

Missionary Monasticism in Marian England: John Feckenham and the Restoration of Westminster Abbey, 1556-59

Br Placid Hughes OSB

On 19 March 1555, the Venetian Ambassador reported that

Sixteen Benedictine monks have also reassumed the habit and returned to the order spontaneously, although they were able to live, and had lived out of it much at ease and liberty, there being included amongst them the Dean of St. Paul's, who has a wealthy revenue of well nigh 2,000; notwithstanding which, they have renounced all their temporal possession and conveniences, and press for readmission into one of their monasteries. The entire 16 last week appeared in their habits before the Queen, who from joy, immediately on seeing them, could not refrain from shedding tears.¹

This event marks the beginning of monastic revival in post-Dissolution England, though it did not bear fruit until a monastic community was re-established at Westminster Abbey more than a year later.

The new foundation differed in many ways from its predecessor, not least because of the changed religious climate in England. Most of its monks had been professed before the Dissolution and many had received a university education. They were led by Abbot John Feckenham, a charismatic and dynamic figure, chaplain to the queen, former Dean of St Paul's, and frequent preacher in London. The Westminster monks made their renewed presence known in the capital through frequent processions, parliamentary activity, and service to the royal family. Their efforts were instrumental in the attack on Protestantism and the restoration of Catholicism in England. Indeed, the monks saw themselves as the new apostles of England following in the footsteps of their illustrious predecessor St Augustine of Canterbury. In my opinion, Benedictine historians have tended to neglect the much greater impact

¹ *CSPV*, vi/1 no. 32.

of the entire community's role in the making of the Marian Church by blowing out of all proportion the role of one of the community's monks, Sigebert Buckley, in providing a link between the English Black Monks and the present English Benedictine Congregation.

Letters patent established and endowed the monastic re-foundation at Westminster Abbey on 10 November 1556. Eleven days later, the abbot and fourteen others received the habit, were tonsured, and formally took possession of the buildings.² Both the presence of the Lord Chancellor and the cardinal's datary lent royal and apostolic authority to the ceremony.³ Celebrating their triumph, the following day

the lord abott with ys coventt whentt a prossessyon after the old fassyon in ther monkes wed', in collys of blake say, with ij vargers carehyng ij sylver rodes in ther handes, and at evyngsong tyme the vergers whent through the clostur to the abbott; and so whentt in-to the churche affor the he auter, and ther my lord knellyd downe and ys coventt, and after ys praer made was browtt in-to the qwyre with the vergers and so in-to ys plasse, and contentt he begane evyngsong.⁴

Cardinal Pole visited the following week on 29 November to consecrate John Feckenham as abbot, with many lords and bishops in attendance, the Lord Chancellor Stephen Gardiner singing the Mass, and the abbot, now mitred, preaching the sermon.⁵

The original nucleus of fifteen or sixteen monks quickly swelled to thrice that number.⁶ The Venetian ambassador described the monks as "all men of mature age,

² Machyn, *Diary*, 118-19; Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, ii. 136. The Venetian ambassador gave the conflicting information of 16 monks on 20 November (23 November 1556), *CSPV*, vi/2 no. 723.

³ *CSPV*, vi/2 no. 723.

⁴ Machyn, *Diary*, 118-19.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 119-20.

⁶ *Ampleforth*, 271-79 lists forty-seven monks and ten more tentatively described as seminarians. Add to this Thomas Twysden alias Bede (Cunich, "Benedictine Monks," 312). H. J. Feasey and J. T. Micklethwaite, *Westminster Abbey Historically Described, With An Account of the Abbey Buildings* (London, 1899), 44 wrongly described a number of men as monks of Westminster. In the first group, one of the men listed, Austin Ringwoode, was not a monk of Westminster but of Glastonbury. All of those named in the second group were Benedictines of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

the youngest being upwards of forty, and all endowed with learning and piety.”⁷ Abbot John Feckenham, probably in his early fifties, was by no means the oldest or the youngest of these. The oldest monk was probably John Redborne, formerly Cistercian Abbot of Dore, who died within a year of the restoration.⁸ Since the entire initial crop of monks had been professed previously, i.e. before the Dissolution, the youngest would have been in his mid-forties.⁹ As with Dr Feckenham, many had left lucrative careers in the Church. The Prior, William Este, had been Archdeacon of St Albans and Canon of St George’s, Windsor, while the cellarer, Richard Edon, held canonries at both Wells and Winchester.¹⁰

