

THE EVANGELIST



"TO BE A CATHOLIC TODAY IS A BEAUTIFUL THING"



The words of Archbishop John Wilson in a recent interview well express the St John's seminary ethos: "to be a Catholic today is a beautiful thing" and indeed to be a disciple of Jesus and a witness to his truth and love are pure joy. We hope that in these pages you will find the beauty of the Catholic Church, the Body of Christ, and the inspirational presence of the Holy Spirit in developing vocations to the priesthood.

Locked down in the middle of the Coronavirus crisis, we nonetheless know that beautiful things have happened in the Church over the last year, including the canonisation of an English saint and the rededication of England to Our Lady. We report on these and on the many graces experienced by our community here at St John's. We focus on such key themes as discipleship and the ordination of three priests and six deacons from our community; the healing hand of the Church, committed selflessly to helping the sick, the dying and the victims of abuse; and the patient work to rebuild the Catholic foundations of our land. We also express our sadness at the loss of two former St John's trustees,

much-loved priests and shepherds of the faithful, Archbishops Michael Bowen and Peter Smith, the latter a former rector of St John's. May they rest in peace.

With much regret, we say farewell to Canon Brian Coyle who stood down as Rector in April. We thank him for his total dedication and care for our wellbeing and formation as seminarians and future priests, and for showing us how to live a prayerful priestly life. We wish him every grace and blessing. We congratulate our own Vice-Rector, Monsignor Gerry Ewing, who has been appointed our new Rector. He will be supported especially by the prayers and good wishes of the community and of the St John's Association of priests, deacons and former seminarians.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Editors thank Canon Brian Coyle and Monsignor Gerry Ewing for their constant support and guidance, and seminarian Rev Thomas Lawes for his photography. We thank Gerry Kehoe, Special Events Operations Director and CBCEW Events Adviser, and Jordynn Williams, Creative Designer at JumpDP, for their unstinting work on design, printing and distribution. Above all, we thank our many writers who ably express the beauty, truth and goodness of our faith.

We acknowledge the work of Edward Bulley, a St John's seminarian in the 1950s, for creating the beautiful manuscript known as the *Bulley Missal*. Some of its pages are reproduced here.

Rev Dcn Peter Sebastian
General Editor



SUPPORT THE EVANGELIST MAGAZINE AND VOCATIONS

We hope you will enjoy this 2020 issue of *The Evangelist*. The magazine is free, but we have invested in better printing and distribution so that we can reach double the number of people than in the past: we hope this will promote prayer for vocations, and indeed actual vocations. If you wish to support the magazine and our work for vocations, you are very welcome to make a donation:

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THE WORD IN THE YEAR OF THE WORD - AND OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Canon Brian Coyle,
Rector of St John's

FATHER, WHEN WILL WE HEAR YOU PREACH...?

Events can overtake us; at times, they can overwhelm us. This article should have been written months ago with the focus on *The God Who Speaks*, the initiative of the Church in England and Wales in 2019-2020 to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Pope Benedict XVI's apostolic exhortation *Verbum Domini* and the 1600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome (*the translator of the Bible into Latin and who memorably stated that Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ*). Pope Francis has also spoken recently about the Word of God in the life of the Church in his apostolic letter *Aperuit illis* in which he declares that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time will henceforward be the Sunday of the Word of God. The Holy Father speaks, too, of the Word of God, and of preaching, in *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG).

Our lives have been changed by the Coronavirus pandemic and the tragedy of so many people dying from Covid-19, including family members and friends. Where is God in all of this and does the Word of God have anything to say with churches closed and no sacraments celebrated publicly? What about the many people living alone and priests, deacons and laity who are not able to be with them with Word or Sacrament or presence? And parishioners not allowed into church to pray quietly and safely. So many

questions are now coming to the fore which speak to us about our faith and will surely inform our pastoral practice in the months and years to come.

I heard that to date over one million people had accessed the live streaming of services from St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. Here is a very obvious way in which we have kept in contact with our parishes and with each other, through the use of social media. In many cases numbers have been greater online than they have been in the pews. There is a hunger for the things of God in a time of need. Priests, deacons, seminarians, parish workers and parishioners have used modern means of communication to enable the Christian community to be in relation to the Word who is Life. The Word of God is Good News and we need to hear and experience that Good News in ways both new and old, individually and as a community.

Father, when will we hear you preach...? These words were spoken to me by a parishioner thirty-five years ago, shortly after I was ordained. They came as a shock. I replied: *You hear me preach every Sunday*. The parishioner responded: *No, we hear you read out something...* It was a hammer blow. I spent hours each week preparing the homily, praying the Sunday readings and looking up as many commentaries as I could. I thought I was doing a good job. The parishioner was right. I was giving a mini lecture, perhaps even showing off a bit. The Word of God is just that: God's Word. It is not my word. But it can become my word if I'm not careful. The Church teaches that Christ is truly present when the Word of God is proclaimed. The books of the Bible are human words written by human authors, but the real author is the Holy Spirit. It is God's Word!

We all know that words can build up or knock down. Words can remain on the surface or they can penetrate our being. We need the language of silence, of prayer, to allow the Word of God to go deeper in us. The priest and the deacon have the great privilege of preaching. But what are we to preach? We give ourselves away when we preach: *are we men of God or not? The homily is the touchstone for judging the pastor's closeness and ability to communicate to his people* (EG 135). Is this God's Word I am breaking open for the people or some other word? Have I been captured by God's Word, so that it is no longer I who am preaching but Christ who is preaching in me because He is living in me (see Galatians 2:20)? The present devastating pandemic is questioning all of us: living more simply and doing with less, caring about the world in which we live, a greater sense of neighbourliness and love of the human family. Wherein is the real meaning of our lives? Where is truth, goodness, beauty and ultimate happiness to be found?

Truth is a Person. The Christian believes that Person is Jesus Christ, the Word of God. That eternal Word became flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, who suffered, died and rose from the dead to save all humanity. The Word became flesh... There is an inextricable link between the Incarnation and the sacramentality of the Word of God when it is proclaimed or when prayed by individuals or groups (the practice of *lectio divina*). In Christ we will find the meaning of our lives. He is longing for us to meet Him in Word and in Sacrament. *The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness* (EG 88). The Coronavirus pandemic is asking many questions of the Church and her leaders, just as it is of

our political leaders. We cannot be let off the hook – questions will be put to us as well.

I have been struck by the many creative ways our seminarians have assisted priests and parishes to bring Christ to parishioners and more widely through social media, especially during Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum, as well as keeping in touch with those living alone. The pain of separation has also prompted us – forced us – to look at new ways of doing things. Even at a distance, the Word of God is Good News when it is evident that it is Good News for the priest, the deacon and the seminarian. The years spent in the seminary are Good News when the seminarian has himself been captured by the Word of God and that Word has become real in his life and in his future as a deacon and a priest. The priest becomes *another Christ*. How can you tell?

Father, when will we hear you preach ...?

POSTSCRIPT

The above Foreword is my last act as Rector. I want to thank the seminary community, the families of seminarians, dioceses, parishes and friends of the seminary for the opportunity to serve over the last six years. I give thanks to God for my time at Wonersh. To the seminarians, above all, I can do no better than repeat the words of Psalm 36(37): "If you trust in the Lord and do good, then you will live in the land and be secure. If you find your delight in the Lord, He will grant your heart's desire."

PRIESTS ARE DISCIPLES FIRST AND ALWAYS

Most Rev John Wilson,
Archbishop of Southwark



Towards the end of *Christus Vivit* (CV), the 2019 Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to Young People, Pope Francis writes 'to discern our personal vocation, we have to realise that it is a calling from a friend, who is Jesus.' (CV 288)

The beauty of this unconditional friendship, of love given and received, connects everything within us, even our hidden self, with our loving Saviour, and with His mercy and His grace. This reality must underpin every vocation to the priesthood. It may sound rather obvious, but seminarians, and those ordained as deacons, priests, and bishops, must always, in a primordial sense, be consciously living, first and always, as disciples. The connection between discipleship and priesthood is vital. Discipleship is the indispensable foundation for vocational discernment and priestly formation.

When I served as a seminary formator I remember reading Dean R Hoge's book *The First Five Years of the Priesthood – A Study of Newly Ordained Catholic Priests*. It examined the

experiences of young priests and why some of them remained in the priesthood, and why some of them, sadly, felt they had to leave. While written back in 2002, some of the rationale it describes remain the same.

One contributor commented: 'Make sure people are in touch with their heart. I think I made my decisions from my head.' Another said: 'I would recommend the seminary really push people about their motivations for being a priest.' The issues covered included spirituality, sexuality, appointments, and mentoring. Some of the problems revolved around the apparent inhumanity of presbytery, parish, and diocesan life. Others concerned a sense of unpreparedness and inadequacy, or the real, previously unappreciated, impact of celibacy.

Seminaries today are seeking to address many of the concerns identified in Hoge's research. It remains true, however, that alongside all the important dimensions of contemporary formation for priesthood there remains the basic requirement of authentic discipleship lived from within a mature character of generous spirit.

Pope St John Paul II's 1992 Post Synodal Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, and the more recent *Ratio Fundamentalalis, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, 2016, have brought increased appreciation of the necessary integration of the human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral aspects of seminary preparation. The *Ratio* identifies within the process of formation the dynamic of discipleship of Christ moving towards configuration with Christ. This remains dependent on the inner relationship each seminarian has with the living Lord. The *Ratio* puts it like this: 'The heart of spiritual formation is personal

union with Christ, which is born of, and nourished in, a particular way by prolonged and silent prayer' (Ratio 102).

The *Ratio* mentions specifically moments of crisis as potential opportunities for conversion and renewal, if adequately understood and addressed. 'These moments,' says the *Ratio* 'will lead the seminarian to question himself critically about the journey so far, about his current condition, about his choices and about his future.' (Ratio 96) But it should not only be at points of crisis that such critical reflection takes place. Conversion and renewal require a clear sense of towards what, or more properly, whom am I converting, and what exactly is to be renewed? The entire formation process is totally dependent on knowing the Lord Jesus intimately as my 'first love,' the one for whom, and in whom, I live, and move, and have my being.

In *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis quotes from a poem by the former Superior General of the Jesuits, Fr Pedro Arrupe. Entitled *Enamórate*, it reads like this:

Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything. (CV 132)

Priestly discernment and formation has personal and intimate loving friendship with the Lord Jesus as its touchstone. The obligatory acquisition of knowledge and skills - humanly,

pastorally, intellectually and spiritually - pivots on this primary relationship, without which we merely construct a house built on sand. To know oneself for the person and gift God has created, to bring that self-knowledge into relationship with Christ, and to place oneself under formation, is a continuous activation of discipleship.

In the context of listening and accompanying, Pope Francis speaks in *Christus Vivit* of three kinds of sensitivity to be practised with those exploring their Christian life and vocation. These are equally applicable to priestly formation and raise considerations for formators and seminarians alike.

Pope Francis speaks first about the sensitivity directed to the individual. 'It is a matter of listening to someone who is sharing his very self in what he says.' (CV 292) Priestly formation rightly focuses on the individual, but in the context of their life of faith and their sense of belonging to Christ and to His Church. It will both accommodate the particularity of an individual's journey of discipleship while giving ecclesial shape to their call to serve. This is, says Pope Francis, an 'Emmaus' kind of accompaniment, where the Lord Jesus walks alongside, even when the disciples are going in the wrong direction. The dawning awareness of the presence of the Lord Jesus, and the gentle revealing of His truth, results in a personal encounter that changes hearts. This gives confidence to the downhearted disciples, turning them from escapees into evangelists.

Pope Francis identifies a 'second kind of sensitivity' as one 'marked by discernment.' This 'tries to grasp exactly where grace or temptation is present.' (CV 293) In this, formators will ask: 'What is it that the other person is trying to tell me, what [do] they want me to realise is happening in their lives.' (CV 293) We want, says the Pope, 'to appreciate their thinking

and the effect it has on their emotions.' Seeking to discern the 'salutary promptings of the good Spirit who proposes ... the Lord's truth' from the 'empty works and promises' of the 'traps laid by the evil Spirit' requires 'courage, warmth and tact' if we are 'to help others distinguish the truth from illusion or excuses.' (CV 293)

A third kind of sensitivity 'is the ability to perceive what is driving the other person.' (CV 294) A deeper kind of listening seeks to discern the direction in which a person truly wants to move. Recognising what they feel and think, and conscious of whatever has happened in their life so far, the real issue is what and who they would like to be. This means going beyond superficial wishes and desires, 'beyond the surface level of their likes and feelings,' to the deeper inclination of their heart. This kind of sensitivity seeks to help discern a person's 'ultimate intention, the intention that definitively decides the meaning of their life.' The Lord Jesus 'knows and appreciates this ultimate intention of the heart' and, therefore, our prayerful intimacy with Him allows and enables Him to help us recognise this. (cf. CV 294)

The resilience of twenty first century priests requires a formation that hinges on having been captured by the loving heart of Jesus. Only priestly disciples can step out in to the future and 'go, make disciples of the whole world and all creation.' (Mt 28:19)

The Most Rev John Wilson was installed as Archbishop of Southwark on 25 July 2019



A FEW MUSINGS ON SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN THE SEMINARY

..... TO BECOME TRULY A SHEPHERD AFTER THE HEART OF JESUS

Canon Luke Smith

Whenever I am asked what I do at the Seminary; I always feel a slight embarrassment in spouting my official title: Director of Spirituality; it sounds rather pretentious and can give the impression that one is usurping the role of the real Director of Spirituality: The Holy Spirit. Perhaps the title's real purpose is to stress the enormity of the undertaking and therefore the need for anyone appointed to this role, to do so with real humility and profound trust in God's grace and providence.

