

An Appreciation

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AN APPRECIATION.

When Rev. Fr. A. Lanfranchi leaves London at the end of this year the Swiss Colony loses one of its most active and beloved members. It was in 1936 when, at the request of His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster, Fr. Lanfranchi, with the permission of the Swiss Bishop of Chur, was attached to the Clergy of the Westminster Cathedral, where he was delegated, besides the manifold duties at the Cathedral, to administer and look after the spiritual and social welfare of the many "refugees" — from the oppressed Fascist and Nazi Italy, Austria and Germany — then in London. He established an international social circle where Catholics of many nationalities found social and spiritual life in the great metropolis of London.

When war broke out he had additional duties to attend to the many Italian prisoners of war to whom he was at once confessor and friend in need.

As the war progressed, however, the shortage of priests to look after the Swiss aged and infirm — and also the many young Swiss — became acute, a fact that was mentioned at the Swiss Benevolent Society's meeting. Under Colonel Bon and Mr. J. Boos a small Committee was formed and an appeal made to H.E. Cardinal Hinsley to release Fr. Lanfranchi from Westminster, for duty as Chaplain to the Swiss Colony, an appeal that was graciously granted, and from April 1941 he was placed at the Swiss Compatriots' service.

Under most difficult conditions, being placed in Presbyteries unsuitable for his work amongst the Swiss, he undertook spiritual and social work amongst the so widely distributed Swiss compatriots, baptising the children, hearing confessions, celebrating weddings and, alas, attending also many funerals. He also made social contacts with the many young Swiss now mostly at work in London and established the Swiss Youth Club in Westminster which in time became the well-known and appreciated "Alpenrosen Club".

It was not till early in 1952, however, when with the co-operation of the then Swiss Minister, M. de Torrenté, that Fr. Lanfranchi was appointed by the late H.E. Cardinal Griffin in charge of St. Ann's Church, Westminster, from where he was now able to give the services so much needed for the old and young of the Colony. At last the Swiss had a centre where they could find a priest of their own, speaking our national languages and understanding.

Wholeheartedly Fr. Lanfranchi set to his task to make St. Ann's a centre of religious life, not only for the local parishioners but for the Swiss Colony in particular.

Instead of one mass on a Sunday there was soon a congregation for three Sunday Masses, now there are four, including one on Sunday evenings. A Choir was formed, at first mostly young Swiss, conducted by Fr. Lanfranchi himself. The impressive singing of this Choir at the special Swiss Services at Christmas, 1st of August and Bettag, etc., was always appreciated by the large congregations attending.

But Fr. Lanfranchi was equally hardworking in the other activities in the Colony. He attended the

Benevolent Society meetings, was an active member of the Choral Society and always a welcome guest at the meetings and dinners of the various Swiss Societies. His cheerful disposition and hard work made him friends amongst all Swiss.

It was the yearly Christmas party for the Swiss Catholic children, however, that made Fr. Lanfranchi most popular.

The Swiss Colony will miss Fr. Lanfranchi very much but we feel certain that H.E. the Bishop of Chur will have a suitable position available where Fr. Lanfranchi will be able to use to the full his experience and his knowledge of so many languages. Meanwhile Fr. Joseph Scherrer is carrying on the duties of Swiss Chaplain at St. Ann's, and we trust when building alterations are completed he will be able to have the assistance of a second Swiss Priest and so give to the Colony the necessary spiritual, moral and social ministrations so ably carried on for so long by Fr. Lanfranchi.

In appreciation of his services, the Committee wishes to present Fr. Lanfranchi with a testimonial on his departure from London, and a collection for funds is being made. We appeal to all friends of Fr. Lanfranchi, Catholics as well as other Swiss Compatriots, to subscribe handsomely to this fund. Your donations should be sent not later than 27th December to Dr. A. E. Amstad, c/o Swiss Bank Corporation, 99 Gresham Street, London, E.C.2; for your co-operation, very many thanks.

J.J.B.