Thirty of those who joined the monastic community at Westminster between 1556 and 1559 have been identified as former religious—more than half of the total. Apart from two Augustinian Canons and two Cistercians, they were all Benedictines. Among the latter, all but three had been professed in wealthy houses whose incomes exceeded £1000 per annum.¹¹ Five monks came from Glastonbury, four from Evesham, three each from Westminster, Ramsey, and Canterbury, two from St Albans, and one each from Hyde, Battle, Sherborne, Crowland, Bury St Edmunds, and Winchester.¹² Thus all these monks came from similar monastic backgrounds, all

See D. M. Lunn, *English Benedictines, 1540-1688: From Reformation to Revolution* (London, 1980), 18; Lunn, ‘Replanting on the Continent,’ 170-72; P. Jebb, ‘Benedictines of the Seventeenth Century who Studied at Oxford,’ in *Benedictines in Oxford*, ed. H. Wansborough and A. Marett-Crosby (London, 1997), 201.

⁷ (21 December 1556) *CSPV*, vi/2 no. 771.

⁸ *Ampleforth*, 273. As added confirmation that the Mr. Redborne of WAM 9327 is to be identified with the Abbot of Dore is WAM 32861, his grant of pension at the Dissolution, which he must have brought with him. For the date of his death, see Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Jones 9, fo. 135r.

⁹ The royal visitations of 1535-36 had set the minimum age at profession to twenty-four years (*RO*, iii. 276-77).

¹⁰ *BRUO*, 193 and 277.

¹¹ *RO*, iii. 473.

¹² Thomas Athelstan, William Adelwold, William Kentwyne, John Neott, and John Phagan came from Glastonbury; John Bromesgrove, Thomas Coventry, John Feckenham, and John Steteforthe from Evesham; John Foster, John Goodluck, and Thomas Lovewell from Westminster; Thomas Fylde, George Marshall, and Hugh Philipps from Ramsey; Thomas Bowser, George Frebel, and John Langdon from Christ Church, Canterbury; Stephen Bayley and William Este from St Albans; Andrew Alton

in the southern half of England, and should have been well suited to life at Westminster.

Since so many of these monks had come from wealthy Benedictine houses, there was a high proportion of university graduates among them. Seventeen of them—more than half—had studied at Oxford.¹³ Eight had completed degrees in theology and a ninth had graduated in arts.¹⁴ Three of the novices professed at Westminster had studied at the universities, one taking both his B.A. and M.A. at Cambridge.¹⁵ Thus, it should be well evident that this was a highly educated group of monks, and many of them had known each other from their student days at Oxford prior to the Dissolution.

The Abbot of Westminster, John Feckenham (c. 1502-84) is a good indicator of the type of community the restored Abbey of Westminster was. He was an active apostle of the Catholic Church, whose strong Christian faith bore much fruit in works of charity, preaching, theological disputation, conversion of heretics, and champion of the Church in Parliament. The records of his activities all show him to be an extremely capable man, charismatic, and able to command authority. Feckenham's decision to return to monastic life probably resulted from a combination of disgust at the religious changes in King Edward VI's reign, and the conviction that the only way to solve the problem was through a revival of monastic evangelism. In his parliamentary speech of 11 February 1557 in defense of the right of sanctuary at

from Hyde; Thomas Bede from Battle; William Vowell from Sherborne; Peter Cleye from Crowland; Reginald Maldon from Bury St Edmunds; and Thomas Figg from St Swithun's, Winchester.