The most recent Vatican document on priestly formation (*Ratio Fundamentalis, The Gift of the Priestly Vocation, 2016*) puts it somewhat dauntingly: *"The Spiritual Director, must be a true master of the interior life and of prayer, one who helps the seminarian to welcome the divine calling and to develop a free and generous response"* (*Ratio 136*).

The challenge is to ponder constantly the mystery of one's own vocation; to remember that the Lord alone is the source and strength of every vocation, our fruitfulness depends upon the depth of our relationship with Him: *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."* (*John 15: 4-5*).

I find Cardinal Achille Liénart's (Bishop of Lille, 1928-1968) address to a new abbot insightful; he said: *"A director, if he is full*

of the Spirit of God, never goes before grace in anything. He only follows it patiently, step by step, after testing it with many precautions.... The things that God makes us do for love of Him are usually prepared by a gentle and imperceptible providence which leads things so naturally that they seem to come as if of themselves. There must be nothing forced or irregular... We should ask only in the measure in which God gives." After which, the Cardinal added: *"Dear Father Abbot, that is indeed what you will have to do from now on. Never try to impose yourself on your brothers. Of course, you would do very well, but grace can do more!"*

Similarly, the Spiritual Director (SD) is called to guide, encourage and challenge only with what he himself has received. What the Ratio says of the seminarian's formation is equally true of the SD: *"to become truly a shepherd after the heart of Jesus, the priest aware of the undeserved mercy of God in his life and in the life of his brothers, he must cultivate the virtues of humility and compassion towards the People of God at large"* (*Ratio 115*).

The seminary spiritual formation programme aims to make spirituality an essential element in all aspects of the life of a priest, both public and personal (we could say the glue that holds everything else together) and is not merely about growing in one's personal life of prayer. In a world that is increasingly fragmented, prone to compartmentalising our lives, to identifying by labels rather than the overall integrity of the person, it is essential that we strive towards that integration and spiritual maturity that we see in the life of the incarnate Son of God. Pope St John Paul II observed that, *"for every priest his spiritual formation is the*

core which unifies and gives life to his being a priest and acting as a priest" (Pastores Dabo Vobis, 1992 §45).

Thomas Merton, similarly points out: *"The spiritual director is concerned with the whole person, for the spiritual life is not just the life of the mind, or of the affections, or of the 'summit of the soul'- it is the life of the whole person."* The Ratio expresses it beautifully: *"Spiritual formation is directed at nourishing and sustaining communion with God and with our brothers and sisters, in the friendship of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, and with an attitude of docility to the Holy Spirit. This intimate relationship forms the heart of the seminarian in that generous and sacrificial love that marks the beginning of pastoral charity"* (Ratio 101).

The timetabled Spirituality courses through the years of seminary formation seek to immerse the seminarian in the vast wealth of the Catholic spiritual tradition; these courses are not primarily academic but aim to help the seminarian grow in understanding and practice of the life of prayer. The art of *Lectio Divina* (Sacred Reading) is employed not only with the Scriptures, but with liturgical texts and writings of the spiritual tradition, so that the seminarian may truly interiorise the Word of God and the Catholic Tradition they are called to proclaim, and to apply it to their daily living.

Each Spirituality class begins with a few minutes of reflection and prayer, prepared by the seminarians in turn; to impress that an essential part of priestly spiritual formation is not merely nourishing one's own spiritual life but learning to feed spiritually those whom we are sent to serve. This reflection may be based on the daily liturgy

or readings, or on a seminarian's personal spiritual reading or interests. I for one have been greatly enriched by seminarians in these reflections, as well as their regular one to one spiritual direction sessions.

I would like to conclude with a thought-provoking question posed by Pope Francis, which reminds us of the bedrock of all spiritual formation, and therefore of all that we undertake in the Seminary: our encounter with Christ and the relationship we have with him. In his homily at Mass on 11 January 2014 reflecting on the First Letter of St John, Pope Francis posed this question: What is our relationship with Jesus like? This is a fundamental question, especially for priests. The strength of a priest is rooted in this relationship.

Commenting on the day's Gospel, that when Jesus' popularity increased he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed (cf. Luke 5:12-16), Pope Francis noted, whenever large crowds came to Jesus, afterwards he went to the Father. Thus, he said, *"Jesus' attitude is a rock of comparison for us who are priests: do we or do we not go to Jesus?"*

A series of questions flow from this, the Pope said. *"What place does Jesus Christ have in my life as a priest? Is it a living relationship, disciple to Master, brother to brother, poor man to God? Or is it a bit artificial, like a relationship that doesn't come from the heart?"*

"We are united through the Spirit and when a priest distances himself from Jesus, instead of being anointed ['unto'], he ends up becoming unctuous ['untuoso']... he seems more like a 'butterfly' because he is always fluttering about vanities, and does not have a relationship with Jesus Christ: he has lost the anointing."

Yet with all our limitations, the Pope continued, we are good priests if we go to Jesus Christ, if we seek the Lord in prayer. If instead we distance ourselves from Christ, we compensate for this with worldly attitudes. *"The priest who adores Jesus Christ seeks and speaks with Jesus Christ, and allows himself to be sought by Jesus Christ - this is the centre of our lives - If we do not have this, we lose everything! And then what shall we give to the people?"* To put it bluntly: we cannot give what we haven't got! That is true for the priest and the seminarian, and of course the Director of Spirituality!

In short, the whole thrust of Spiritual Formation offered in Seminary is to prepare the future priest for a life-long commitment to spiritual growth and nourishment in order that, *"In contemplating the Lord, who offered His life for others, he will be able to give himself generously and with self-sacrifice for God's people."* (Ratio 41)

Canon Luke Smith is an alumnus of St John's. He celebrated his Silver Jubilee to the priesthood this year on 4 June.



HUMAN FORMATION FOR PRIESTS - INITIAL AND ONGOING

Fr David Barrett

"Who are you, Oh Lord, and who am I?"

One of the prayers used by the Desert Fathers in meditation was: *"Who are you, Oh Lord, and who am I?"* Human Formation is one of the ways in which we try to answer the second half of that question. Discovering who I am is a crucial part of engaging in a life-giving relationship with the Lord who calls each one of us as a unique person to follow Him. After all, if Jesus sends us as He Himself was sent by the Father, then it is through the matrix of our personality that He wishes to be sacramentally active, just as it is through His humanity that He revealed the love, truth and activity of the Father.

As is evident with the first disciples, our personality has a history. The strengths and weaknesses of the Apostles were used by the Lord to further His work. Perhaps the passionate nature of one of the "sons of thunder" was used to inspire him to write the Fourth Gospel with its passion for the *Person* of Christ. Paul is aware that the history of his personality is part of his story, even with the radical conversion encounter he experienced with Christ. His zeal for persecution is transformed into a zeal for evangelisation, deploying fruitfully a previously harmful aspect of his personality. In many of the Church Fathers we find a similar awareness – Hilary of Poitiers details how his history of learning led him to faith in Christ and indicates how earlier patterns of behaviour still affect his ability to follow Christ wholeheartedly; Augustine of Hippo in his *Confessions* gives

a dramatic portrayal of his personal history, all of which, sin and doubt as well as his evident intellectual gifts, was used by God to bring him to faith, even when Augustine was unaware of His action.

The twentieth century has seen a growth in awareness of how our personal and social histories are formative of who we are – initially with Freud's psychoanalytical theories and then the development of other schools of thought which challenged or corrected some of Freud's assumptions. Our personal history influences consciously and unconsciously – it is always present, affecting our sense of self and our relationships with others and even how we relate to God.

Human formation is one of the four dimensions of priestly formation proposed by Pope St John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (Post Synodal Exhortation, 1992). In that document, and in the later *Ratio Fundamentalis*, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, 2016, these distinct dimensions “interact simultaneously” throughout our lives (*Ratio* 89). The *Ratio* goes on to state that human formation is “the foundation of all priestly formation” (*Ratio* 94): perhaps because it encourages the student, deacon or priest to become self-aware – to become aware of the self who is the object of God's call.

One of the things that has struck me in human formation work is that the self is both static and a dynamic. There is a continuum of personal identity in every person; yet the person is capable of enormous change and is continuously influenced by a network of relationships with others, our past, society, the whole mystery of the Church and ultimately with God. Throughout life, our

sense of ourselves physically, psychologically, morally and socially will change, while rooted in the personal “I” which is the “thou” to whom Christ issues His “Follow me”.

This has a number of important consequences for human formation. Firstly, becoming aware of who we are humanly is an on-going process. Psychology will play its part but so also will grace, theology, spirituality, encounters with others in pastoral roles and in friendships, as will suffering and mistakes and personal sin. A key goal of human formation is to help the student or cleric to integrate and apply all of these experiences fruitfully: God's grace will use all of these experiences if we allow it.

A second consequence arises directly from this first. Disclosing these things is not easy. Fear of judgment, especially from the formator, is understandable. Here the formator has to make a concerted effort to show absolute acceptance of the student. I believe that Christ's own acceptance of us in His Passion stands as a model for every human formator. Indeed, the “formator” is not really the one doing the forming: they are a servant of the student. If the formator can embody the model of Christ's loving acceptance (who came not to be served but to serve), they can reduce any barriers to full personal disclosure, facilitating the on-going and fruitful integration of the person's experiences. For the formator, this requires contemplation of Christ as model of this – on-going personal formation, in fact.

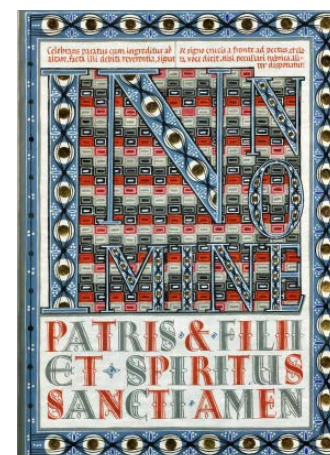
Thirdly, I believe that human formation is best practised within an overall Christian anthropology. When dealing with areas where the person is “stuck” humanly,

psychotherapeutic assistance is deployed, but a sense of the goal of this deployment needs to be present: being one with Jesus Christ, being a fruitful and cherished member of the Whole Christ. An unnuanced and unhealthy sense of personal sin, for example, can distort any sense of hope for personal change, resulting in a self-hatred that impairs someone's priestly ministry because of a sense of hopelessness for the human condition. This can lead to other problems: lack of basic self-care, driving oneself to work a (self-) punishing schedule, and unhappiness and disillusion in ministry. A renewed sense of Christ's love for this person as they actually exist can help them discover a previously dormant self-worth. An appreciation that Christ's Resurrection is an active process within us through the sacraments, overcoming all the “enemies” of grace, can help the person to see that nothing within them is beyond redemption. Jesus died for us and rose again so that we might die to our false self and rise again as the new self which is hidden with Christ in God. There is always hope.

Fourthly, the ever-changing self means that on-going formation should remain part of life beyond seminary. Counsellors and therapists have a professional duty to maintain on-going professional and personal development. They have a supervisor – the term has nothing to do with any sense of line-management or managerial reviews. Instead, the supervisor works confidentially with the therapist, helping them to reflect on their work, apply theory to practice, maintain professional development through reading and courses, and adhere to an ethical code of conduct which includes taking care of themselves properly and having a balance of proper leisure

in their lives. I believe that such reflection would be very useful for pastoral ministry. Some clergy already use some kind of supervision. It might help clergy to reflect on whether their ways of working are useful and healthy; how to apply theology to practice; how to augment their theological formation to assist them in ministry; become aware of personal issues they need to address and where to find the help they need. This kind of reflection needs someone who is aware of the four dimensions of formation. I believe that training people for such roles, and helping clergy to see the personal usefulness of such reflection, could well be a further stage of the implementation of the vision of *Pastores Dabo Vobis*.

Fr David Barrett has been appointed Director of Human Formation at St John's where he also lectures in Patristics. He is Parish Priest at Olney, Bucks.



PRIESTLY LIFE AFTER ST JOHN'S

Interviews with Eddie Hopkins.

In July 2019 three men left St John's and were ordained to the Sacred Priesthood. Eddie Hopkins caught up with them

in the autumn to hear about their first few months after ordination.



INTERVIEW WITH FR TOMASZ MARGOL, SOUTHWARK

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A NEW PRIEST?

Amazing and somewhat scary! Overall, something really deep spiritually, really fulfilling. Being who I'm meant to be. It's an extremely new reality. Even compared to a parish placement – people look at you in a very different way. You for them are somebody else – not Tomasz but Father Tomasz.

DOES IT SEEM STRANGE TO BE CALLED FATHER?

Someone called me Father - I thought they were talking to someone else. I'm getting used to it.

WHAT'S IT LIKE HEARING CONFESSIONS?

It is extremely intimate and moving. Giving absolution is really humbling for me. People leave the place joyful rather than discouraged.

