

Queens of Portugal

We start a new series of short biography on consorts of Portuguese kings:

The first Portuguese King **D. Afonso Henriques** (1110-1185) married probably in 1146 **Matilde** who was a daughter of Amadeu II, Count of Savoy, Moriana and Piedmonte and the Countess Mafalda of Albon. Not much is known of her life other than having founded a number of charitable and religious institutions. In her will she curiously left the income from two properties to pay the expenses of two river ferries to cross the Douro near Lamego (Moledo and Porto Rei) also funds to build, two bridges, one across the Douro near Barraqueiro, the other across the Tâmega.

She died in Coimbra in 1158 and is buried together with her husband in Santa Cruz. She had seven children, three of whom died in infancy.

Obituaries

One of the tragedies of the APN's demise is the disappearance of obituaries of those who, one way or another, were linked to the English speaking community in Portugal.

Today we include an obituary of Bishop Guazzelli who for many years was part of the English College of Lisbon. A real "Inglesinho", as they were known in Lisbon.

The death of Bishop Victor Guazzelli took place on 1st June 2004.

The love affair between Victor Guazzelli and the country and people of Portugal began in 1935 when he travelled to Lisbon as a fifteen-year-old boy to begin studying for the priesthood at the English College. Founded in 1628, the College continued to educate students for the priesthood until its closure in 1970. In those pre war years, it was not unusual for gifted boys to be sent abroad to study in this way.

Victor Guazzelli was well suited to the challenge of continental Catholicism as a son of Italian immigrants born in London's East End on 19th March 1920. His proud Italian father pointed out to the impressionable teenager that, as the only son, the family name would not be carried on were he ordained a priest. Nonetheless he gave the boy his blessing as he set off on his journey from Southampton early on a September morning.

The declaration of war in 1939 ensured that the separation from home and family lasted even longer than expected. Students and priests at the English College became exiles from their own country for over ten years. Not only had Victor Guazzelli left England as a boy to return as a priest after the war, but his father had died in the meantime.

His natural urbanity and gift for languages made Victor Guazzelli ideal for his first appointment in London to the cosmopolitan parish of St. Patrick, Soho Square, where he ministered from 1945 until 1948. He was recalled to Lisbon to teach scripture and act as Bursar to the College for the next ten years. In 1958, he was appointed first as chaplain and then Sub Administrator to the colourful Mgr Francis Bartlett at Westminster Cathedral. These were tumultuous years as the

Church at large and the Cathedral in particular tired to digest the liturgical changes envisaged by the Second Vatican Council.

Appointed parish priest to St Thomas' Church in Fulham in 1968, he thrived on the joy of being a parish priest. Sadly, this was not to last too long as Cardinal Heenan, recognising the respect in which he was held, made him Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Westminster. In 1970 he was created an Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese.

For almost thirty years he gave himself in unstinted service to the priests and people of the Diocese. When, in 1976, Cardinal Basil Hume created Pastoral Areas to be served by his Auxiliary Bishops, Victor Guazzelli was the natural choice to look after the London Boroughs of Camden, Islington, Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

During the late 1960's and throughout the 1970's when the East End of London was convulsed with industrial action and new tides of immigration, Guazzelli was able to speak with authority to workers and community leaders.

His passion for justice involved him in the work of Pax Christi whose President he became in 1975.

His gentle, reassuring style ensured that disagreements did not result in conflict.

His first hand experience of the social and demographic changes taking place in the East End of London made him ideally qualified for the Inter Faith dialogue which he pursued seriously. This also made him the obvious choice as Chairman of the Bishops' Committee for Faith and Cultures.

In 1993 he became the Bishops' representative on the Apostleship of the Sea. His Portuguese connection made him the ideal candidate to visit Bishop Bello in East Timor on two occasions, each at the height of the civil conflict between that fledgling democracy and Indonesia. Long before the injustices experienced by the people of East Timor were recognised by the West, Victor Guazzelli was lobbying government and Church agencies on the human rights, which were being violated there.

In undertaking these visits he offered outstanding personal and pastoral support to the isolated and virtually unknown Bishop Bello. Victor Guazzelli was gratified when the international community eventually recognised Bello's extraordinary defence of human rights with the award of the Nobel Prize. He served for the last decade on CAFOD's Latin America Committee. At different times Cardinal Arns and Archbishop Helder

Camara came to see him at his home in East London. Once more, his vision of Episcopal ministry extended far beyond his responsibilities in Westminster.

He will be remembered by generations of Lisbonians for the skilful way in which he negotiated with the government of Portugal over the closure of the English College in Lisbon and the maintenance of an English Catholic presence in that country. His passion for golf, shared by many of his fellow clergy, was indulged in the house he established in Faro both as a place for recreation and retreat for priests from all over England. Three years after the normal age of retirement for Bishops, returned to Westminster Cathedral as an honorary chaplain.

His life was based on Gospel values, which expressed themselves in dedication, courage, optimism and prayers.