



Seminary News

from Allen Hall, London SW3 5AA

Autumn 2014

From the Rector

Welcome to this autumn newsletter from Allen Hall. It has been a very active summer, with many of the men busy on pastoral work and in Lourdes. Here we opened up a summer hostel for paying guests from all over the world and were particularly happy to welcome nearly 40 Sisters of the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary for their international retreat. At the same time, our rotting library roof was replaced, and we began work to repair the ceiling, which had fallen in and made the library dangerous and unusable. All of this structural work has been made possible by the generosity of the people of the Diocese, especially through the Growing in Faith initiative, and we are very grateful for all your continuing support.

Inside you will find some photographs of the community here, together with some short biographies of our new men. On this page, two of our newly-ordained write of their journey into the great work that is priestly ministry. We have a wonderful diversity of backgrounds, which is a sign of the life and vigour of the Church throughout the world. One of our seminarians, Tony Thomas, writes about his direct experience of this, too, on a visit to the Church in Kenya. We come in all shapes and sizes; there is no one model, except the model of the Good Shepherd himself.



With our thanks and prayers
Fr Roger Taylor

Here two of our new Priests, Frs Brian and Andrew, write about leaving seminary

Brian: There's certainly something quite attractive about getting on with the work you've been preparing for and a sense of adventure in not knowing what's in store. Also looking forward to just belonging to a parish and being there; nice as this place might be, you never really belong here. You leave each year, come back in September, you go away on placement. The people keep changing, there is the sense of permanent temporality, if that makes sense. Right from the start you know it's only for six years, while in a parish you do make it your home, till the Cardinal tells you to move. And being able to celebrate the sacraments, of course, will be a huge joy. I did think of other religious vocations - missionary priesthood had an appeal to me as a youngster and I thought of the Jesuits. But I guess it's primarily the idea of rootedness, being attached to a place, which I find most attractive. I did a summer with Missio in Kenya; it was amazing, but I returned convinced that my vocation lay in the diocesan priesthood.

Andrew: I took a few years after school to be with a missionary organisation called Faith Alive, which started out of St John Paul II's call for the New Evangelization. We would go into schools as teams to preach the gospel; peer-to-peer ministry, young people talking to other young people, so it was quite good and very effective. It was a great experience of Christian community and mission. It naturally drew me to thoughts of missionary orders, but whenever I went to Mass, the thought kept coming back: 'What about the priesthood?' I finally did a course of discernment called Compass, and it seemed to become quite clear that this was where I was meant to be.

Brian: There's so much that can be done in the parish. And I would say that part of discerning vocation is to realize that it might not always look like what you expected it to at first. I think I can say that I would have been in the wrong place if I'd chosen a missionary order. It seemed like God had led me to this, and once you find that you don't need to go around exploring

We welcome Fr William Nicol as our Pastoral Director

I come from the North East, where I joined the Anglican Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield, W. Yorks. After 17 years in community and much thought and prayer I decided to leave, and was received into the Catholic Church at St Mary of the Angels in Bayswater. As a Catholic layman I ran the Fr Michael Hollings Drop-In Centre for the Homeless by day and was an usher at the Royal Opera House by night. Seminary formation at the Beda College in Rome began in 2005, with Diaconate at St Paul's Outside the Walls in 2008 and Priesthood in 2009 at Bayswater. Since then I have been Assistant in Kingsland parish before becoming Parish Priest of Wapping.



Newly-ordained Frs Derek Hyett, Brian O'Mahony and Andrew Jaxa-Chamiec with Cardinal Vincent and Cardinal Cormac

every other option there is, great peace can follow. I knew this was the place for me when I started, but I also realized there was the aspect of continuing discernment which comes with a place like this. I thought I'd give it till Christmas, starting from September, that was fine; then I gave it till the end of the academic year; that was fine again; then I thought I'd give it two years. And really that's how it's continued.

Andrew: To know so many others on the same journey and have their friendship has been great. I loved the pastoral placements. The love with which people receive seminarians in parishes is very humbling.