AND CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST?

You become an alter Christus – suddenly God is in your palms ... you are taken by what is happening. You're involved in something bigger than yourself and in a much deeper way than before.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR TIME IN SEMINARY?

The knowledge we receive – it's so useful. The self-awareness you get from the one-to-one work is demanding but really helpful. Sometimes our Lord wants to mould us and it can be painful. We're all afraid of pain and suffering, but with the help of the staff I embraced it. Being in community helps too. Coming from abroad, most of my friends are priests and former seminarians which is good, because they understand things, but one also needs wider experience. I would encourage people to keep joyful, to pray to the Holy Spirit and not to worry too much about their own sinfulness. The Lord calls sinners to the Priesthood. Not that I want to encourage sinning! Be faithful to prayer and listen to the staff - although they can be wrong sometimes!



INTERVIEW WITH FR SIMON DAVIES, EAST ANGLIA

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND THE LAST FEW MONTHS SINCE ORDINATION?

Most of all, it is all quite daunting, not least offering the Holy Mysteries. Celebrating the Mass has an awesome quality to it. I don't really experience any intimidation by being so prominent in the celebration (I was expecting to, given my natural shyness). Rather, one feels a certain joyful weight: the heritage of the ages falls upon my weak shoulders in those moments as I take, break and give in the Person of Christ the Head. The words “this is My Body” feed back into the soul, forcing me to reflect upon what it is that I am really

saying. It's not just repeating the words of Jesus; it's not a piece of theatre. It is definitely me saying those words, as well. This raises the bar of what is expected of me personally, not only by my own standards, but by the holy people of God, and by Almighty God Himself. Consequently, it is also interesting to reflect upon what that means for the priest in relation to his own personal identification with the man Jesus.

HAVE YOU FOUND ANY CHALLENGES OR DIFFICULTIES YET?

It's been difficult to dedicate a lot of time and effort to prayer. Most of the time, all you can give to prayer is physical presence. Maybe that is saying more about me, but I find - particularly in my parish, which I suppose also has an effect - that there are so many things whirring around in my mind, it's difficult to find peace and quiet, and when I do, I sometimes fall asleep, because my body is still adjusting to the fitfulness of a busy parish ministry, and I find it difficult to maintain a regular sleep pattern. It is quite a burden, which is why it is important to have some good support from other clergy, not least a decent spiritual director who isn't in the clouds, who can say that it is okay.

APART FROM THE FACT IT'S SO BUSY, IS THERE ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR YOU'VE NOTICED ABOUT BEING A PRIEST AT A CATHEDRAL?

Yes, with confessions. Because we have an "optional curtain" - there is always a "grille" that can be seen through if necessary - some characters I have got to know solely in the confessional; I have no idea who they are to look at, but I have got to know them through a curtain. It has encouraged me in realising how important regular confession really is, particularly with the same person. And the option of anonymity is really important for

people. Some people say things to a curtain that they simply wouldn't say to your face. I think part of the nature of a cathedral/large church confession ministry is to provide that space for people who don't want to go to their own parish priest, or just want to get lost in the crowd. And by the way, prepare to be shocked sometimes. Seminary needs to teach you how to keep a poker-face.

OKAY! HAVE YOU ANY OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR TIME IN SEMINARY?

I know I'm inclined to say these things anyway, but rigorous academic formation is important. Michael Ramsay used to say that we study not to deliver erudite sermons, but simple ones. We really need to have a proper, firm grasp of church teaching, theology and metaphysics, and to be able to translate that into accessible language and actions, without showing off that it is "teaching," "theology," or what have you.

INTERVIEW WITH FR JOHN-PROMISE UMEOZURU, PORTSMOUTH



WHAT ARE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF BEING A PRIEST SO FAR?

Three things. One is the privilege of celebrating the Eucharist. That

fact of making Christ present for myself and the people of God is amazing. And I come out of Mass each time thinking, "Wow, what a profound mystery!"

Secondly, grace to forgive people's sins. Having been a penitent myself and now a confessor, I find the Sacrament of Reconciliation one of the best things the Church has. We have people come to the Lord - not to me, they come to the Lord - with a whole load of burdens and troubles and worries. And I am able to say the Lord forgives you and I give them absolution. They themselves depart with joy, with their sins forgiven.

The third thing, I would say, is visiting people who are about to die. I've already anointed four people who are about to die, who are on their way to the Lord, and its powerful, meeting people at their lowest point and giving them assurance of peace and salvation. I remember one lady - I granted her apostolic pardon. That is a powerful prayer.

DO YOU THINK YOUR TIME AT WONERSH PREPARED YOU FOR ALL THIS? DOES ANYTHING STAND OUT IN YOUR MIND?

One is that in this seminary I was taught to have a deep prayer life. I already had the habit of a holy hour before community prayer. What struck me, and I'm not saying this to flatter anyone, the fact that I saw my rector there, observing that hour before any of us, each day, was fascinating. As a priest you can't function effectively if you're not glued to the Lord. I still make the effort to wake up and observe an hour of adoration before the Lord exposed in our oratory. For me, nothing happens in the parish without that being done.

AGREED. WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU FOUND HELPFUL?

In my previous seminary experience there wasn't much

importance given to human formation. In Africa men aren't expected to be in touch with their emotions. But here at St John's I realised it's okay to be yourself, to be in touch with your emotions, because it's only from your humanity that you minister to people. If you're not vulnerable yourself, you won't understand what people are going through. For me, it's something I took with me all the time, to minister as a priest but from a point of vulnerability. We're all vulnerable. I'm in the confessional not to lord it over people; I'm not saying Mass to be a showman; when I visit people in their houses, it is just to meet them where they are. I've seen my formators, they've studied a lot but they're just human beings. That's something I take from Womersley.

THE ORDINATION OF SIX DEACONS



On 14 December 2019 six seminarians were ordained to the diaconate by the Rt Rev Richard Moth, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton. Here four deacons - Thomas Lawes, Peter Murphy, Giovanni Prandini, Dermott O'Gorman - describe

their thoughts and feelings before and after ordination, while Deacons John Howard and Thomas Kent focus respectively on St John's discipleship (p.14) and the rededication of England to Our Lady (p.30).

'OILY BEARDS'

Deacon Thomas Lawes, Diocese of Clifton



Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

(Psalm 133:1-2)

One by one eleven of us turned up that September afternoon in 2014. Not only was the year group big but it was young. Except for one member of the year, we were all under twenty-eight. Being so similar in age and having such a strong presence in the community, we shared much in common already.

Change came quickly: one member of the group left the seminary after only six weeks. By Christmas another had left,

and by Easter one more. Six have left since that first year. As they left, the year adapted. Those remaining were affected in different ways and according to friendships formed. I cannot speak for my year group as a whole, but I myself experienced strong disappointment.

However, it did not make us any quieter! Rather than weaken, our sense of identity strengthened! The identity we shared gave a good sense of belonging. We were all sharing in the experience of getting to know a new place, praying together, familiarising ourselves with the routine, the lecturing styles, the studies, and immersing ourselves in the social life of the community. We supported one another increasingly, especially through intensive academic work.

Sometimes this solidarity could become a little too strong and we had to be reined in or reminded of our duty to the wider house. There is always a risk that the solidarity of a big year group can be the cause of wider division. However, with guidance from the seminary formation staff and our natural sociability, and fundamentally growing in self-knowledge through the Holy Spirit, we were able to build strong relationships with others across the house.

The seminary programmes in spiritual and human formation helped us to discover ourselves, open up to others and change. Naturally, in the first year we took a little time to get used to these aspects of formation. As time went by we worked out how to stay close but without excluding others. I recall especially how during the 2nd and 3rd years in our spiritual reading sessions, the Director of Spirituality taught us to listen to one another, to let the Holy Spirit take us deeper into a genuine exploration of

each other's ideas rather than a superficial expression of 'what I think'. It enabled us to speak more freely, to be ourselves and to encourage each other, all the time thinking beyond seminary life.

This formation in fact prepared us well for the separation of the group during the 4th year "Extended Pastoral Placement" when we were sent out to spend the whole year in parishes. This separation from each other, while accompanied by regular meetings with our Pastoral Formation director, allowed us to begin to develop as individuals away from the seminary. This was important, because seminary life is never the final destination but precisely the preparation for leaving and going out. This growth in individuality also helped us, on returning to the seminary for the final two years, to fulfil the important supportive role the top year plays in its relationship with seminarians lower down the house. We became more flexible and malleable while maintaining the strong ties we shared.

The year group's strong fraternity has meant that all the stresses and uncertainties that can come in the build-up to ordination, both to the diaconate and to the Sacred Priesthood, have been a burden shared rather than one carried in isolation. We have been able to talk freely and discuss things honestly with one another. We have been able to share the joy and excitement of the prospect of being sent out into our dioceses to live the priesthood for which, together, we have been preparing these past six years.

Over the years we have changed as individuals and as a year group. It has been an immense privilege to be a part of such a strong group of men who above

all have helped each other to draw closer to God in true devotion. There has always been a sense of striving for holiness, trying to give our lives to Christ and supporting one another in that mission. We have been shaped and nurtured by a wider seminary community, both by staff and by students, together committed to that fraternity modelled on Christ and His disciples.

Looking onward to priesthood, it will be a great shame not to continue sharing my life with these brothers of mine. I can only be grateful to God and to them all for everything the Lord has given through this fraternity.

EXPLORING THE CALL, FEELING THE CALL

Deacon Peter Murphy,
Archdiocese of Liverpool



As you might expect, I have spent much time over the past few years, both before and during seminary, witnessing priests going about their pastoral, spiritual, and liturgical ministry, feeling something of the Lord's voice calling: "You too; follow me". Exploring the call, which I have felt and continue to feel,

to the Sacred Priesthood, and being formed in this manner, has been the major work of the last five or so years of my life. In the course of this discernment, and as a fruit of the initial formation that takes place in the seminary, I received at different stages the lay ministries of reader and acolyte. In receiving these ministries, as well as when I was admitted as a candidate for Holy Orders last summer, in exercising the new role I had been given and in trying to live up to the responsibilities that went with them, I drew a little bit closer to what I felt called to, and to what I yearned for: the Priesthood!

In the process of preparing my application for ordination to the diaconate, I realised that things felt rather different. Although it would be possible for diaconal ordination to be seen as the 'penultimate stop' on the 'formation train' before finally reaching 'destination priesthood', this was not the case. Diaconal ordination – and in turn, diaconal ministry – is not simply a step towards priesthood; it is an order in its own right with its own rights, responsibilities, challenges, gifts and graces. Of course, for those who are familiar with the important role that Permanent Deacons play in our dioceses and many of our parishes, this will not come as a real revelation. Indeed, for me, this was not so much an intellectual realisation, but a spiritual one. In being ordained a deacon, I wasn't simply a step closer to priesthood, but I was offering myself, in a very real, but new way, to be conformed to Christ.

Just a few months into my new life as a deacon, the reality of what this conformation to Christ looks like is still constantly being uncovered. This period has seemed like a whirlwind which can only really be experienced

and understood in retrospect. This is most definitely the case when it comes to my experience of the ordination day itself. The ordination day, 14 December, was also my 29th birthday – something which I kept forgetting until I opened cards from those few people who were being environmentally (or economically) conscious and had used one card for both occasions. It was the greatest of joys to be able to share my birthday with the other five men in my year who were ordained alongside me and, by extension, our families and the whole seminary community.

O HOLY SPIRIT!

Deacon Giovanni Prandini,
Archdiocese of Southwark



The ordination itself was an anticlimax! One moment you are in the ambulatory welcoming guests. The moment after you are walking down the nave in an alb, as you have done many times before, except this time the alb is possibly a bit whiter and certainly better ironed. And, finally, in a blink of an eye, you find yourself clad in a vestment that looks like tin foil and feels like a suit of armour. And you find yourself wondering, or at least I found myself wondering, 'Is that it?'

For the rest of the day, after my ordination, I was left with a strange feeling. I knew in my head that something had happened, and yet I felt as if nothing had happened at all. And I would have lingered with this feeling if I hadn't started to exercise the ministry of deacon immediately the day after my ordination, and in particular if I hadn't started preaching.

I gave my first homily the day after my ordination, the third Sunday of Advent. I wasn't feeling apprehensive at all. In fact, I was rather confident given I had already prepared and rehearsed that homily in one of our homiletics classes. And yet it is so different to preach to a congregation from preaching to your classmates. Of course, the faithful in the congregation listen with more benevolence. But that is not the only difference: it felt different at a more subjective level. Preaching is nothing like giving a speech to an audience. It is a deeper and more personal experience. To prepare a homily is to listen to the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us in prayer and in the Scriptures. It is also to discern what is relevant to the congregation. Again, this discernment is guided by the Spirit. When I prepare and give a homily, I am aware of the working of the Holy Spirit in me. Although I may be tempted to look upon writing a homily as any other homework, the reality is that I am a channel of the Spirit. Granted, who I am, my past, my memories, my intellect are factors that contribute to the final homily, but among all factors the Holy Spirit has the lion's share.

That the Holy Spirit is the main factor in homily preparation, I experienced in the days after Christmas. I had volunteered to prepare the homily for St John's day, thinking that it would be easy to find something

to say. To my surprise, I found myself stuck; I couldn't even start writing. In my pride I had thought I could produce something all by myself and now I was being proven wrong. Only after admitting my uselessness in front of the Lord, was I able to jot down my homily with extreme ease.

