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Mission to Thailand



Twelve sixth form students from St Joseph's Catholic High School in Slough, Berkshire, are preparing to visit Thailand early next year to help out at a variety of projects supported by Thai Children's Trust, a UK-based charity that for over 30 years has helped disadvantaged and disabled children in Thailand. Their visit will take them to the resort town of Pattaya - some two hours' drive south east of Bangkok - where they will be helping the charity's partner, the Father Ray Foundation, which takes care of 850 orphaned, abused and disadvantaged children and students with disabilities. They will see at first hand the love and care that goes into projects such as the Day Care Centre, the Chil-

dren's Home, the School for the Blind and the Centre for Special Needs.

The initiative has been spearheaded by the head of the sixth form, Rhian Morgans, who hopes this first visit will become an annual event for the school. She started taking pupils to Thailand four years ago at her previous teaching job and knows the impact it can have on the students.

Firstly, though, each of the students has to raise money which will go towards the trip costs. So far the group has raised approximately £3,000 of their £12,000 target through the organisation of a local summer fete, offering beauty treatments such as nail care, cake sales, competitions and holding a school disco. Planned for the autumn term

are dinner nights, pub quizzes and students taking part in individual sporting events.

Rhian Morgans said: "It's a real cultural insight and will open our students' eyes to the hardship of other children. I think it is important that they see how lucky we are in comparison. I believe they will get an enormous amount out of it and enjoy seeing how they can make a difference. It is hard not to bond with these children and the experience will stay with them forever. **Donations can be made by contacting Miss Morgans on T. 01753 524713 or emailing r.morgans@st-josephs.slough.sch.uk**

Read more about the Thai Childrens Trust here: <http://www.thaichildrenstrust.org.uk>

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**Further information: Janet Baker 01989 565027
or Margaret Langley 01858 571242
www.prolifepilgrimage.org**





Getting into print

Send news reports, photos and other material to the editor, Fr. Paul Hardy, St. Edward's, Burchard Crescent, Shenley Church End, Milton Keynes, MK5 6DX: vine01@btopenworld.com We promise to print your news as soon as we can find space for it.

Material should be e-mailed whenever possible. If this cannot be done for digital pictures they should be sent to us on disc. Send photographs in jpg format as separate attachments, and not embedded in Word documents. Urgent and dated items should reach us by the first Sunday of the month before publication.

A booklet of advice on writing news reports for The Vine is available on request.

Parental permission must be sought before photographs of minors are sent for publication.

While we accept unsolicited feature articles, we reserve the right to edit the text or not to publish. Letters for publication must include a name and address, which will be omitted by request.

The content of each issue is decided by the editor, Fr. Paul Hardy, email: vine01@btopenworld.com

Views expressed in The Vine are not necessarily those of the editors or of the Diocese. The publisher of The Vine, Bellcourt, deals with advertising. Those wishing to place advertisements should telephone 01440 730399. Difficulties with distribution should be referred to Mrs Busby.

Stonor

copy of the famous document written by St Edmund Campion has been returned to the house in south Oxfordshire where it was secretly produced more than four hundred years ago and has now gone on display to visitors. The pamphlet was printed on a press hidden in the roof of Stonor Park, a recusant home, in 1581. 'Decem Rationes' ('Ten Reasons') argued against the validity of the Anglican Church and its publication led to the eventual arrest, torture and execution of Edmund Campion.



The copy of Decem Rationes, believed to be one of just five in the world, has been loaned by the Diocese of Portsmouth. It has been put on public display in the Long Gallery in the house. When four hundred copies of it were distributed in Oxford in 1581, it caused a sensation and Campion was tracked down within weeks. It also led to a raid of Stonor and the printing press

was removed. An exhibition at Stonor features St Edmund's life and work.

The return of the pamphlet to Stonor coincides with a large scale renovation of the thirteenth century chapel there, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other grant making trusts. The medieval Catholic Chapel was used throughout the years of the Catholic repression. Stonor has been lived in by the same family for over eight hundred years. Lord Camoys, whose ancestors gave shelter to Campion, says the restoration of the Chapel - the biggest in his lifetime — is a vital step in keeping this important part of Catholic heritage alive and hopes more visitors will come to see it for themselves.

The whole roof of the Chapel has been retiled, a new stone floor installed and Stations of the Cross given by the writer Graham Greene, who was a frequent visitor to Stonor, have been put on display around the walls. Lord Camoys says that "if the Chapel goes, the family goes" - so they see themselves as the guardians of the Chapel and the house.