Brian: Like Andrew, I loved the pastoral placements: you see the variety, the opportunities and challenges I worked with young offenders in prison, the travelling community, hospital, where I learnt so much from the lay chaplain. I enjoyed my pastoral work in a primary school greatly and it was a bit of a revelation about myself, too.

Andrew: Parishes top the placements list for me. There's privilege in being with people, some going through great suffering, others just wanting someone to be available for them; seeing the hunger people have for God is so inspiring. An eye-opener for me was taking children with learning difficulties to Lourdes. It made me so much more aware of their needs, but also gave me a great appreciation for the dignity of their lives, not least their spiritual life. It taught me that they can teach us so much: a real lesson to take with me into priesthood.



Our New Men



David Knight—Westminster

I started seminary formation in September 2012 at the Royal English College of St. Alban, Valladolid, with a propaedeutic year. It was a gift from the Diocese I will never forget and will continue to draw strength from. Returning to Westminster, I was given the grace of a Pastoral Year at Our Lady of Grace and St. Edward, Chiswick. It was great

working with Canon Dwyer, Fr. Graham Stokes and the parish with lots of challenges and things to learn, not only about Priesthood and parish life, but also about myself. A strange thing for a 40 year-old to say perhaps, but our own humanity is such an important part of our priestly formation. Previously, I have worked in partnership accounting in the City, as a professional musician and Lay Clerk in Westminster Cathedral Choir and taught singing at the London Oratory School.



John Scott—Westminster

I was brought up in the Church of England in the 1950s and 60s and had the good fortune to be a teenager under a parish priest whose liturgical sense and scriptural perception were inspirational. After my time at university he had become a bishop and claimed me for his diocese. I later moved to London and served in two parishes before a change of spiritual

direction took me to twelve years of chaplaincy to a small house of contemplative Anglican sisters and hermits, an experience for which I am continually grateful. A few years more of Anglican chaplaincy in London brought me into the Catholic Church as a Pastoral Assistant. After several years of change and discernment I judged it right to offer myself for the priesthood and now here I am at Allen Hall surrounded by younger men, whose commitment I admire.



Marcin Nadolski—Redemptoris Mater

I'm the youngest of four children, born into a Polish Catholic family. When I felt a call to the priesthood at 17, I wanted to know God better. Luckily, I was not alone. I met a priest who introduced me to the Neo-Catechumenal Way. During my period of discernment with the Way I attended a vocational group. This helped me to know myself better and to see that the Church is a gift in which God reveals

himself. It helped me to deepen my first vocation: to be a Christian. I graduated from Gdynia Maritime University and started working as an electrician. But something was missing; the opportunity for me came in 2012 during the vocational pilgrimage to Budapest. I discovered that I am happy when serving others. A few months later I was sent here to the seminary in London. I am glad to be here, praying that the Lord will guide me in this journey.



Back Row

Standing

Seated

Front Row

Trevor Ferros, Joe McCay, Marco Lazzaron, Mar
Rev Cyril Chiaha, Christian de Lisle, Tony Thomas, Mauro
François Couâson, Josh Hilton, Rev Kevin Grad
Karol Kencel, Jonny Whitby-Smith, Damian Rya

Royston Price, Marcin Nadolski, Lawrence Ndl

Rev Dr Michael O'Boy, Fr Francis Selman, F
Sr Magdalen O'Neill IBVM, Fr Mehall



Joe McCay—Nottingham

I am 20 years-old and was born and brought up in Doncaster. My first sense of vocation came when I was 16 and my best friend died in a tragic car accident; I found real consolation and comfort within the Church. I describe it as a seed that started to grow in my mind, telling

me to follow God's call. So I got in touch with my uncle, who is a priest of Nottingham Diocese, and he sent me to the Vocations Director. After finishing my A-Levels, I did a discernment year within the Scunthorpe Deanery, with a spell at Nottingham Cathedral, and in May of this year I was accepted for formation and sent here to Allen Hall. My main passion is supporting my club Leeds United, where I have had a season ticket for 12 years now. Well, somebody has to!