Back to my original musings: has anything happened when I was ordained? Clearly, yes. After all, as Jesus said, 'By their fruits you will know them'.

THE JOY OF PRIESTHOOD

Deacon Dermott O'Gorman,
Archdiocese of Southwark



According to a Yiddish proverb, "if you want to make God laugh, tell Him your plans". Everyone has plans and dreams, generally of the 'picket fence' variety: a six-figure salary, a big house, a smart car, attractive partner, etc. These are all good things, but sometimes God calls us to choose a different path, such as the Sacred Priesthood or religious life, which deviates from the norm and so can be unsettling at first.

I first felt called to priesthood as an altar server at school. After university, and some years working, I 'took the plunge' and

recall sitting on the plane at Gatwick to start my first year of seminary in Valladolid. I wondered how I would survive several years of formation and, albeit after some further time out, I have not only survived but thrived. The Lord has blessed me with joy at the deepest level and the confidence to enter a range of situations from which I previously would have retired. My pastoral placements have shown me that priesthood is a privilege as you participate in some of the most important and sensitive events of people's lives. You experience the joy of baptising a newborn, marrying a couple in love or catechising inquisitive teenagers. You also experience sad situations such as supporting a prisoner at a low ebb, anointing a terminally ill patient or conducting a funeral. Through being an *alter Christus* (other Christ) for people, the priest represents a hope the world cannot give. As a celibate, he is a vital sign to the lonely or widowed that God is enough in this world and will fulfil us entirely in heaven.

It was a great joy to be ordained a Deacon in December, and I have experienced the honour of preaching the Word of God to the people. I now look forward to the day when, as a priest, I can celebrate Mass and the other sacraments to be a channel of God's grace to my parishioners. People have a range of reactions to priests and seminarians. Some are extreme, from putting you on a pedestal to claiming you only work on Sundays and have no idea about 'real-life'. These extremes are immature viewpoints. Priests are certainly not perfect, but I have met many inspiring and dedicated priests. It is crucial to promote priesthood and religious life not because it is superior, but because marriage tends to promote itself. All young people should consider if the Lord is

calling them to follow him in this way so the Eucharist and the sacraments will always be available.

Whatever our specific vocation, we are all called to holiness through modelling our lives on Christ through regular prayer, receiving the sacraments and serving our neighbour. As Pope Francis says, "Every vocation is a summons not to stand on the shore, nets in hand, but to follow Jesus on the path he has marked out for us, for our own happiness and for the good of those around us."

ST JOHN'S DISCIPLESHIP AND CHRIST'S PASSION

Deacon John Howard, Dean of Seminarians, Archdiocese of Southwark



Our priestly ministry can be shaped by what St John saw, heard and did at Christ's Passion. I would like to look at four aspects of the Passion.

First, on either side of the Crucifixion John experiences rest and friendship with Christ. We see this at the Last Supper where John reclines on Jesus' breast. And we see it after the Resurrection where Christ cooks breakfast for John and the other Apostles by the Sea of Tiberias.

Therefore, for Christian activity to be fruitful and authentic, it must stem from resting with Christ in prayer and have its ultimate goal in the eternal rest of heaven. As priests, we are called to show our flock how to trust Jesus whether at home or in the workplace, and how to draw on that rest and peace that comes from Christ alone.

Secondly, turning to the Crucifixion itself, we find John standing at the foot of the cross. He sees his innocent friend with arms outstretched in agony on the wood of the Cross. Here John sees the true horror of suffering, and he experiences his powerlessness - realising he can do nothing to alleviate Christ's suffering. Let us remember that St John is the only recorded Apostle to be at the foot of the cross. So we see the great courage that John displayed by simply being there. We too as priests are called to enter those pastoral encounters which require courage, those encounters where we are powerless to alleviate in a practical way the horrors of suffering. Where we are powerless to do anything practical, let us be encouraged that, if we too stand with those who suffer, we stand as John stood on the side of truth and love, on the side of hope, as witnesses to justice, and with Christ who suffers with those who suffer. Let us console those with whom we stand: that on the third day when the sun rises from the east, mercy and justice will reign and we will no longer stand under the shadow of the Cross but be bathed in the eternal light of the resurrected Christ.

Thirdly, standing at the foot of the cross St John sees the destructiveness of sin. But he also sees Jesus turn in mercy to the repentant thief. Despite his agony and his fatigue, Jesus

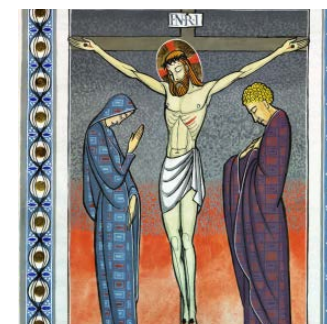
desires to show mercy to the thief. The social outcast whose body is also disfigured and tortured by the Crucifixion. In priestly ministry, we are likely to be called upon at inconvenient times to support the sinner, those looking to pour out their soul, those seeking confession and Christ's absolution. In such situations let our response be informed by Jesus's response to the repentant thief despite his fatigue.

One challenge I myself face when visiting female prisoners is seeing a number of the women with the marks of self-harm on their forearms. The sight is an uncomfortable one and I could easily turn away from the encounter with these women and travel down the path of judgement and despair. However, if Christ turned not away - but towards the disfigured and tortured body of the repentant thief, I too must turn in love, hope, mercy and forgiveness.

Finally, standing at the foot of the Cross John sees Jesus turn to his mother. He turns in love and concern for her needs. He entrusts her care to St John. John, the Apostle Jesus loved, was given the mission of a hidden life spent with Mary. Let us take courage then that time spent with Mary gives great glory to God. Standing at the foot of the cross John would have seen the almost unbearable pain and sorrow experienced by Mary.

At the foot of the Cross, no one suffered more than Mary; no one participated more fully in offering Christ on the Cross to the Father, than Mary. For no one had cared for Jesus, no one spent as much time with Jesus, no one knew Jesus as much as Mary. In the womb, Jesus would have become familiar with Mary's voice and would have turned to hear it. As a child, he

would have turned to her for his needs and he would have obeyed her requests. Jesus now turns to the needs of his Mother even as he breathes his last. As we are formed primarily to stand at the altar to offer the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross to the Father, let us also turn to Mary and learn from her and be with her - our Queen - who took her stand at the foot of the Cross and offered her son to the father.



Homily given on St John's Day, 4 February 2020, First Vespers

TWO FLOODS OF VOCATION

Frazer Bellfield (Year 2)

"I will go anywhere and do anything in order to communicate the love of Jesus" (Mother Cabrini)

Many people in both the Dioceses of Southwark and Arundel & Brighton know or have heard of the Flood brothers. Gerald and Eric Flood both served lovingly and diligently in a number of parishes over the two Dioceses and are a product of our St John's seminary. Sadly, both have recently died: Fr Gerald, born on 30 April 1931, after 63 years of active priesthood and his younger brother Fr Eric, born on 23 October 1934, after 50 years of active ministry and the burden of a long illness.

Originally from the parish of Forrest Hill in Southwark, the brothers received their primary education at the school founded

by Saint Francesca Cabrini at Honor Oak, London. When aged five Gerald was seriously injured in a car accident. His leg was smashed. He was given a boot and metal frame and was told he would be permanently disabled. The young boy vowed that if he were ever to be cured, he would become a priest. He asked for the heavenly intercession of his school's founder Mother Cabrini. A new operation restored him to full mobility and he kept his promise. As soon as he could he became an altar server and, after being further educated by the Christian Brothers, entered the Mark Cross minor seminary in 1947. After being accepted by Archbishop Amigo for formation, Gerald entered St. John's Seminary on 19 September 1950.

During an air raid in the Second World War the brothers calmed their father Patrick and two sisters Margaret and Eileen through leading the prayers of the Holy Rosary as their mother Lucy gave birth to their younger brother Michael. Gerald and Eric were brought up in a loving and faith-driven environment. Eric did not originally feel called to the priesthood and pursued studies in medicine. But on a trip away in the early 1950s he asked his seminarian elder brother what he would have to do if he felt called to the priesthood. This resulted in Eric entering St John's on 6 September 1955. They overlapped by one year. Both brothers did well academically; both were formed to become well-loved parish priests.

Gerald was ordained on 25 May 1956; he served in the Surbiton parish as curate and then spent ten years at St. George's Cathedral before becoming parish priest of Edenbridge, Deptford and finally Biggin Hill where he served for over thirty years before having to retire due to ill health. As a young boy growing up in the parish of St. Theresa's, Biggin Hill, I - the writer of this

article - was deeply inspired by Fr Gerald, my parish priest. He saw a possible vocation in me from a young age. He encouraged me to become an altar server and he often spoke of his own journey to the Priesthood. He was very encouraging. Fr Eric would often visit his elder brother and seeing the two of them celebrate Mass together was profoundly moving and made a deep impression on me. Both brothers took the time to encourage vocations and helped several young men respond to God's call. One of these young men was an altar server named Richard who spoke of a possible vocation with both Fr. Gerry and Fr Eric. Richard also attended St John's seminary and is now the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton, the Right Reverend Richard Moth.

When the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton was established by Pope Paul VI in 1965 Fr Eric, originally from the Southwark Diocese, found himself in a new Diocese. Fr Eric served in Leatherhead, Forest Row, Mayfield, Goring-on-Sea, Thames Ditton and Lewes before his retirement in 2005. In recognition of his great service to the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton he was made a Canon of the Cathedral, where after many years of illness his Requiem Mass was celebrated by Bishop Richard on 29th August 2018. In his homily Bishop Richard spoke of how inspired he had been by Fr Eric and how not only had the brothers helped him on his own path to the Priesthood but that their steadfast faith and determination was a great example to all the faithful.

It is important for seminarians to remember priests of earlier days; we do this in our daily Office when we pray for students and staff past and present. I will always be grateful to the Flood brothers and will never forget the impression they made on me from boyhood. I now hold them as an example in formation and eventually, God willing, in priesthood.

CANON JOHN O'TOOLE - 40 YEARS OF DISCIPLESHIP

Interview with Deacon Peter Sebastian



Canon John was ordained priest on the Feast of All Saints 1978 having been an alumnus of both St John's, Wonersh and the junior seminary at Mark Cross, Sussex. I first met Canon John in 2018 when he came to St John's to brief us on ecumenical relations and was struck by how much he enjoyed and was at peace in his priesthood. Given his wealth of priestly experience - in parish life, in Catholic education, in building ecumenical relationships, in mission work - I resolved to interview him for The Evangelist. I caught up with him just as he was beginning his appointment as Episcopal Vicar for Kent.

HOW IMPORTANT WERE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IN BRINGING YOU TO PRIESTHOOD?

My family experience was fundamental to my vocation as was a loving and faithful parish community, the influence of kindly and knowledgeable priests and the commitment of great teachers. Both my parents had a strong faith and were deeply involved in parish life. I was born in Dublin in February 1950. In 1958 my parents moved the family to Chatham, England. Money was scarce. Eventually my father got a job as a bus conductor. My parents were brave and intrepid in making a new start,

and I deeply respected them for that. We were welcomed here extremely warmly by priests and parishioners. That's why I feel I have a great debt to the Archdiocese of Southwark and particularly to St Michael's, Chatham. The whole experience shaped me.

Two of the curates at St Michael's made a lasting impact. Fr John Castelli, who sadly died just recently, was a great inspiration. He was a very kind and saintly man. The other curate, Fr Ron Duggan, who was later to vest me at my ordination, had a great love of the liturgy and of preaching. He taught us to serve at the altar with reverence and understanding. The two men had very different but complementary personalities and gifts; together they sowed the seeds of faith and vocation in me. I wanted to be like them in one sense or other.

At thirteen I discussed priesthood with Fr Duggan. We approached the diocese and I had to take a test for the junior seminary at Mark Cross. I was interviewed by Archbishop Cyril Cowderoy. I don't know how I got in! But I started at Mark Cross in 1963. My family was very pleased. We were all very involved in the Church - my brother and I were altar servers together. It was a privileged education at Mark Cross. The teachers - all secular diocesan priests - were deeply committed and had a great influence on us. Mark Cross was organised much like a senior seminary. We wore cassocks, followed regular prayer and study times, and learned Latin and Greek.

AND THEN CAME THE SHOCK INTERRUPTION OF YOUR PRIESTLY STUDIES?

Yes. Unfortunately, after two years there, I was expelled for smoking, or as expressed at the time, "you were returned to your

friends!" This was a great shock, but I trusted God and, unknown to me at the time, it was to strengthen my determination to become a priest. I returned to Chatham and attended St John Fisher Catholic School. There was no sixth form, so I had to move once again, from this cosy world to a large, non-Catholic Grammar School where I took A-Levels in English, French and History. Once again I was fortunate in having very good teachers who inspired me to read History at King's College, London. In the months before beginning my university course I worked as a bus conductor alongside my father in Chatham. I would return to be a bus conductor every summer as a student.

DID YOU ABANDON ANY HOPE OF VOCATION AT THIS POINT?