¹³ Those who did not take degrees were Andrew Alton, Thomas Bowser, John Bromesgrove, Thomas Coventry, John Foster, George Frebel, John Goodluck, Thomas Lovewell, and John Phagan.

¹⁴ John Feckenham graduated B.Th. and D.Th. Thomas Athelston, Stephen Bayley, Thomas Bede, Richard Edon, William Este, John Langdon, and John Neott graduated B.Th. William Vowell graduated B.A.

¹⁵ William Copinger graduated B.C.L. at Oxford. Henry Style graduated B.A. and M.A. at Cambridge. It is not known where Ralph Hunt had studied, but he was listed as M.A.

Westminster, Feckenham emphasised the role played by monks in the evangelisation of England. He wrote that

Lucius the first Christian Kinge of this Realme and who about an hundred yeares after Christe receiued the Christian faith from the hollie Pope of Rome and Martyre Eleutherius by the ministrie of the *hollie moncks* Fagane, whome some call Fugane and Damian, immediatlie after that he was by the saide *holie monks* baptized and instructed in the true profession of Christes religion.¹⁶

Feckenham then related how Britain was overrun by the Saxons and Christianity was soon replaced by paganism.

So remained faith exiled...till the time of hollie St Gregorie Pope of Rome, who...sent hether the *holie monk* St Augustine, Melitus, and others to preache againe the true faith of Christe in this Realme.¹⁷

Feckenham continued his argument right up to his own time, emphasising that once again faith had been overthrown and then restored, implying that he and his fellow monks of Westminster were the new missionary monks sent to correct the errors of Protestant heretics. And so Feckenham preached often, both as dean and as abbot, for he knew that people could be easily converted through persuasive preaching.

John Feckenham had begun monastic life at Evesham Abbey in Worcestershire and obtained an Oxford education just prior to the Dissolution. Like so many others, he acquiesced in Henry VIII's religious reforms, but soon became outspoken for the Catholic cause during the reign of Edward VI, when he became chaplain to Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London. Both were imprisoned in the Tower and released upon Mary's succession to the throne. Feckenham then became one of her chaplains and in March 1554, Dean of St Paul's, London. And in May 1556, just six months before his return to monastic life, he was made a Doctor of Divinity at Oxford.¹⁸

¹⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson MS D 68, fo. 2r (emphases mine).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fo. 2v-3r (emphasis mine).

¹⁸ For details of Feckenham's early life, see *BRUO*, 201-2; *RO*, iii. 428-29; *Ampleforth*, 280-83.

In his own day, John Feckenham was most renowned as a preacher, not as an abbot, and his only surviving printed works are sermons. His public preaching career seems to have begun at least as early as 1540 at the University of Oxford,¹⁹ yet his rise to national prominence did not come until 16 January 1547 when as chaplain to Bishop Bonner he preached at St Paul's Cross, London. There he displayed the religious conservatism that was to gain him both the enmity of Edward and the wholehearted support of Mary. It was reported at length that

From the finding of Christ in the Temple among the doctors he inferred that, having lost Christ, we shall find Him there again by returning to our old worship used 16 or 17 years ago. The youth of England, he said, is brought up, from pride, to lechery, theft, heresy; and whereas the good men who 'used virtue and holy ceremonies' were so many that others were ashamed, now the other sort are so many that 'sanctimony of life is put away with fasting on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and beads, and therefore good men dare not now use them for fear they should be laughed to scorn.' He inveighed against the Germans as seditious heretics of 300 sects with Frederic duke of Saxon as their first defender, violently depraving that nation; wherein it is marvel that my lord of London, being present, would permit his chaplain so to inveigh against a nation reputed the King's friends and having ambassadors here... His words were even more odious than here reported.²⁰

Here one encounters some of Feckenham's favourite subjects, namely the disunity of the Protestants, the apostasy and impiety of the present times, and the need to return to traditional Christian worship and practise.

