

ROMAN MISCELLANY

THE BLOG OF AN ENGLISH CATHOLIC PRIEST

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Blessed Antonio Rosmini



The Church has a new *beatus* today, Antonio Rosmini, who is greatly venerated in Italy not only as a holy man but as an influential political thinker. Indeed, his role in preparing the way for Italian Unification means that many towns and villages have a 'Via Rosmini'. Of course, he is also a controversial figure who had forty propositions condemned posthumously in 1887. Rosmini was certainly progressive for his times and his interest in democratic movements seemed particularly worrying to his contemporaries. He also attacked a close relationship between Church and State, and criticized the lack of true involvement in the liturgy (though he was not,

as some claim, a pioneer of vernacular liturgy).

However he was greatly admired by Gregory XVI and Blessed Pius IX. Pope Benedict is in the unusual position of having removed, as Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the 'reasons for concern' surrounding Rosmini's works (2001) and now, as Pontiff, approving his beatification. As others have commented, Rosmini's beatification is in itself a miracle!

In England and Wales, we remember Rosmini as the founder of the Institute of Charity (1830). He had a great interest in the conversion of England and sent many of his finest men to the English Mission, such as Luigi Gentili (who, I hope, will one day be beatified) and Giambattista Pagani (a noted spiritual writer). Indeed, the Rosminians claimed to be the first priests in England to wear the Roman collar and preach Missions. Soon after the Institute's foundation, the Fathers of Charity were sent to Prior Park, near Bath, to help Bishop Baines in his ambitious plans for the Western District. However, they fell out and were invited by Ambrose de Lisle to Leicestershire, where they did many works of evangelization. An impressive College was founded at Ratcliffe and important missions were set up in Newport, Cardiff and London - including my parish of Kingsland, which was cared for by the Rosminians between 1854 and 1874. Shortly before Fr William Lockhart moved to Kingsland, he visited the ailing Rosmini at Stresa and received his blessing for the English Mission. The holy man even hinted that he would like to visit if the opportunity arose. Lockhart was one of the first to translate the works of Rosmini into English and thus popularize his books beyond Italy.

Blessed Antonio Rosmini, pray for us!