Not at all. It was my understanding that there was no way back to the Priesthood. I had tried my vocation and failed; the door was closed, even at such a young age. But I was still resolved to enter St John's. I approached the diocesan vocations director in early 1969, explaining that St John's was my first preference but that I was also applying to university to read History. At this point, the Diocese decided to experiment! I received a letter from the Rector of St John's, Mgr McConnon, saying that I had been accepted but that I should start my studies at King's and "top and tail" each university term at Wonersh. I started at St John's in September and at King's in October 1969. There I benefitted hugely from a tough regime of writing a weekly 3000 word essay. My tutor was inspiring. I gained my BA in History after three years and I was encouraged to do a PhD - but my heart was in the Priesthood. I went to St John's full time in 1972. There were seventy-seven seminarians in the house. Twenty-four had

started in my year alone, of which twelve were ordained. For me and my family, it was a warm and fulfilling seminary experience.

WHAT A TIME TO ENTER SEMINARY! WAS ST JOHN'S FILLED WITH CONTROVERSY OVER VATICAN II?

Rector McConnon described my year as a "breath of fresh air" because we arrived after the upheaval of the 1960s when many seminarians left. He would say that we had no axes to grind. Before us, some seminarians thought too much change had happened while others thought not enough. St John's culture changed from "do as you are told and follow the rules" to "use your intelligence and common sense" - the only rule was charity. We did not experience the tensions of earlier years.

While at Wonersh, I was advised to diversify, so I obtained a PGCE in education at Strawberry Hill and followed up with a probationary year at Richard Challoner School where to my surprise I was appointed Head of RE while also helping to teach A-Level Government and Political Studies. I received a lot of help from Sean Flannigan, a superb historian and teacher. Ordination came on 1 November 1978 at the hands of Archbishop Michael Bowen. All my seminarian year came, along with eighty or ninety priests, to St Michael's Chatham, with a reception in John Fisher School where I had been a pupil. There were 500 guests for a sit-down meal with the staff of the Thornton family's catering business in Chatham giving their service for free, such was their pride in our faith. I was moved.

YOU HAVE A RICH EXPERIENCE IN FORGING ECUMENICAL RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIPS IN PARISH LIFE AND AT NATIONAL LEVEL. HOW HAVE YOU REMAINED

HOPEFUL AMID THE UPS AND DOWNS?

The late Bishop Michael Evans, a fellow member of my year at Wonersh who became Bishop of East Anglia, used to say that "Unity is a gift before it is a task." It is a gift of the Spirit, not our doing. What we can do is share in the gifts we have in common; we are brother and sister in the one body of Christ. Let's celebrate that. We are in real but imperfect communion. The task is to work for the full communion. We should not get disheartened.

And let me crib the words of our new Archbishop John Wilson - we can learn from other Christians, particularly from the Pentecostal tradition. Why are they doing so well? Three things: the quality of their preaching, the clarity of their teaching and their sense of belonging. Archbishop John concluded that we as Catholics should excel at all three - and so we should. We should have the humility to realise that we can learn from others.

DID YOU TRY TO SHAPE YOUR PRIESTLY CAREER?

I go where I am sent - the promise of obedience is important to me. Dr Freddie Broomfield at St John's taught us that obedience means you can have every word except the last! - the Holy Spirit is at work. Every posting has its advantages. The priesthood is a joyous calling with a rich variety of roles and work. We priests are privileged to have access to people's lives and to see the action of the Spirit.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU KNOW NOW THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE WANTED TO KNOW AT THE BEGINNING?

Probably not. There is no substitute for experience. Arriving at Lewisham hospital as a new chaplain on a sick call and being told that your parishioner has just died - who can prepare you for that? It is probably better not to know too much too soon!

CANON JOHN O'TOOLE

1978-81:	Assistant priest at St Saviour's, Lewisham.
1982-87:	Diocesan Catechetical Centre, RE Adviser for Secondary Schools.
1987-1990:	Assistant priest at St John Fisher, Merton.
1990-96:	Parish Priest at Thamesmead, where he joined the ecumenical clergy team at the shared Church of St Paul's as part of the Thamesmead Christian Community, a local ecumenical project involving the Church of England, Methodists, United Reformed and Catholics.
1996-99	Catholic Missionary Society, team member – a national body leading parish and school missions.
1999-2004	Parish Priest at St Andrew's, Thornton Heath.
2001	Appointed member of the English-Anglican Roman Catholic Committee – ARC
2004-2011	Director, Christian Education Centre (later Centre for Catholic Formation), Tooting Bec
2011-2015	Dean of St George's Cathedral, Southwark
2015-2020	National Ecumenical Officer and Secretary to the Department for Dialogue and Unity at the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
2020 Feb	Appointed Episcopal Vicar for Kent.

ARCHBISHOP
MICHAEL BOWEN
(1930-2019) RIP

An abridged version of the homily given by the Right Reverend Richard Moth, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, at Archbishop Bowen's Requiem Mass, St George's Cathedral, Southwark, 4 November 2019.

For me, Michael was always "Your Grace". As his private secretary and his Vicar General, I could never quite do for Michael or Micky; but he was, for me, my second father in this life and it is a great privilege to be allowed to say a few words here today. I think we all know that Michael would not have sought a eulogy or panegyric. I shall try not to preach one, but I might fail. I am certain it is our prayers Michael values more

than anything else, for he was, at heart, a man of simplicity and great humility and our prayers are the greatest gift we can offer.

He believed strongly in family, spending as much time with them as responsibilities would allow. I am sure one of the joys of retirement lay in being able to give more time to family and friends, especially his brother, Pat. Today is a time when we pray for each other at this time of loss. I and many others in this Cathedral Church today will have lost count of the number of times we have heard that word 'gentleman' in recent weeks. Michael was never, ever, a "dictator over any group that had been put in his charge." He allowed things to grow from the ground up, willing to put up with the occasional mistake and willing, too, to allow things to fail sometimes - more importantly to empathise with people who failed.

It is true Michael could worry and agonise over things - spending many hours pondering over clergy moves and the difficulties of so many in the Diocese who contended with the challenges of life. It is true, too, that once a decision was made, he would stand firm. In all of these things, he did, I believe, seek to approach things with a core simplicity.

He could be at home with saying nothing, rather than say something of no value. He was not one to push himself forward, seeking the limelight. Humility and simplicity marked his ministry and life - and much good humour. The ready smile, the twinkling eye put us all at our ease. Recreation played a part in his life too - golf, tennis, played and watched on TV. Even boxing on occasion.

There were always, always thanks - a word, a card or letter. Many of us will have received such notes and cards and cherished them. However, the burden of Pastoral Office is great - that of Episcopal Office even more so. The "Yoke" - the "Cross" - that the Lord called him to bear was, at times heavy. Prayer and the celebration of Mass supported him in these many demands - here in Archbishop's House, the Divine Office and Private Mass before breakfast as a matter of routine and discipline, ensured the compass remained true to its course. Midday Prayer at the desk in the office - the tip of his letter knife following the lines of the Psalms - enabled him to keep the Lord before his eyes as the day progressed. He found rest in the Lord in prayer. It was, I suggest, his spirit of self-effacing simplicity that led him to retire so quietly to the flat on

Blackheath. There will be many who wish he had been around a little more, but - rather like John the Baptist, he was happy to grow less. He was, certainly, tired after thirty-three years' service as Bishop. He enjoyed the flat and improved his cooking skill. Declining health was born with characteristic lack of fuss and bother, and for someone who had, over the years, enjoyed the company of sisters, those final months at the Little Sisters at Vauxhall will have been a great consolation to him.

We pray today that the words of the Lord, "I will give you rest" are true for Michael, one of the family, pastor, a Bishop, a friend and father in Christ.

ARCHBISHOP
PETER SMITH
(1943-2020) RIP

A brief reflection – Canon Brian Coyle.

It was with great sadness that the community of St John's Seminary heard of the death of Archbishop Peter Smith, Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark, on 6 March 2020 at the Royal Marsden Hospital, Chelsea, following a recent diagnosis of cancer. Archbishop Peter Smith holds a special place in the history and affection of St John's.

Peter David Smith was born on 21 October 1943 in Battersea, South London. He was educated at Clapham College, then an all-boys voluntary aided grammar school. He read Law at Exeter University. One of his teachers was Professor Dominik Lasok, the father of Dr Pia Matthews (Director of Studies at St John's).

Peter Smith entered St John's Seminary as a seminarian for Southwark on 13 September 1966 and so began a long and happy association with Wonersh - one lasting nearly fifty-four years. The seminary register for 1966 indicates that over thirty new men joined the seminary that year, most of them for the first year. And so Peter Smith began the traditional six years of seminary formation for the Priesthood. He was ordained to the Priesthood on 15 July 1972. Thereafter Fr Peter Smith spent two years as a curate in the then parish of Larkhall Lane (now Stockwell).

He went to Rome in 1974 to study Canon Law at the Angelicum. Armed with a doctorate in Canon Law, Fr Smith returned to his alma mater in 1977 to teach Canon Law. He was also Vice-Rector for a time. He spent the year 1984-1985 as parish administrator in Thornton Heath and was appointed Rector of St John's Seminary in 1985. He was to remain as rector for ten years until Pope John Paul II appointed him to succeed Bishop Alan Clark as the second Bishop of East Anglia in 1995. An account of Mgr Peter Smith's rectorate can be found in chapter 19 of Fr Sean Finnegan's *In Hope of Harvest* (The Wonersh Press, 2011).

Bishop Smith now began what might be called the second phase of his life as a priest. He spent six years in East Anglia. In 2001 he was translated to Cardiff as Archbishop and, again, in 2010, he was translated to Southwark (his home diocese) as Archbishop. In Southwark and as Metropolitan, Archbishop Smith was also, for a time, Apostolic Administrator of Arundel and Brighton. He retired from episcopal office in 2019 and became Archbishop Emeritus of

Southwark.

In the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales he was Chairman, for nearly twenty years, of the Department for Christian Responsibility and Citizenship. He was also Vice-President of the Conference, stepping down shortly before retiring as Archbishop of Southwark. In his day, Archbishop Peter was a regular and eloquent spokesman for the Church on radio and television.

Archbishop Peter held high Church office for many years. He always said that all he wanted to be was a parish priest. St John's Seminary always remained close to his heart. As seminarian, professor, rector and bishop/archbishop, he remained loyal to his seminary. The young man who entered the front door of St John's in 1966 remained at heart a pastor. The ever-demanding burdens of office took their toll on his health and he was not to enjoy happy years of retirement in Whitstable and the garden he so looked forward to tending. Archbishop Peter was only seventy-six when he died.

A fuller appreciation of Archbishop Peter Smith will appear in next year's *Evangelist*. In the meantime, let us give thanks to God for the life and ministry of this priest and bishop. In a particular way, for all of us at St John's Seminary, and for all involved in the formation of seminarians for the Priesthood, may we have the zeal of this faithful servant of the Church. May all of us be worthy of the Priesthood to which the Lord has called us and may we all pray for vocations to the Priesthood.

FOR BOTH ARCHBISHOPS
MICHAEL AND PETER, WE
TRUST IN GOD

*Well done, good and faithful servant.... enter into the joy of your Master. (Matthew 25:21)
Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual light
shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen.*

GRIEF TO GRACE: RECOVERING DIGNITY AFTER ABUSE

Fr Dominic Allain

The most urgent contemporary issue for priestly identity today is how to recover from the scandal of clerical abuse. It strikes at the heart of priestly identity in a uniquely insidious way. At stake is the recovery or death of the image of priest as father.

When priests cease credibly to incarnate a father's love in their dealings with everyone, especially the most vulnerable, then how can priesthood effectively personify Jesus who says, 'To have seen me is to have seen the Father?' (Jn 14:9). Priests who abuse give priesthood the appearance of a corrupt, sterile, self-serving caste. Priestly identity is similarly damaged when the hierarchy respond to its disclosure by placing issues of reputation or liability before spontaneous, fatherly compassion for the dignity of those abused. How can priestly identity recover? Ten years ago Pope Benedict gave this advice: 'Above all the Church must direct her efforts towards concrete measures for healing the survivors of these egregious crimes.' (*Pastoral Letter of H.H. Pope Benedict XVI to the People of Ireland, 19 March 2020*) If priesthood has been part of the problem, it must be seen to become part of the solution.

At the time Pope Benedict wrote his words, the ministry of Grief to Grace was being established in England, offering healing for the psychological, spiritual and bodily damage of abuse. Catholic in its anthropology, it believes that such wounds need the healing power of the Divine Physician. Priests play a key role in a team also comprising psychotherapists and trained lay volunteers who together minister this intensive, specialised programme over six days. It is called a retreat because it is grounded in Scripture, prayer

and the celebration of the sacraments. But the methodology and the intensity of contact over its six days differs from a conventional retreat. So too does the programme's communitarian matrix. It might seem counter-intuitive to treat something so shaming in a group, but this is a key factor in the healing. All abuse isolates. To have their sufferings acknowledged, their grief witnessed, and their dignity affirmed by a welcoming, safe community is essential for the healing and restoration of victims.