During Queen Mary's reign John Feckenham became a frequent preacher at Paul's Cross, preaching there more than half of at least fifteen sermons mentioned by contemporary chroniclers. Sometimes it is merely recorded that he preached,²¹ but on other occasions interesting details are added, such as his appearance, the sermon topic, and the audience, as on 20 June 1557 when he "mad a godly sermon of Dyves and Lazarus, and the crossear holding the stayffe at ys preching; and ther wher grett

¹⁹ *BRUO*, 201.

²⁰ *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*, xxi/2 no. 710.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 76 and 158.

audyense, boyth the mayre and juges and althermen, and mony worshepfulle.”²² Often sermons at Paul’s Cross involved spectacle, such as the appearance of condemned heretics, publicly performed penances, or the burning of books.

John Feckenham made one of his most aggressive attacks ever in a lengthy sermon for the obsequies of the King’s grandmother Lady Jane, Queen of Spain. Feckenham’s line of attack was perfectly attuned to the scripture that he propounded, Deuteronomy 32:28-29:

For they are a nation void of counsel,
And there is no understanding in them,
If they were wise, they would understand this,
They would discern their latter end!

Most of the sermon was a fairly conventional exposition of the four last things²³, but towards the end he began to denounce a large part of his audience as a ‘nation void of counsel’ and infected by the Lutheran heresy. For the benefit of these, he denounced all the heretics of Christian history right up to contemporary Protestant Reformers, whom he called

the very palebreakers of the vnitie of christes church, the breders of al scismes and contentions of the same, the blasphemers of christes sacramentes, the subuerters of all good orders and constitutions, the reuiuers of olde cankered and rustie heresies, and now by them newe furbished and set forth.”²⁴

He concluded the sermon by exhorting his audience to be people of good counsel and foresight, reconciled to Christ’s Church and prepared for the last things.²⁵

On a more personal level than his sermons, John Feckenham met with many heretics, singly or in small groups, both noble and common, in order to bring them

²² *Ibid.*, 139-40.

²³ John Feckenham, *A notable sermon made within S. Paules church in London, in the presence of certen of the kinges and Quenes moost honorable priuate counsell at the celebration of the exequies of the right excellent and famous Princesse, lady Jone, Quene of Spayne, Sicilie and Nauarre etc. the xviii of June Anno 1555. By maister John Feckenam, Deane of the sayd Churche of Paules* (London, 1555). [STC 10744], (A.iii)r. Editorial note: Only the first four folios in the quire are numbered (i.e. A.i-iiii). Unmarked pages are given an assumed quire number in brackets.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, [C.vi]v.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, [C.vii]r-[C.viii]r.

back to true faith and to save their lives. Despite some success at doing this, Feckenham and his monks were rebuked and denounced at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign by the Protestant Dr Cox "for having caused the burning of so many poor innocents under pretext of heresy"²⁶, and by the Protestant chronicler John Foxe. Feckenham was especially active on behalf of saving heretics while Dean of St Paul's, but also during his abbacy.²⁷ He successfully obtained the recantation of Sir John Cheke²⁸, but failed with both John Throckmorton²⁹ and Lady Jane Dudley.³⁰ In these interventions, Feckenham proved himself to be an able and persistent inquisitor, a compassionate intercessor, and a devoted pastor of souls.

Abbot Feckenham was also active in Parliament, having regained the ancient privilege of the abbots of Westminster to sit among the bishops in the House of Lords—the first and only abbot to do so after the Dissolution.³¹ His attendance record is impressive; indeed, he had far less distance to travel than any of the other Lords Spiritual. His most noteworthy interventions in Parliament concern his speeches on the right of sanctuary at Westminster and against the Uniformity Bill. Throughout his public life, Feckenham clearly proved himself to be a loyal servant to Church and Crown, by preaching and upholding the old religion, restoring monastic observance and charity, and praying for the royal family.

²⁶ (Il Schifanoia to Octaviano Vivaldino, 30 Jan 1559) CSPV, vii. no. 15.