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Trevor Ferros—Westminster

Although I was raised in a devout Catholic family, it was an experience at World Youth Day which led me to take the first real steps towards Priesthood. However, my indecisive nature meant that it was some time before I felt able to apply for Seminary and I attempted to carve out some meaning for my life in a variety of Civil Service roles. Having spent one year at the Royal English College in Valladolid, I now continue my journey of discernment at Allen Hall in the Diocese I was born and raised in. Whether or not I am ordained Priest, this time of formation has led me into a deepening friendship with Jesus Christ; and as this friendship grows, the meaning for which I had

been searching so long becomes ever more real.



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An experience of the Universal Church; and meeting a giraffe or two.



*Every summer seminarians are sent for a month-long placement. Most are local, but opportunities do occur for mission in different parts of the world. **Tony Thomas** recently went to Kenya with Missio, the Church's official charity for Overseas Mission and reports here on his experience ...*

In July 2013 Derek Hyett and myself spent a memorable month working in St Mary and St Joseph parish in Shauri Moyo, located in the outskirts of Nairobi, the Kenyan capital. Our host was Fr Benny Quinto, a genial Mill Hill Father, originally from the Philippines. Most of the homes there are small, shanty-style properties, and lack basic amenities. Nevertheless, we received a warm and sincere welcome, and people's generosity towards us – often giving out of the very little that they possessed – was heartfelt and touching. Small Christian Communities (SCCs) are a thriving part of church life. Groups of two or three dozen meet in a member's home each week, to worship, pray with Scripture and share their faith experiences. For these parishioners, the Word of God isn't just something heard at Mass on Sundays; it is a personal Word to shape their week. The SCCs also distribute aid to the poorest members, supporting those who are sick or facing hardship. It was inspiring to see such examples of community life in action.

A moving moment for me personally came with home visits to parishioners with HIV, which is quite prevalent in Shauri Moyo and still carries a degree of stigma resulting in late diagnosis, transmission to partners and, sometimes, to babies. In response, the parish has set up an HIV clinic, to help with diagnosis and the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs. This project has grown and now provides professional medical care, part-funded by U.S. Aid

Programmes. Parish volunteers provide a home visit service, so that patients can receive counselling and advice on their medication regimes. Pope Francis has often reminded us about the Church's mission to the poorest and most marginalised, and in Kenya we saw many concrete examples of this type of outreach.

It was a privilege to join Fr Benny visiting up to 25 shanty homes a day to give blessings; we met some of the local religious communities, many of which are thriving and have lots of young vocations; we spent time with the local Filipino community, celebrating Mass with them and enjoying their hospitality; we visited a maternity hospital which struggles with inadequate funds to provide care for premature babies; and we gave talks to the parish's young people's groups.

Many things inspired and challenged us during our time in Kenya; overall I was left with the impression of a Church materially impoverished, but full of faith and missionary zeal. We are grateful to Missio and to Fr Benny for giving us the chance to experience the Church in such a different culture. The Kenyan experience has left us with more than great memories; it also inspired us for that New Evangelisation which is so desperately needed in the western world.

More details about Missio and its work can be found at www.missio.org.uk

Almighty God, bless those preparing for the priesthood at Allen Hall, and all those involved in the life of the seminary.

May they discern your will in their lives; may they grow in faith, hope and love; and may they lead others to know Christ and to grow in holiness.

We pray especially that you will call many people to the priesthood and consecrated life in our Diocese and that you will give them the courage they need to answer your call.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

St Thomas More *Pray for us*

Martyrs of Douai *Pray for us*

Summer Accommodation in London



The seminary, with beautiful gardens and Chapel, offers comfortable bed and breakfast accommodation during July and August. Centrally located, it is also within walking distance of Battersea Park. Rooms from £50 per night. More details can be found at:

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