Some psycho-education at the beginning of the retreat helps to normalise many of the symptoms associated with abuse so that from the start participants find relief in discovering they are not alone. Every symptom tells a story and an environment is created wherein participants explore their histories in the light of present symptoms. Work on memories comes easily because we are not asking "what's wrong with you?" - with focus on a "damaged self" - but "what happened to you?" Sharing the impact of the abuse leads easily into work on the legitimate and justified Anger left in its wake. An entire day is devoted to expressing this anger, acknowledging the outrage and helping participants find their voice and take up residence in their bodies to "fight back" and reclaim their mind and spirits. People are eager to share their stories and reveal the damage when they are believed and supported to do so while remaining protected and safe. For people of faith, a place of safety must include care for spiritual wounds and needs. They are a large part of what has been abused.

We have many different methods of entering stories to reveal the damage of abuse: artwork; grieving rituals; focused discussions; meditations; memory work; symptoms lists; and body work where survivors are invited to tune into the physiology activated by trauma triggers. Unlike ordinary

memories, those of abuse are kept alive in the body; the ongoing distress of abuse isn't to do with obsessive thinking or a stubborn refusal to let go of the past. It comes from living in a scared organism in which normal brain and body functions have been disrupted by the overload of the body's healthy survival instincts.

Memories and anger work prepare the physiological safety and readiness required to release grief. Thus, participants reveal the damage done by abuse and then move into an active process of transforming it. They are invited to travel with Christ in his sufferings. That journey with Christ through the agony, betrayal, torture, mockery and humiliation and brutalisation of his own Passion gives freedom for participants to share their own unspeakable degradations, humiliations and condemnation. The specially designed 'Living Scripture' meditations and activities, which take retreatants through each stage of Christ's Paschal mystery, provide a powerful vehicle for exploring abusive experiences and open new opportunities for connection with others (including the Redeemer) and the possibility of reclaiming a new identity no longer controlled by suffering as Jesus bursts the confines of the tomb in our Living Scripture exercise of the Resurrection. The dignity of each participant is honoured, as well as the strength and resilience which helped them to survive in horrendous situations. What remains after revealing the damage is a profound commitment to reclaim their lives from the perpetrator's control so as to permit emotional and spiritual growth. People come to Grief to Grace when they have grown sick of the secrets and defences which imprison them. The programme facilitation helps participants become aware of how defence mechanisms which initially helped them to survive are like the safety features on a car, designed to deaden impact, but essentially temporary. You can't drive your car with the airbags

inflated! Participants are invited to experiment with new ways of relating and speaking up for their needs. These can be safely practised in the group.

Sharing the scars of abuse with others diminishes the shame associated with it. We have heard over and over again that what people love the most about the Grief to Grace retreats is that everyone "gets it." They don't need to explain themselves or feel shame, because everyone on the retreat has also been through abuse and they don't feel the need to protect others from the pain of their experiences or wrap it up neatly in 50-minutes of a counselling hour. The uninterrupted days of working through the sludge of their experiences, with God journeying alongside them, as their grief is honoured with reverence and empathy, makes for an intense but highly effective engagement. It is essential that each story is witnessed by others who have the strength to bear the burden with them. The whole group offers encouragement and praise. Resistance can be met with encouragement; breakthroughs are celebrated with joy and even dancing! It is powerful to witness the ministry the survivors provide to each other in the context of the group format which is structured but fluidly capable of expanding to hold the motion and emotions of each participant at each step.

It's common to hear that participants feel closer to people from the retreat community than people they have known for years because of the deep sharing and vulnerability that can take place. The retreat is a place of sanctuary, respectful of the soul's wounds. They also leave feeling intimacy with God, on whom in many cases they have leant so heavily, perhaps without hitherto understanding quite so viscerally his solidarity with them in suffering; blinded to it by shame.

The success of the programme is evidenced by the psychometric tests we administer before

and afterwards and by the participants' own evaluations. The UK team has helped found and train teams for France, Spain, Austria, Slovenia and Australia. In each case an 'alumnus' of one of our programmes, a survivor him or herself, has felt empowered to return home and recruit others to become healers. One participant described Grief to Grace as: 'The Church's field-hospital, operating at its professional best deep behind enemy lines.'

There are no simple, easy solutions to the crisis of clergy abuse. But Grief to Grace, with its expert understanding of how abuse impacts mind, body and spirit and its dedicated team representing both the hierarchical and charismatic Church, proclaims that the body

of Christ hopes and cares for victims of abuse and its members hear the divine mandate to bind up wounds, but only in the strength of Him whose wounds are now glorified and dazzling, Jesus Christ, Eternal Son and Mary's child.

Fr Dominic Allain is International Pastoral Director of the Grief to Grace charity, 14, Edge Hill, Wimbledon, London, SW19 4LP. www.griegtogracesuk.org email: info@griegtogracesuk.org

He also provides Spiritual Direction to seminarians at St John's



THE GOOD SAMARITAN: HOPE AT THE HEART OF HEALTHCARE CHAPLAINCY

Dr Pia Matthews

In *Christifideles Laici* (1988, n. 53) Pope John Paul II's exhortation on the vocation and mission of lay people, the Pope explains that for centuries the Christian community has re-enacted the parable of the Good Samaritan through the commitment of healthcare workers to care for people who are sick and suffering. Healthcare professionals tend to be strangers to those for whom they care. They provide appropriate care because the patient before them is first and foremost a person in need. Differences in faith or culture or nationality serve not to exclude the person from care but to ensure proper respect. Healthcare is available even when the patient cannot pay for it because people have a right to adequate care, indeed many healthcare professionals go beyond basic requirements because healthcare is a vocation rather than merely a job. The Samaritan bandages the man's wounds and pours on oil and wine, antiseptic and healing balm for the spirit. He shows compassion and tender mercy. After the initial treatment he continues to care for the man. Healthcare professionals are good Samaritans who see Christ in the least and in those who are in need (Matthew 25: 31-40). Moreover, they are guided by the Good Samaritan, Jesus.

Jesus introduces the story of the Good Samaritan in order to answer the lawyer's question 'who is my neighbour?' However it is important to note that the lawyer first asks what he should do to have eternal life. Jesus replies 'you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart



and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself'. The 'what should I do?' is an ethical question and the question is set within Luke's chapter on Christian mission and evangelisation. Moreover it is framed in the context of the abundance of life brought to us by Jesus who came 'so that they may have life and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

All of the Church's missionary activity continues the work of Christ (Acts 10:38), and Jesus himself directs the Apostles towards a ministry of the sick (Mark 16:18). As the ministry of Jesus demonstrates, healing is not just about providing cures

or restoring to health. People come to Jesus seeking wholeness and Jesus wants to restore their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Moreover Jesus enables those who listen to him to grow in holiness. Through the sacraments we share in the mystery of Jesus's Passion, death and Resurrection and Jesus institutes the Sacrament of the Sick (James 5:14-16) reminding us that suffering and death have finally been overcome. Certainly a vocation in healthcare continues Christ's healing love and is one of the works of mercy. As Pope Francis says in *Evangelii gaudium* 'we are all missionary disciples'. However, the healthcare chaplain has a special task in

reminding us that human beings are not the ultimate healers: it is Christ who gives meaning and redemptive value to pain and suffering.

Hospital chaplains are well-known for 'loitering with intent'. This loitering does not detract from their professionalism: chaplains attend to patients and their families, as well as other healthcare staff. They go to arranged meetings, multi-disciplinary team meetings, and ethics committees. They follow well-established professional standards and codes of conduct. Indeed chaplains are often very busy. However Catholic chaplains are also a spiritual presence and they are called to be people of prayer. They are there for whoever needs them, irrespective of whether or not the person has a faith. Chaplains are not there to judge people or to ask them what they believe. In being available, and through supportive prayer, Catholic chaplains bring the Good News of Jesus into some of the most difficult human situations.

Care for people who are sick and for their families is an integral part of the Church's mission and this care brings with it precious moments of evangelisation. Moreover this care is work that is both truly human and truly theological. Healthcare is a service to life and an act of Christian witness because sickness affects the person in all his or her dimensions: the physical, emotional, mental,

psychological and spiritual. Sickness can lead to isolation and a form of possession because, like the Gerasene demoniac in Mark 5:1-20 who lives among the tombs, the person appears free but is not really free or in control. Sickness makes us all aware of the fragility of life and of our dependence on others. Sickness raises questions that go beyond the medical or clinical to ethical questions of 'what must I do?', and spiritual questions about meaning, suffering, human dignity, the value and limits of life, and eternal life. These questions, and additionally questions of theodicy, the 'why me?' questions, can be asked without offence because they are asked under the shadow of the Cross. When the newly elected Pope John Paul II returned to Poland and preached in the town where some years before he and the town's people successfully fought the atheistic authorities to have a church built, he spoke about human dignity, about suffering and hope, about people who stand under the Cross and next to the empty tomb. Here, he said, is the Good News of salvation by Love. Each time the Cross is raised new evangelisation begins. In the Christian vision neither earthly life nor health are idolised, instead life and health are properly cherished. After all, as Pope John Paul II explains our earthly life is not our ultimate reality, even so it remains a 'sacred reality' entrusted to us.

Christians working in healthcare, and particularly chaplains, are called to protect and promote the human dignity of everyone as human persons both here and now and as called to share in the life of God. It is a fundamental aspect of the Church's evangelisation and mission to declare that no one is redundant, no one will be abandoned. Indeed, everyone, including people who are sick or disabled, are 'sent forth as labourers into the Lord's vineyard'. Every life, even the most compromised, is a gift and has a vocation. The Catholic chaplain brings hope in the most difficult of times. As Pope Francis reminds us, there is great joy in the knowledge that 'when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved' by God.

Dr Pia Matthews is Dean of Studies and lecturer in Bioethics at St John's. She is author of Ethical questions in Healthcare Chaplaincy: learning to make informed decisions, 2018, Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

OUR COMMUNITY

Dioceses: A&B: Arundel & Brighton C: Clifton L: Liverpool P: Portsmouth S: Southwark



YEAR 6

Dcn Peter Murphy (L), Giovanni Prandini (S), Thomas Kent (A&B), Thomas Lawes (C), Dermott O'Gorman (S), John Howard (S)



YEAR 5

David Hunter (S), Stephen O'Brien (A&B), Stephen Corrigan (C), Matthew Donnelly (S), Paul Nwune (P)



YEAR 4

Joseph Gulliford (S), Allan MacDonald (S), Michael Etuka (S), Joseph Meigh (C), Nicholas Harden (A&B)



YEAR 3 & SPECIAL COURSE

Dcn Peter Sebastian (S), Gustavo Campanello (A&B), Fr Stephen Vooght (P)



YEAR 2

Eddie Hopkins (A&B), Frazer Bellfield (S), Stephen Findlay-Wilson (C)



YEAR 1

Scott Coleman (A&B), Stephen Trafford (S), Philip MacGregor (S), Gary Carter (A&B)

RESIDENT FORMATION STAFF



Canon Brian Coyle (S)
Rector until April 2020



Monsignor Gerry Ewing (S)
Vice-Rector and Rector from June 2020



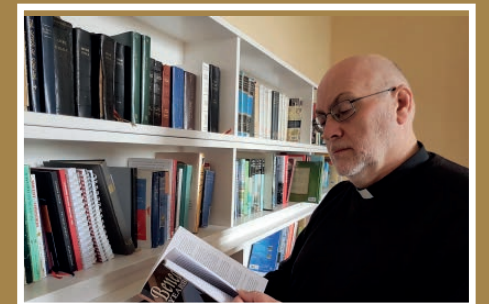
Dr Pia Matthews
Director of Studies and lecturer in Bioethics



Canon Luke Smith (S)
Director of Spirituality and lecturer in Aesthetics



Fr Kevin Dring (A&B)
Director of Pastoral Formation



Fr Julian Shurgold (S)
Director of Liturgical Formation, Librarian and lecturer in History



We welcome Fr David Barrett (Northampton) our new Director of Human Formation

We say farewell to Fr Michael Fountaine (Clifton Diocese) and thank him for his guidance to seminarians and for his contribution as Director of Liturgical Formation. Fr Julian Shurgold (Southwark) is now responsible for that brief.

NEW SEMINARIANS

Phillip MacGregor and Stephen Trafford joined the seminary in September 2019. Eddie Hopkins (Year 2) interviewed them.

PHILLIP MACGREGOR (SOUTHWARK DIOCESE)

WAS THERE A KEY MOMENT IN YOUR FAITH JOURNEY THAT YOU COULD DESCRIBE BRIEFLY?

There were quite a few 'key moments' over the last five years and probably quite a few that I am not aware of! A major step was finally getting in touch with the Archdiocese's Vocations Director. You can only research the priesthood on the internet and in books for so long; eventually you just have to take the daunting step to tell someone about your calling.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE SEMINARY LIFE?

A place of focused learning and growth, where you can develop as a person if you openly engage with the process – and it's busy! The typical seminary day is very structured so you're always looking at the next thing you have to do. But even in your free time, you tend to be catching up on reading, essays, 'life chores' and House Jobs. And it's vital to make time for private prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament; that's a priority. So all in all, there's always something to do.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING IN SEMINARY?

The chance for regular private prayer, formally learning about your faith and the camaraderie among the seminarians – all integrated and encouraged within the community.

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT YOUR OLD LIFE?