²⁷ Machyn, *Diary*, 157.

²⁸ CSPV, vi/1 no. 645.

²⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Mary I, 1553-1558, Preserved in the Public Record Office*, ed. C. S. Knighton, rev. ed. (London, 1998), no. 400.

³⁰ Lady Jane Dudley, *An Epistle of the ladye Iane a righte vertuous Woman, To a learned man of late falne from the truth of Gods most holy word, for fear of the worlde. Read it, to thy consolacion. VVherunto is added the communication that she had with master Feckenham vpon her faith, and belefe of the Sacraments. Also another Epistle whiche she wrote to her sister, with the words she spake vpon the scaffold befor she suffered. Anno. M.D.Liiii.* (London, 1554). [STC 7279]

³¹ The Grand Prior of the Knights of St John (Hospitallers) also sat in Parliament at this time. M. A. R. Graves, *The House of Lords in the Parliaments of Edward VI and Mary I: An Institutional Study* (Cambridge, 1981), 210.

As Abbot of Westminster, Feckenham's activities are public and well documented, but very little is known of the activities of other individuals in the community. Abundant evidence as to the administrative activities of individuals survives in the abbey muniments, but otherwise one must look to the activities of the community as a whole. Being located in the heart of the capital, they were ideally placed to re-invigorate Catholicism and counteract Protestantism and took full advantage of the situation, being prominent in the public eye and in supporting their new Catholic queen. They staged numerous public processions through the streets of London and Westminster, as well as solemn celebrations of the Mass and Vespers in their abbey church. On St Andrew's day, 30 November 1556, just days after the monks had taken formal possession of the abbey, they were celebrating the first anniversary of the reconciliation of the English Church with Rome; Cardinal Pole and the Royal Council were present for the occasion. The community was said to have "made a fine show and procession."³²

A further procession followed on 6 December—the third mentioned in the space of a month—when the sanctuary men, cross keys on their garments, went before the abbot and convent.³³ A few weeks later, the Queen made a special trip to Westminster Abbey before her departure for Greenwich, in order to "see the Benedictine monks in their habits...whither she went to vespers, being received in state by them and their abbot."³⁴ And six months later on the Feast of the Ascension, 27 May 1557, King Philip visited Westminster with his queen; they "rod unto Westmynster with all the lords and knyghtes and gentyllmen, and ther ther graces whent a prossessyon abowt the clowster, and so thay hard masse."³⁵

³² *CSPV*, vi/2 no. 743.

³³ Machyn, *Diary*, 121.

³⁴ *CSPV*, vi/2 no. 771.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

A high priority for the new monastic community was the re-erecting of St Edward the Confessor's shrine, which had been dismantled at the Dissolution. Just four months after the monks had taken possession of the abbey, it was recorded

The xx day of Marche was taken up at Westmynster agayn with a hondered lyghtes kyng Edward the confessor in the sam plasse wher ys shryne was, and ytt shalle be sette up agayne as faste as my lord abbott can have ytt don.³⁶

Just one month later work had apparently been completed, for the monks were showing their visitors "sant Edward shryne nuw set up."³⁷ One of these visitors was the Duke of Muscovy, who attended Mass beforehand and feasted at the abbot's table afterwards.³⁸ Most of the pieces of the original shrine were still close at hand, and only required reassembling. Archaeologists have shown that it was put together in great haste, for it was not done properly, some pieces being in the wrong place, so that a cornice had to be added where none was needed before. It should also be mentioned that the classical canopy originally covering the gilded coffin of the saint has often been attributed to Feckenham, but is now believed to have been built in the early Tudor period.³⁹

Besides so many noble visitors, the monks also kept very busy with deaths in the royal family. In August of 1557, they staged an impressive procession to receive the body of Princess Anne of Cleves, and sang a requiem mass in the abbey church on the following day, at which the abbot preached, followed by a banquet.⁴⁰ The obsequies of Emperor Charles V followed soon after on 24 September.⁴¹ When the queen herself died in December 1558, the monks celebrated her funeral with the

³⁶ Machyn, *Diary*, 130.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 132.

