



IN THE DIOCESE

Clothing Ceremony at Belmont Abbey

On the feast of Ss Peter and Paul this year, I was admitted into the novitiate at Belmont Abbey (located just outside Hereford, in the Archdiocese of Cardiff), having spent a ten month probationary period, known monastically as the 'postulancy'. This event, of formal entrance into the monastic life, was symbolised by my being clothed (together with fellow novice, Br. Stanislaus) with the black habit of the English Benedictine Congregation, from the hands of our Abbot, Paul Stonham.

The ritual has clear resonances with that scriptural notion of putting on the new nature in Christ; and indeed marked a fresh start, as I embarked upon the two year novitiate here in the monastery. I was also presented in the course of the ceremony with a copy of the Rule of St. Benedict, and the admonition to listen carefully to its instructions – since it provides the very framework for our monastic observance.

That Benedictine ideal of prayer and communal living; still possesses a potency today, for people eager to seek the Lord in an intimate manner. Belmont may not be quite as 'strict' as the Cistercian



Br. Jonathan receiving the monastic hood from the Abbot of Belmont

monastery of Mount St. Bernard, but community life constantly has its innate challenges – not to mention its simple joys. 'Pax' is in fact the motto of Benedictine monasticism; and so a deep-rooted 'peace' should lie at the heart of anyone who truly takes its charisma seriously.

For those who might feel a calling to the monastic life; some advise from a spiritual director as well as from Fr. David Cain (the

Diocesan Vocations Director) would be invaluable in pointing you in the right direction – combined of course with visits to various monasteries (male or female, which invariably have their own websites: yes, monks and nuns are not immune to technology!).

Br. Jonathan Rollinson
(Holy Rood Parish, Market Rasen)
Belmont Abbey

Accepted to begin training for the Priesthood for the diocese



I was delighted to hear in May that I had been accepted to begin training for the Priesthood for the diocese. It was a pleasant surprise to discover also that the seminary I was to attend is Allen Hall, which is located in the centre of metropolitan London. Allen Hall is a large building built around a quadrangle and surrounded by a splendid garden. Among my first reactions was a feeling of deep respect for the history and long tradition of this relatively humble location. There is, of course, the association with St. Thomas More whose extensive grounds included what is now Allen Hall. But there is far more: in the refectory stand two long wooden

boards on which are drawn the names of the Douai Martyrs, about a hundred and fifty priests who formed part of Cardinal Allen's home mission from Douai. A walk down the corridors of Allen Hall can be a witness in itself to the courage and devotion of the martyrs.

I have been fortunate to have spent two years studying theology with the Oxford Dominicans, at the house of study of the English Province, before joining seminary. Although this has given me a valuable head-start on my journey in many ways, life at seminary is quite busy. The challenge, I have found, is in the routine, the carefully arranged procession from



prayer to work to the other seminarians continues to astonish and encourage me. After two weeks of introductions to pastoral theology and the priesthood, there is one thing that stands out atop the others: that we don't give our priests enough credit. Theirs is for the most part a thankless job and done very often in unimaginably difficult circumstances. Their unsung lives, as much as the lives of the most illustrious of the Saints, encourage the seminarians in our discernment. It is a great honour for me to train for the priesthood in this Year for Priests. Please pray for the priests and seminarians of the diocese of Nottingham and of England and Wales.

zeal and holiness of the seminarians in our discernment. It is a great honour for me to train for the priesthood in this Year for Priests. Please pray for the priests and seminarians of the diocese of Nottingham and of England and Wales.

God was calling me

Hello, my name is Lisa, I'm 29 and I'm from Coalville in Leicestershire. In 2005, after several retreats to Mt St Bernard's, the influence of some key people in my life and a strong sense that God was calling me I was received into the Catholic Church at St Mary's in Loughborough. As I grew in my faith, I began to realise that I wanted my relationship with God to be the focus of my life. I got in

contact with Fr David Cain, the Vocations Director for our Diocese. He gave me details of the Compass programme held at Worth Abbey in Sussex, for young Catholics discerning religious life www.compass-points.org.uk. It sounded fantastic so off I trekked to Worth for several weekends and my first complete Triduum!

At the end of Compass I felt God was calling me to live in communi-

ty, so I packed up, handed in my notice and moved to Brighton! There I committed to spend a year living in a lay Benedictine community with 3 other young adults. We followed a timetable of saying the Divine Office, personal prayer, lectio divina (prayerful reading of the scriptures) and work. We pooled our incomes and offered hospitality and service to the wider community. This included leading a weekly prayer

group and the infamous 'Sunday lunches' for young adults, participating in the Brighton soup run to the homeless and assisting with other parish activities.

I've now left Brighton and remain a member of the Lay Community of St Benedict: a network of lay people throughout Britain committed to following



Christ and the spirituality of St Benedict. www.laybenedictines.org. I hope and trust in your prayers for the next stage in my journey with Christ, as I further discern God's will for my life. St Benedict, pray for us!

by Fr David Cain
Vocations Director for the Nottingham Diocese
St Peter's, 21 Hincley Road,
Leicester, LE3 0TA
0116 251 9370
frdavid@nrcdt.org.uk