Living in a busy city (London)

near lots of local amenities and near a Tube line. You don't have to plan your days out; you just get up on a Saturday, jump on the train and see where you end up. Socialising can be done at very short notice too! That said, there are certainly positives about living in a somewhat secluded community; there's the peace and quiet that allows you to contemplate things much more easily.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD?

Don't be scared, pray about it and get yourself a Spiritual Director, who you can discuss your potential vocation with. When you first start thinking about becoming a priest it can all seem a bit overwhelming. That's pretty normal for many reasons; in fact, if you weren't slightly perturbed by the whole thing, there's probably something wrong. But with prayer and guidance you slowly start to realise the path that God wants you to travel down, although you'll never know the final destination. God's got all sorts of surprises for you along your journey, even if you don't fully understand the meaning of them at the time. There's also the reality that your vocational journey never ends, even after ordination (so I'm told!); there'll always be the next parish or ministry to serve in, the next problem to overcome, the next surprise in life. But that's the same in any walk of life really. So trust in God, get some good guidance and take it a day at a time.

STEPHEN TRAFFORD (SOUTHWARK DIOCESE)

WAS THERE A KEY MOMENT IN YOUR FAITH JOURNEY THAT YOU COULD DESCRIBE BRIEFLY?

The most definitive moment of

my faith journey came in my early teens. One evening I watched a Narnia film at the cinema, and that night I sat in my bedroom reading about CS Lewis and his story of conversion. His story (and latterly his book 'Mere Christianity') had a profound impact on me. I saw how faith in Christ can transform you and how it should have an impact on one's everyday life. That night, for the first time, I knelt, prayed and was truly touched by the presence of God. I went on to be confirmed in the Church of England. Then in 2013, aged 21, I was received into the Roman Catholic Church at the end of a Theology degree at Heythrop College. I have never regretted that decision and have continued on the long road to sanctity ever since. In one sense I consider myself very blessed in that I can very definitively say when and how I came to profess a belief in Christ, and by the grace of the Holy Spirit have made this choice for myself (having also chosen to be baptised aged 10).

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE SEMINARY LIFE?

A fraternal community comprising an abundance of different characters who together are driven by a deep love for Christ and his Church. The experience is too rich to say more at this point.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING IN SEMINARY?

Whilst living in community can bring its challenges, it is also one of the best things about being here because you get to know your fellow seminarians on a deeper level and can learn a lot from them. The food in this seminary (in my opinion) is also pretty good!

WHAT DO YOU MISS MOST ABOUT YOUR OLD LIFE?

I miss involvement in my home parish of the Sacred Heart, Sittingbourne. I have a great

affection for this community who continue to give me loving support. It was within that parish community that I came to a realisation of my vocational call and I owe its members much for the Gospel values they have imparted to me. I do also miss many of the students I used to teach last year when leading Religious Education at the Cedars School in Croydon. They weren't a bad bunch!

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO SOMEONE THINKING ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD?

Do not be afraid to talk to people about it and especially speak to priests, listening also to their own experiences of discernment and priesthood. Most importantly however, go to Eucharistic adoration! Our Lord is waiting to listen to you there, to your thoughts, desires, requests and problems. Talk to Him, listen to Him, meditate upon Him and all will become clear – your self-knowledge will grow!

NEW ARRIVALS FROM THE ROYAL ENGLISH COLLEGE OF ST ALBAN'S, VALLADOLID

Scott Coleman and Gary Carter (Arundel and Brighton Diocese)

The location of St John's in the beautiful English countryside is certainly a different setting for us, after a very enjoyable year at the rather sunny Royal English College of St Alban's in Valladolid. The *Ratio Fundamental*, *The Gift of the Priestly Vocation*, 2016, places a great emphasis on seminarians undertaking a *propaedeutic* or preparatory year to allow for a period of spiritual growth and reflection before joining the major seminary of St John's. It was for this reason that we both headed out into the unknown on a dreary September morning in 2018 from Gatwick on the formation journey

(and it really felt like a journey).

The English College in Valladolid has formed priests since 1589 through persecution, war, peace and stability. The college is now solely a propaedeutic seminary where seminarians from England, Ireland, Scandinavia and Canada meet, discern with and learn from each other in a Catholic culture. The education we received focused on how we can both learn about God and cultivate a deeper relationship with God in preparation for the studies to come. As well as studying, we were able to get stuck into pastoral work in soup kitchens, schools and residential homes as well as being able to learn about and get involved in the religious, historical, culinary and cultural life of Spain. The warmth of the welcome and hospitality from the people of Valladolid was always humbling and will always stay with us.

Among the high points of the year were the celebration of the College's martyrs: priests in the Reformation era who were executed on their return to England for administering the sacraments

and serving the faithful. To have trodden the same college halls, prayed in the same chapel and lived in the same building as these brave men is inspiring and awesome. In December followed the feast of *Our Lady Vulnerata* ('the wounded one'), a celebration unique to the College, based upon a statue of *Our Lady of the Rosary* which was damaged when the English raided Cadiz in 1596 in revenge for the Armada. This feast is well known in the city and is a focus of devotion for many residents as well as seminarians.

The high point of the year was *Semana Santa*, Holy Week, for which we were joined by the staff and students of St John's. Its focus in Valladolid is on penitential processions led by members of the city's confraternities. These brotherhoods were founded to undertake both charitable works and the Holy Week Processions. Each confraternity has a church, and its specially crafted floats are carried about the city. The floats themselves are often masterpieces of sacred art; in the Spanish style they do not shy away from the horrors of the Lord's Passion, and





also capture the intense emotions of the participants. The various statues of Our Lady of Sorrows are deeply moving.

We were invited to walk in procession with the *Vera Cruz* ('True Cross') confraternity on their Palm Sunday procession. The whole city comes to a standstill, as around 35,000 people lined the streets to greet the Redeemer King. The procession wound its way all around the city centre, lasting nearly three hours. To an Englishman, it is remarkable to see this kind of communal and popular Catholic devotion, and to see it so highly honoured.

Canon Paul Farrer, Rector of the English College, Valladolid, takes part in the Holy Week penitential procession with the Confraternity of Our Lady of Anguish. The penitents wear hoods to preserve their anonymity as a mark of humility - an idea which applies not only to Holy Week processions but also to charitable good works throughout the year

On Monday of Holy Week, when Womersley arrived, we carried our own statue of Our Lady *Vulnerata* to meet her Son, brought by another confraternity. It was after midnight when we left the College church, carrying Our Lady outside, singing the *Pater Noster*. The Womersley students carried candles, incense, and flowers, and the crowd in the street outside joined in the singing of the *Salve Regina*. As we retreated back into the Church - Mary never turning her back to the Lord - he turns, as it were, for one final glimpse of His Mother before continuing to Calvary. This moment was an immense privilege and an emotive start to the celebration of the Paschal Mystery.

Our two seminaries celebrated Holy Week together, praying, visiting the city, and socialising. Bishop Paul Mason joined us to lead the celebration of the *Triduum* liturgies. In the evening of Maundy Thursday many of us followed the tradition of visiting seven *Altars of Repose* around the city's countless churches. Good Friday had a more sombre tone but was livened up by

seeing one of the confraternities riding around the city on horseback to announce the Sermon on the *Seven Last words*, this year given by the Archbishop of Madrid and attended by thousands.

The Easter Vigil was, as always, a highlight of the liturgical year, not least with some glorious music. The celebrations continued afterwards with canapes and something fizzy (the domestic staff always went the extra mile for special occasions). We spent Easter Sunday itself celebrating and enjoying our final day together before St John's seminarians left early the next morning.

The propaedeutic year was a valuable time of spiritual growth as well as a unique experience of Catholic life and culture in Spain, and having a year to get to grips with how seminarians run meant that we could hit the ground running here at St John's. Please do pray for all the seminarians at the Royal English College in Valladolid, that the Lord may form and guide them to follow His will for their lives.



A NEW ACT OF CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY

Deacon Thomas Kent



Mary is the key to understanding the reality of Jesus's humanity.

Over the past few months English Catholics have been asked by the bishops to make a special act of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, thus recalling a similar event that was carried out over six hundred years ago by King Richard II. In 1381, on the feast of Corpus Christi at Westminster Abbey, King Richard personally consecrated England to Our Lady's protection, a significant act of public piety that clearly reflects the vibrancy and strength of Marian devotion at that time. Because of such devotion, prior even to the king's act of consecration, England had already been characterised in the Middle Ages as *Our Lady's Dowry*. What does this mean? In the medieval world, a *dower* was a part of the husband's estate that was set apart exclusively for his widow on the occasion of his death, the rest going automatically to his eldest son. As *Our Lady's Dowry*, England, was understood to have been "set apart" by God, for Mary.

To the contemporary, post-Reformation mind, many people may well wonder what it really means to say that England is "set apart for Mary". Certainly, non-Catholics would balk at the idea – others too, can find it difficult to grasp the real meaning. To avoid any confusion, I think we need to begin by noting that such language is fundamentally symbolic. It is not as though God has given Mary a divine right to govern English affairs, or that, looking at things the other way round, she has a lesser significance in other parts of the world. The title was applied to England, not as an attempt to convey a theological truth, but because the English had developed an impressive reputation for their Marian devotion.

At the heart of English devotion to Mary lies the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, a hugely popular place of pilgrimage, built in 1061 after a lady called Richeldis de Faverches experienced several Marian apparitions in that area. The essential message of these apparitions was that Christians ought to foster a newfound appreciation for the Annunciation and Incarnation – that precious scene, beautifully narrated in St Luke's Gospel, where Mary is told by an angel that she will bear in her womb the Son of God; Immanuel, God-with-us. Initially fearful, Mary eventually concedes to God's plan and utters those immortal words: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me as you have said".

Numerous theologians, including not least Hans Urs Von Balthasar – a Swiss priest and important theologian of the twentieth century – have suggested that in order to grow closer to Jesus, we need to relate to him from the context within which he chose to manifest

himself. Whilst being wholly divine, the historical context of Jesus' earthly existence was that of also being wholly human. This included the reality of belonging to a family, of having a real mother, a real earthly father – albeit an adoptive one – and real, intimate friendships. It is the very reality and tangibility of these earthly relationships that reveals to us the way in which Jesus desires to relate to us. It is the very nucleus of our faith. God does not desire to be at a distance from us; he desires a relationship with us as real as that between close family members. "I do not call you servants", Jesus said, "I call you friends". We have been called by Jesus to become members of his family.

Mary is the key – God's instrument – which makes this possible. Her "yes" to God the Father made the incarnation of Jesus physically possible and, in a sense, the Father actually consecrated the Son to her; he gave him over to her to look after. For this alone, we owe Mary a debt of gratitude. And yet her divine mission to be the mother of Jesus is one that surely never ended. If – as we believe – Jesus remains for all time fully divine and fully human, the reality of his having a human mother must also remain in place for all time. By drawing closer to this mother figure, we actually move deeper into the reality of Jesus' family life. By consecrating ourselves to Mary, it becomes easier to see ourselves, not merely as his followers, but as members of his family. If God the Father was willing to consecrate his own Son to the motherhood of Mary, it makes eminent sense for us to do the same.

Mary's response to the angel is also vital for our spiritual lives. Why? Because it teaches us the response that we need to give

to God if we want to share in Mary's mission of bringing Jesus Christ into the world. And that is our mission: to bring Jesus Christ into the world, to "go and make disciples of all nations". By taking Mary as a role model for evangelisation, it is easier to recognise how, at least for the medieval Englishman, there was no conflict between Marian devotion and absolute Christocentricity. Marian devotion has always been a significant part of our seminary community, and we regularly implore Our Lady's intercession for our beloved country. We have two shrines dedicated to Our Lady Queen of the Clergy; numerous students gather each day to pray the rosary in the afternoon; the angelus is recited every day before morning prayer; Marian anthems and the prayer for England are offered in our Lady chapel every week after the office of Compline.

With secularism being the dominant flavour of the day, one can hardly imagine such a prominent public person undertaking so bold a gesture as King Richard II. During this year, therefore, the responsibility falls to each one of us to make a new act of consecration to Mary, to pray for the healing of our society and its restoration to faith in Jesus Christ. Because of COVID 19 pandemic, it has not been possible to make that new act of consecration a public act. But England was rededicated as the Dowry of Mary on Sunday March 29 2020 as an individual event taking place in thousands of homes up and down the country, as well as at a live-streamed Mass at the Catholic National Shrine in Walsingham and St John's Cathedral in Norwich. It is our fervent hope that, with our Our Lady's prayers to help and inspire us, England will soon be restored to complete faith in Jesus Christ, her divine son, and our brother.

WHY WAS JOHN HENRY NEWMAN CANONISED?

Fr Stephen Dingley



To be a really good theologian you need to be holy, because you need to be close to your subject, and your subject is God.

The canonisation of St John Henry Newman by Pope Francis on 13 October last year was a big event for our country. He was the first English person to be canonised since 1970 when the Forty English and Welsh martyrs of the Reformation times were canonised, including people like Edmund Campion, the great priest and scholar, Margaret Clitherow, the courageous mother of a family, and Philip Howard, the patron of my own diocese (Arundel and Brighton).

WHO WAS JOHN HENRY NEWMAN?

He was born in London in 1801 and baptised into the Church of England. At the age of fifteen he experienced a first level of religious conversion, to evangelicalism. He went up to Oxford University – where he did very badly in his final exams, apparently because of bad advice, anxiety and overwork. However, his real ability was soon recognised by others,

and he became a fellow of Oriel College.