³⁸ Machyn, *Diary*, 132.

³⁹ J. G. O'Neilly and L. E. Tanner, 'The Shrine of St. Edward the Confessor,' *Archaeologia*, c (1966), 129-54.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 146.

⁴¹ Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, ii. 142.

greatest splendour. A funeral Mass was celebrated for her at the abbey on 13 December 1558.

and a-for the corse her chapell, and after all the monkes, and after the bysshopes in order; and so by Charyng-crosse to Westmynster abay; and at the grett dore of the chyrche evere body dyd a-lykt of ther horse...and at the cherche dore met her iiij byshopes, and the abbott, mytered, in copes, and sensyng the body.⁴²

Ten days later, her body was carried from St James Palace back to Westminster for burial, where there was “a sumptuous and riche hearse made under which the corps stood all night.”⁴³

Though there is no mention of either the monks’ or the abbot’s presence at Queen Elizabeth’s coronation on 15 January 1559,⁴⁴ they were certainly present on 25 January for the opening of Parliament. On that occasion occurred a well-known scene to which perhaps too much import has been attached.

On arriving at Westminster Abbey, the Abbot, robed pontifically, with all his monks in procession, each of them having a lighted torch in his hand, received her as usual, giving her first of all incense and holy water; and when her Majesty saw the monks who accompanied her with the torches, she said, ‘Away with those torches, for we see very well.’⁴⁵

More important is what occurred during the service, when the preacher Dr Cox, newly returned from exile abroad, preached for an hour and a half,

saying many things freely against the monks, proving by his arguments that they ought to be persecuted and punished by her Majesty, as they were impious for having caused the burning of so many poor innocents under pretext of heresy.⁴⁶

The abbot seems to have gotten his revenge twenty years later, when he was placed in the custody of Dr Cox, by then Bishop of Ely, who petitioned the Lord Treasurer in

⁴² Machyn, *Diary*, 183.

⁴³ Wriothesley, *Chronicle*, ii. 142.

⁴⁴ *CSPV*, vii. no. 10.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, no. 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

1578 to be relieved of his charge, adding, “I think my house the worst being pestred with suche a guest.”⁴⁷

Following Cox’s attack on the monks in January, Parliament passed an act dissolving all religious houses refounded by Queen Mary.⁴⁸ In May it was reported that the dispossessed religious “who will swear to approve the laws” shall be granted pensions.⁴⁹ Yet, in the following month, allowance was made for the abbot and his monks to remain at the abbey, provided they would celebrate the liturgy according to the Book of Common Prayer and take the oath of supremacy.⁵⁰ It is an important indicator of the changed religious climate that all of them refused to conform, unlike the earlier changes wrought by Henry VIII; they soon left, receiving no pensions from the state.⁵¹ The monastic foundation at Westminster Abbey officially came to an end on 10 July 1559.⁵²

Most of the monks quickly disappeared into oblivion leaving no trace of their existence, but some did not, and their stories are fascinating. The abbot, John Feckenham, was arrested 20 May 1560 and remained under the watchful eyes of the government for the rest of his life.⁵³ He continued to be outspoken in defence of the Catholic faith against the Protestants and finally died on 16 October 1584 at Wisbech Castle.⁵⁴

A few of the monks returned to the universities, such as Richard Edon, who became principal of Gloucester Hall in 1563 and was involved in the founding of St John’s College, Oxford, formerly St Bernard’s College, where he had taken his B.Th.

⁴⁷ (Bishop of Ely to the Lord Treasurer, 29 August 1578) London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 27, fo. 28r.

⁴⁸ WAM 6498 (copy).

⁴⁹ CSPV, vii. no. 71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 78.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, no. 82.

⁵² RO, iii. 434; Westlake, *Westminster Abbey*, i. 233.

