

Monsignor Canon George Wallis, 1924—1950

SINCE THE PARISH began 100 years ago Monsignor Wallis was Rector for more than a quarter of that time—26½ years.

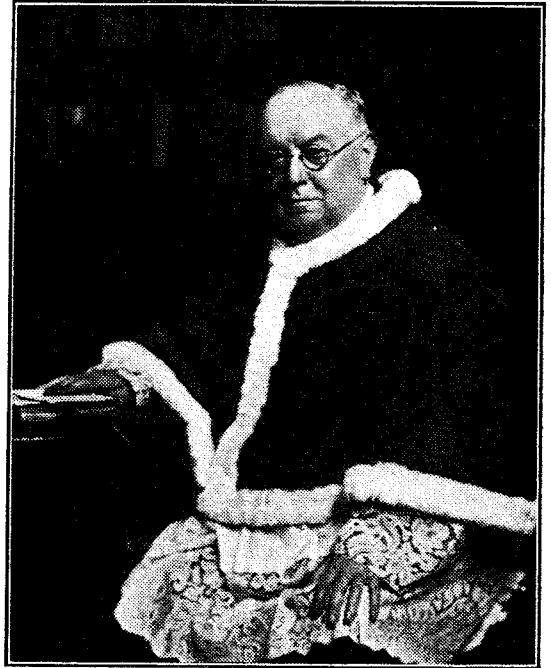
Monsignor was born in London on February 15th, 1873. He was educated at the French Seminary in Rome and at the Beda College, and was ordained in the Basilica of St. John Lateran on May 27th, 1899. From his student days he acquired a French accent which he always retained, and from his long stay in Rome a love of the Eternal City which was such a marked feature of his character. As a student he liked to assist at the various liturgical functions, especially as they were carried out in the great basilicas, and in this way he developed a very thorough and accurate knowledge of the liturgy. Hence it was that after his return from Rome he was appointed to Westminster Cathedral, where he was Master of Ceremonies from 1901-1913. It brought him great joy to supervise the arrangements for the Eucharistic Congress of 1908, and also the very complicated ceremonies for the consecration of the Cathedral in 1910.

After nearly twelve years at the Cathedral, he decided to leave London and to devote himself to more pastoral work. For this purpose he offered himself to Bishop Amigo, who appointed him first as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor in the Old Shoreham Road, then in 1924 as parish priest of St. Mary Magdalen's. He became a Canon of the Southwark Chapter in 1936 and a Domestic Prelate in 1949, the year of his golden jubilee in the priesthood. He had been a Papal Chamberlain since 1905.

During his long years here his fatherly way won him to his people. Among his many achievements was the high and efficient standard of altar serving which he built up from the beginning. He loved to invite veteran foreign missionaries to his pulpit to appeal for alms for their mission fields and to acquaint his

parishioners with the progress of the gospel.

From his own education abroad and kept conversant with European thought and practice, Monsignor Wallis strongly held the view that we had much to learn

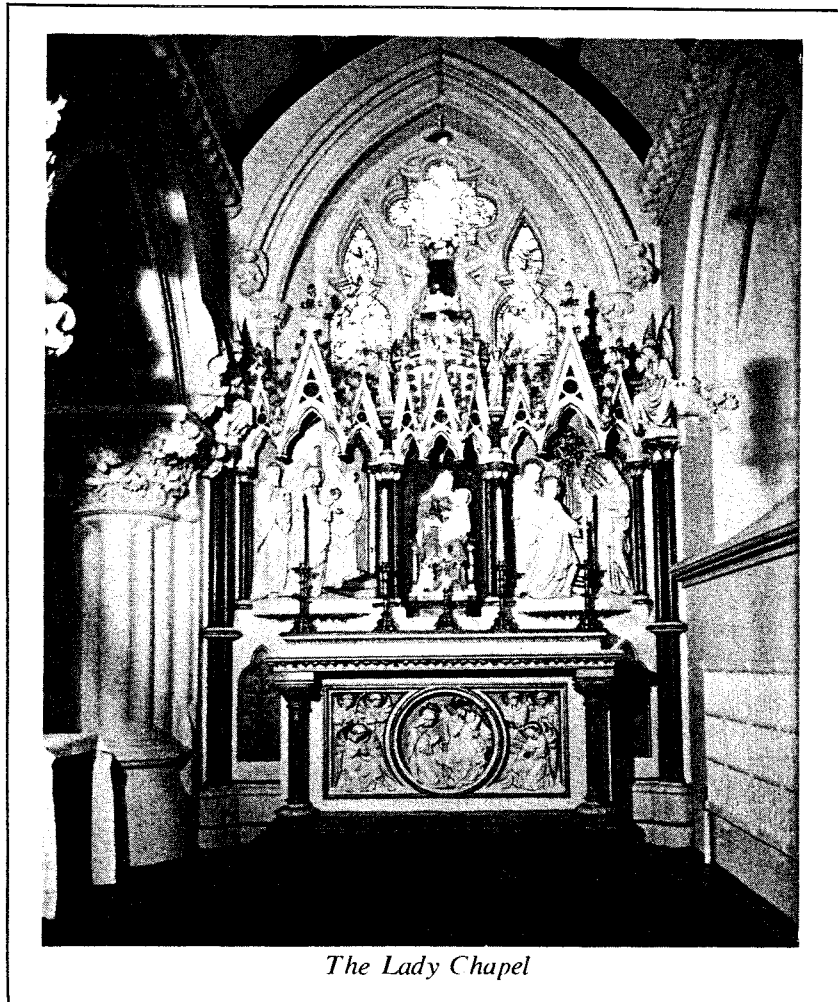


The Rt. Revd. Monsignor George Wallis

from the better aspects of continental Catholicity, and that an adaptation of the spirituality and liturgical ways of the continent to our needs would make us less insular and better Catholics. Perhaps our entry into the Common Market will, among other things, bring about that closer tie with Catholic Europe which Monsignor so desired.

Death came somewhat suddenly to Monsignor Wallis. He was hurried to hospital for an appendicitis operation, complications set in, and he died in the early hours of December 12th, 1950.

(continued at foot of page nineteen)



The Lady Chapel

Father Smith consecrated the Parish to the Immaculate Heart of Mary on July 2nd, 1962.

"It is our wish that this consecration be made in every parish. And we are confident that blessings and favours from heaven will follow in abundance from this public consecration".—PIUS XII.

(continued from page eighteen)

Bishop Cowderoy presided at his Requiem, and he was buried at Hove Cemetery.

Westminster Cathedral had not forgotten the architect of her ceremonies, and the Westminster Cathedral Chronicle in January, 1951, contained this tribute to his memory: "The name of Monsignor Wallis will long be held in honour for the

excellent tradition which he set up during his residence here, and which is deeply appreciated by all who frequent the Cathedral and follow the Sacred Liturgy. The high reputation which Westminster Cathedral enjoys throughout the world for the dignity and care with which its solemn ceremonies are carried out is, in great measure, to be attributed to him".

page nineteen