In 1825 he was ordained as an Anglican priest, initially ministering in a working class parish, but he was later appointed as the Vicar of St Mary's, the University church. Throughout his life he was a diligent pastor and a renowned preacher. Around this time, Newman became involved in the "Oxford Movement", promoting the more "Catholic" elements of the Church of England, and he gained much fame as a controversial writer.

Initially Newman advocated the Church of England as a *via media*, or middle way, between the excesses (as he saw them) of Roman Catholicism and the diminished beliefs of Protestantism. However, he became more and more dissatisfied with this theory, especially through comparisons with disputes in early Church history (which he had studied in depth). In those ancient controversies, he realised, the truth was always to be found in the position of Rome rather than with the compromise party. In order to test this insight, and to see if it applied to his own personal situation, he set himself to write his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. But even before finishing it properly he realised he had to leave the Church of England and become a Catholic.

On 9 October 1845 Newman was received into the full Communion of the Catholic Church. He studied briefly at seminary in Rome and was ordained as a Catholic priest. Returning to England he set up the Birmingham Oratory. For a few years he was involved in a project to found a Catholic University in Ireland, but mainly he continued his priestly ministry and theological writing

at Birmingham—not without significant controversy and opposition. This ultimately led to his writing his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* - a spiritual autobiography, giving a reasoned defence of his religious opinions and journey. In 1879 he was created a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII, which he saw as a vindication of his whole life's work. He died in 1890.

WHAT WERE HIS KEY IDEAS?

They were many and varied, but a few can be highlighted.

First, there is his lifelong opposition to "liberalism" or the "anti-dogmatic principle". This is the idea that it doesn't matter what we believe, just as long as we are sincere in that belief—which ultimately implies that there is no real truth in religion, only sentiment.

Related to this is Newman's keen advocacy of the value of conscience. By this he certainly did not mean just relying on our gut feelings to judge right and wrong. Jesus and His Church have very clear and vital teachings on moral matters. Rather, Newman meant the absolute importance of doing what we judge to be right—which necessarily includes listening to Jesus' teachings through His Church. In this light, we can understand the significance of one of the lines of Newman's hymn *Firmly I believe and truly*:

*And I hold in veneration, for the love of Him alone,
Holy Church as His creation, and her teachings as His own.*

As mentioned earlier, another of Newman's key ideas was the development of doctrine. Church teaching is not static, it develops. This does not mean changing its basic content, or adding novelties, or taking away awkward bits. Rather, it means becoming more fully itself, like an acorn developing

into an oak tree: making explicit what was implicit, drawing out logical connections, and making links with other established doctrines. For all of this the Church's *Magisterium*, or teaching office through the pope and the bishops, is the ultimate guarantee.

Another of Newman's ideas worthy of mention is the value of consulting the laity in matters of doctrine.

Finally - and very importantly for our own times as well as Newman's nineteenth century - is the link of faith to reason: a topic he returned to many times in his life, both as an Anglican and as a Catholic. He argued that not only theologians but ordinary people in the pews should have faith that is rationally justified. This does not mean that the doctrines of our faith should be a matter of logical or mathematical proof: that is impossible. God is not a mathematical object, and Christian doctrines are mysteries beyond humanly discoverable facts. What it does mean is that through personal, responsible and rational weighing up of all the evidence available to us, we should reach an authentic and trustworthy judgment that Christianity *ought* to be believed: it is irrational *not* to believe!

WHY WAS NEWMAN CANONISED?

First of all, Newman was not canonised because he was clever. There are lots of clever people, and not many of them become saints! On the other hand, to be a really good theologian you need to be holy, because you need to be close to your subject, and your subject is God.

Rather, I think Newman was canonised because he was a man of extraordinary personal integrity, rejecting all sorts of

intellectually fashionable ideas, and following through his own line of reasoning with dedication and humility in the face of weighty opposition, both as an Anglican and as a Catholic. And he was canonised for following through his ideas in his life, from his initial conversion aged fifteen to his final conversion to Catholicism in 1845—at great personal cost. Finally, I think, he was canonised for remaining a humble, diligent, caring pastoral priest through it all; for fostering deep personal friendships; and, most of all, for his deep, reverent friendship with God.

Fr Stephen Dingley lectures in Doctrinal Theology at St John's and is Parish Priest of Effingham and Fetcham.

CANONISATION OF NEWMAN - A PILGRIM'S ACCOUNT

Canon Michael O'Dea reports from Rome

FRIDAY 11TH OCTOBER

I made my way to Heathrow airport with two priest friends and some parishioners from south-west London. As we queued for the flight we noticed it was not the usual weekend exodus but our queue had several roman collars, school children in uniform, and people wearing distinct red tea shirts emblazoned with the face of John Henry Newman. Such was our pilgrim band. We landed in warm autumn sunshine and made our way to our accommodation in a convent in Trastevere. Having unpacked we made our way to St. Peter's Square. On the façade of St. Peter's hung the tapestries of images of the new saints, John Henry Newman occupying central place. His enigmatic smile beaming out for all to see. I remembered that Newman, when he arrived in Rome like us, made straight for St. Peter's.

SATURDAY 12TH OCTOBER

After breakfast we headed over to *Collegio de Propaganda Fide* for a group Mass in the Chapel of the Three Kings where John Henry Newman was ordained priest. As we were a small group we picked up a few more pilgrims who joined us for Mass. As a group of priests celebrating Mass together it was very humbling to be where Newman's ministry began. In a brief homily we heard of Newman's sense of mission in his prayer 'God has created me to do Him some definite service and I am a link in a chain a bond of connection between people'. This was a poignant reminder of our own calling to mission.

Later that evening we went over to Santa Maria Maggiore for a prayer vigil led by Archbishop Bernard Longley. As we gathered and gazed at the glittering mosaic of Christ and the Virgin Mary there was a true feeling of anticipation. *Praise to the holiest* rang out as our opening hymn and there was a feeling of pride that soon we would have another English saint.

SUNDAY 13TH OCTOBER

The day of Canonisation arrives and an early start to St. Peter's for the Mass in the Piazza. It was a cool morning and already the golden sunshine was on St. Peter's with Newman's image to greet us. As is customary concelebrating clergy are penned together and there are the usual nods of recognition and conversations between friends and strangers. On the sanctuary the bishops were closest to the altar. On the opposite flank were other VIPs, noticeably Prince Charles in a sharp blue suit and dark sunglasses. Behind him were Anglican bishops and clergy including our local vicar from Putney. As Pope Francis processed to the altar the *Veni Creator Spiritus* was sung followed by the Litany of Saints.

After a proclamation was read and the Pope's assent given, there was gentle applause. Pope Francis in his homily speaks of the saints as 'kindly lights amid the encircling gloom and urges us to go out of our comfort zones. He concludes in Newman's words 'Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as thou shinest: so to shine as to be a light for others.' Someone said after the Mass that 50,000 people were present and that it seemed like a very prayerful parish Mass.

St Peter's Square was now a veritable suntrap and it was time for the pilgrims to disperse and find lunch in the nearby trattorias. Later that afternoon, once refreshed by a siesta, we walked to the Venerable English College for a special exhibition featuring Newman's four visits to Rome. When at *Propaganda* Newman and Ambrose St John were the only Englishmen out of 140 seminarians. Newman visited the *Venerabile* on a weekly basis and would engage in theological discussion with seminarians and no doubt take tea! Afterwards, we walked over to the *Chiesa Nuova*, a few streets away, where St. Phillip Neri gathered together young Romans to form the first Oratory and where his body is displayed in a side chapel. He is still one of Rome's best loved saints and inspired Newman to bring the Oratory to England. So it was appropriate that as part of the celebrations a musical oratorio was performed; a mixture of prayers, readings, choral music and reflections. I am sure St Phillip would have approved.

MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER

Today marks the end of our weekend of celebration and we have a Thanksgiving Mass in St. John Lateran, the Pope's cathedral. Cardinal Vincent summarises our feelings saying our party is coming to an

end. It seems like the whole English Church has invaded this beautiful and ancient basilica. The entry procession of priests is 500 strong and it seems to have no end. Taking part in the Mass are the two recipients of the miracles of our saint: Deacon Jack Sullivan from Boston and Melissa Villalobos from Chicago. The Mass has a family feel and the Oratorians have worked hard to make sure everyone feels the charism and spirit of St. John Henry Newman. Bishop Robert Byrne captures this in his homily when he reminds us that Newman's "greatness lies partly in his intellectual ability to approach the questions of the day from a different angle and a broader perspective. Like his spiritual father, St Philip Neri, we cannot put Newman in a box; we must let him speak for himself and he will teach us much."

Canon Michael O'Dea is Parish Priest at Our Lady of Pity and Saint Simon Stock, Putney, London.



ST JOHN'S SEMINARY ARCHIVES: JO HALFORD APPOINTED ARCHIVIST



I was thrilled to join the seminary staff as part-time Archivist and Records Manager in September 2019. For the next two years, my task will be to appraise and sort the records of St John's and of Mark Cross junior seminary, whilst taking steps to ensure their permanent physical preservation. My aim is to produce a detailed catalogue making the archive accessible to all.

In 2003, I gained a Master's degree in Archive Administration from the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Since then, I have worked as Archivist in a wide variety of repositories, including eight years for the British Psychoanalytical Society, and six at Kingston Grammar School. I am also School Archivist for Prior's Field School in Godalming

ACCESSING AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE ARCHIVE

If you would like to consult the archive or contribute photos, documents or reminiscences, please contact me.

Opening hours:
8.30am-1pm, 2pm-5pm,
Wednesdays and Fridays
Contact email:
archives@wonersh.org
Phone: 01483 892217

ST JOHN'S SEMINARY: THE CHAPEL CHALLENGE APPEAL

**Mgr Gerry Ewing, Vice-Rector
and now Rector - St John's
Seminary**

Around Easter 2019, we launched our *Chapel Challenge Appeal*, having been overwhelmed by the generosity of so many towards our *Seminarians' Room Refurbishment Appeal* the year before. We didn't want to 'push our luck' so-to-speak in asking for more help from already generous donors – so we tried to make it clear that our *Chapel Challenge Appeal* was not being made to those who had been generous to us already, but rather to those who may have missed our *Seminarians' Room Refurbishment Appeal*, and also to the 'Old Boys' of Wonersh – whether ordained or not.

We were also keen to make our *Chapel Challenge Appeal* known to potential significant donors, who may have been in a position to make donations through businesses and companies. In addition, we wanted to make the *Chapel Challenge Appeal* known to those who might want to make a thanksgiving donation in honour of the Sacred Heart – to whom the Chapel is dedicated – for prayers answered or favours received. So far, the wonderful generosity of donors has raised £146,000 towards the *Appeal*, which means that we have a further £204,000 to raise in order to meet the £350,000 target.

The Chapel was re-ordered, refurbished and redecorated in the late 1980s, enhancing its beauty, and bringing it in line with the liturgical requirements of the Church. It is still a very beautiful place, at the heart of the Seminary community. Those who have studied for the priesthood at Wonersh will be familiar with the inscription '*Non vos me elegistis, sed ego elegi vos ... You did not choose me, but I have chosen you*' – in prominent place over the Sanctuary. They will have many memories of the Chapel, remembering times of great joy, as well as times of great

comfort, consolation and challenge, as they discerned God's will.

While the Chapel is still very much fit for purpose and in daily use, work needs to be done to stabilise the original parquet flooring, to upgrade the heating and lighting, and to improve the sound system – and the Chapel desperately needs redecorating. This involves much more than just a lick of paint. There are many fine features, which have been delicately painted, and which need to remain in such a way, as the Chapel is a Grade II listed building.

We are deeply grateful to all those who have helped us with the *Chapel Challenge Appeal* so far. Every day we remember in prayer all those who support us spiritually and financially. This is the prayer that we pray ...

*May Our Lady,
Queen of the Clergy,
and St John, our patron,
intercede for us with
the Lord;
that our seminarians,
staff and benefactors,
past and present,
may be helped and
saved by him.*

We ask that you keep us in your prayers too – for the success of our *Chapel Challenge Appeal* – and, of course, in our task of providing good and worthy priests for service in today's Church.

Any *Chapel Challenge Appeal* donations, large or small, will be very gratefully received (cheques payable to: *St John's Seminary*). Please send to: Mgr Gerald Ewing (Vice-Rector), St John's Seminary, Wonersh, Guildford, Surrey GU5 0QX

(It is also possible to donate by Bank Transfer, and to Gift Aid. You may even like to remember the Seminary in your will. For further details email: vice-rector@wonersh.org)

Thank you so much – and may God bless you!

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HOW IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Everyone is called to discipleship, whether as a priest, religious, permanent deacon or lay person. If you feel called to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life, talk to your parish priest or contact the Vocations Director for your diocese. If not, perhaps consider how God wants you to be a disciple as you are now: he may be calling you to exciting new things!

Please pray for vocations, and please encourage other people to pray about their vocations. Your words may help them to answer God's call.

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THANK YOU

All the photos of the ordination of the six deacons – whether individual, family shots, with the bishop, during the ceremony, after the ceremony were taken by ©Nina Mattiello Azadeh