⁵³ Machyn, *Diary*, 235; ‘Official Lists of Prisoners for Religion from 1562 to 1580,’ ed. J. H. Pollen, *Catholic Record Society*, i (London, 1905), 47-72, 56.

in 1538.⁵⁵ The blind monk Henry Style returned to Cambridge and became a fellow of Caius College.⁵⁶ Later on he went abroad and visited the seminary at Douai in 1579 and became a monk at the Abbey of St Ghislain, where he died 17 October 1588.⁵⁷ Only one other Westminster monk, Thomas Figg, is known to have entered a foreign monastery, St Andrew's Abbey, Bruges. John Langdon fled to Flanders in 1561.⁵⁸ Two other monks returned to their former residences: Stephen Bayley to St Albans after the accession of Elizabeth, dying there on 1 February 1559⁵⁹ and Thomas Bowser to Canterbury Cathedral where he became a minor canon once again, but left upon the election of Archbishop Parker; he soon died there.⁶⁰

A number of other monks followed their abbot to prison. After being released from the Gatehouse at Westminster, Hugh Philipps was arrested in Canterbury in 1561 and again in 1576 for saying mass in the house of John Pynchin.⁶¹ William Copynger was imprisoned in the first year of Elizabeth's reign and died soon afterwards.⁶² Thomas Cook was imprisoned from at least 1572-1580, while William Wybourne was in Newgate as late as 1586.⁶³ Additionally, Sigebert Buckley, the Westminster monk who lived longest, remained in prison for the whole of Elizabeth's reign, finally being released by King James in 1603. In 1607 Buckley performed the significant act of aggregating the monks Vincent Sadler and Edward Mayhew "to himselfe and to the English Benedictine body, the which by survivourship before

⁵⁴ Aveling, 'Tudor Westminster,' 80.

⁵⁵ *BRUO*, 277.

⁵⁶ Wainwright, 'Queen Mary's Religious Foundations,' 135.

⁵⁷ Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, ii. 475.

⁵⁸ *BRUO*, 340; 'Official Lists of Prisoners, 1562-80' 52.

⁵⁹ *Ampleforth*, 274.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 275; WAM 6401.

⁶¹ 'Official Lists of Prisoners, 1562-80,' 50; London, British Library, Lansdowne MS 23, fo. 123r.

⁶² Wainwright, 'Queen Mary's Religious Foundations,' 135; 'Official Lists of Prisoners, 1562-80,' 49.

⁶³ 'Official Lists of Prisoners, 1562-80,' 60 and 70; 'The Official Lists of Catholic Prisoners during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Part II, 1581-1602,' ed. J. H. Pollen, *Catholic Record Society*, ii (London, 1906), 219-88, 267.

remained in him alone.”⁶⁴ With this simple act Buckley is supposed to have ensured the canonical continuity of medieval and modern English Benedictine monasticism.

As English Benedictine historians have long recognised, the restoration of Westminster Abbey is especially significant in the light of the later creation of the English Benedictine Congregation. Yet, I would like to suggest that as the monks of Westminster believed themselves to be the new apostles of England, following in the footsteps of the monk St Augustine of Canterbury, who had evangelised the country almost a thousand years previously, it is missionary monasticism, not the papally-recognised aggregation of Sigebert Buckley, which provides the real continuity between medieval and modern English monasticism. The missionary monasticism of Marian Westminster made a huge impact, overflowing both into the court at Westminster and the city of London, as well as the entire programme of Catholic revival. The abbot’s activities especially of preaching, theological disputation, conversion of heretics, parliamentary participation, and close association with the queen, made him a prominent public figure who could not help but draw his community into the public eye as well. The community’s frequent processions, hosting of royal funerals, and claim to rights of sanctuary gave it a strong influence on the religious culture of London. The restoration of monastic life at Westminster Abbey, therefore, played an invaluable role within the Marian Church and was an indispensable element in the wider programme of Catholic restoration in England.

⁶⁴ Baker, ‘Treatise of the English Mission,’ 178.