was very softly spoken, his voice wasn't very strong. I remember the Queen taking over and being in total control of the whole situation. It was like they were saying goodbye for the final time. He was holding the Queen's hands with both hands and giving her a box with rosary beads."

*The Queen: 60 photographs for 60 years* is on show at Windsor Castle until 28 October.

## Munich martyr

GUILLOTINED BY the Nazis in the Second World War, Alexander Schmorell, a co-founder and one of the leaders of the Munich White Rose resistance group, was canonised and became a New Martyr in the Russian Orthodox Church in Munich last Sunday.

Schmorell was born in Russia to a devoutly Orthodox family. His grandfather was an Orthodox priest. The family emigrated to Germany after the Russian Revolution when Alexander was still a child. Together with Hans and Sophie Scholl and several other German and Austrian students, the White Rose secretly distributed pamphlets in which they outspokenly criticised the Nazi regime, often quoting from Scripture and the classics. Using a hand-operated duplicating machine, the group produced thousands of pamphlets, which were distributed via clandestine couriers to German and Austrian cities.

Schmorell was well aware of the fact that the Nazis were killing Jews. "Since the conquest of Poland, 300,000 Jews have been murdered," he wrote in a pamphlet in 1943. He remained devoutly Orthodox throughout his short life.

Shortly before his execution, when he was already in the death cell of the Stadelheim Prison in Berlin, he asked for an Orthodox priest to be sent for so that he could go to Confession. He was guillotined on 13 July 1943 at the age of 25. His farewell letter to his family ends with the words: "One thing I beg of you. Do not forget God!"

## Mistaken identity

WITH ITS *ad orientem* altar, Lady chapel and statues of saints including St John Mary Vianney, you could be forgiven for walking into St Silas the Martyr, in north London, and assuming it is a Catholic church. And that is just what reporters assumed when they accompanied the Prince of Wales on a visit to the Kentish Town church last week.

According to a report by the Press Association, later corrected, the heir to the throne visited the "Roman Catholic church" of St Silas, accompanied by the Bishop of London, Richard Chartres. In fact, it is a Church of England church, albeit a very Anglo-Catholic one.

The parish priest, Fr Graeme Rowlands, was happy with the confusion, telling us: "I take it as a great compliment since we have always taught the Catholic faith." The Prince of Wales visited two other Anglican churches in north London to highlight their work with local communities.

## Final production

PAUL BURNS, who died last week at the age of 77, followed in the footsteps of his uncle by spending a large part of his career at the Catholic publishing house Burns & Oates. He started work as production manager while his uncle, Tom Burns, was chairman. When Tom departed in 1967 to become editor of *The Tablet* Paul rose up the ranks to serve as publishing director until 1969.

Following a stint at Hamlyn Books, he turned self-employed and continued to offer his services to Burns & Oates until last year. Robin Baird-Smith, publishing director of Continuum, which owns Burns & Oates, recalled: "I always enjoyed his visits and our lunches together. I always found him to be gentlemanly and charming."

His brother is Fr Matthew Burns, a monk at Ampleforth, and his cousin, also an Ampleforth monk, is Fr Dominic Milroy. They will concelebrate his requiem Mass, which will take place at noon at St Bernadine's Church, Buckingham, on Monday.