

HEADMASTER'S WELCOME

Inauguration of Gentili Province

15th June 2010

As you know to your cost, it is almost impossible to stop any headmaster from grabbing the microphone at the least opportunity, but I promise to be brief and hopefully even vaguely to the point.

My message before our Mass begins is simple yet sincere and it says welcome to Grace Dieu today - for those of you who know this place (and if you know it, I suggest, you are bound to love it), to you I say "welcome back"; if you are a newcomer, my hope is that, by the time you leave us later this afternoon, the gentle spirit of this house, its chapel and its beautiful grounds - which Gentili knew so intimately, of course - my hope is that the spirit of this place will have left its delicate but clear imprint upon you.

It is a joyous privilege for me to welcome each and everyone of you, and I know that you share my delight that Fr General is with us from Rome and is leading our celebration this afternoon. Fr Jim, the warmest of welcomes to you.

It is very special for us, too, to have Rosminian brethren here from as far away as New Zealand, Ireland and the United States of America. The majority of you will be relieved, I think, to hear that I have just managed - after some tricky negotiation - I have just managed to secure a written assurance from our American friends that they will make no reference today to the fallibility of English goalkeepers.

Our Rosminian Sisters of Providence are with us in force today,

and how good to be able to welcome them among us also. You, Sisters, are always at the heart of any Rosminian celebration, as indeed are the many

Ascribed Members of the Institute of Charity who are present today, and I always feel that the ascribed members are a wonderful group characterised by quiet, faithful support for the order, support both in prayer and in other practical ways.

They show their steadfast faithfulness in the same way that some of you here today from Omeath show faithful service, and I am referring to those here who show such devotion in tending the grave of Luigi Gentili. We thank you today for that devotion.

No celebration at Grace Dieu would ever be complete with members of the community from Mount St Bernard Abbey - the links between the school and the abbey are as strong as ever, and we are all thrilled that Abbot Joseph and other monks are here today.

Mention of the abbey leads me neatly to welcome most warmly Squire De Lisle and his dear wife, Edith. It is an obvious point but nonetheless one worth making, namely that without the Squire's illustrious forbear, Ambrose, none of us would be here today.

But now, gathered around the altar, we must get to the heart of the matter, and, as we do so, I am sure that you share the sentiment that I feel so strongly today, "Lord, it is good to be here".