Mass is celebrated every Sunday in the Chapel of the Blessed Trinity at 10.30am and Stonor Park is open Wednesday, Thursday, Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday afternoons

Jordan

UNESCO declared Bethany Beyond the Jordan, on the eastern side of the Jordan River, as a World Heritage site and the location of Jesus' baptism. "The decision is logical. The Eastern side is where all the Byzantine antiquities and churches are located," said Franciscan Father Eugenio Alliata, professor of Christian archaeology at Jerusalem's Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. He said pilgrimages to the Western side began only about 600 years ago. "But for us it is the Jordan River, the middle, which is the most holy place." For years, Israel and Jordan have been at odds as to which side of the Jordan River is the actual site of Jesus' baptism, as both sides vie for the title to increase tourism. Israel upgraded its shoreline with changing rooms and a wooden deck access to the murky waters, while Jordan's eastern shore has remained a sleepy site despite two papal visits. Father Alliata said ancient iconography shows Jesus in the middle of the river rather than on any of the two shores, and there are accounts by ancient pilgrims of marble columns in the middle of the river marking the site of Jesus' baptism.

October

We plan a full report of the priestly ordination of Benedetto D'Autilia

Birmingham

In an address at the national evangelization conference, Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster challenged parishes to become evangelizing communities.

"Our mission always starts in our prayer, flows from prayer, from our daily openness to the great mystery of the life of God," he said. "It cannot start anywhere else."

"Evangelization is not about superior planning, greater efficiency and high-class management," he continued. "It is about love, and trust and openness to the Holy Spirit."

The prelate suggested "three C's" in evangelizing: reaching out to colleagues, answering the questions of the curious in everyday discussions, and responding to "the cry of the human heart; the cry of confusion, pain, hunger, loneliness, need, anger."

Shrewsbury

Catholic education is distinctive because it offers pupils a vision of lives full of purpose, the Bishop of Shrewsbury has told schoolchildren.

The Rt Rev. Mark Davies, the Bishop of Shrewsbury, warned youngsters that increasingly education was nihilistic and transmitted the false message that human life was devoid of all meaning. The Catholic vision, he explained during a Mass at St Nicholas's Catholic High School in Hartford, Cheshire, envisaged a role, or vocation, for each person in harmony with God's created order. "Many young people are being told ... that we are here in this world by accident, living a life without any ultimate meaning," Bishop Davies said during a homily at the annual diocesan secondary schools Mass.

"It is an empty and debilitating vision of life. "But our Christian faith declares that we are here with a purpose," the Bishop continued. "We have each been called into existence, every one of us created by God out of love."

He told the students from across the Diocese that each of them had a vocation.

Bishop Davies said: "Seeing all your uniforms representing so many schools across the Diocese I want to remind you what it means to be part of the venture of Catholic education. It is the vision that created the idea of a university, which inspired artistic achievement and scientific progress based on our conviction that the world makes sense and life has a purpose."

Note

All stories and pictures for publication in The Vine must be sent directly to the editor, Fr. Paul Hardy: vine01@btopenworld.com Pictures must be sent as independent jpgs, and not embedded in the text.

We need Polish Speakers and people with a connection to Krakow to help with our trip to World Youth Day.

If you are interested please contact Nick on 01440 730399 or nick@cathcom.org

Catenians fight diabetes



When David Holden was 15 years old he was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes and for more than 50 years he has been injecting himself with insulin on a regular basis. So it was not surprising that David chose Diabetes UK as Chiltern Circle's President's Charity for 2014-15.

At the start of his presidential year David arranged for a young mother who has two children with Type 1 diabetes to come and tell us about the problems of establishing how much insulin needs to be injected before each meal based on the type and quan-

tity of food the children were expected to eat.

There are more than 3.2 million people in the UK who have been di-

very informative web site which explains the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes and the symptoms to be expected in a person who is diabetic. Visit - www.diabetes.co.uk.

A total of £2,250 was raised during the year and a cheque for this

amount was presented to Teresa Strange of Diabetes UK by David Holden following a quiet lunch at the Greyhound in Aldbury. David asked that the money should be used by Diabetes UK to assist children who have been diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.



agnosed as diabetic and it is estimated that as many as 630,000 people who have diabetes have not yet been diagnosed. It is anticipated that the number diagnosed will rise to 5 million by 2025.

Diabetes UK sets out to provide help and advice to diabetics and has a

Family and friends gather for John's ordination



John Lang was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate at St. Peter's, Biggleswade on 20th June by Bishop Peter. John was supported by his immediate family, his mother and father and cousin (a Benedictine Monk) who had flown in from America, and a large number of his friends from work and diaconal training. The Parish of St. Peter's expressed their joy in a beautifully arranged liturgy and outstanding singing. A reception was held at Shortmead House following the event.



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Permanent Deacon for Langley

Graham Jones, of Holy Family parish, Langley, was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on June 27. Husband of Mary, and father of Anthony, Michael and Philip, Graham has been a parishioner at Holy Family for over twenty years. Before his ordination he was a Minister of the Word, a Eucharistic Minister and a Welcomer. For the past three years he has co-ordinated the parish's contribution to Slough Food Bank.

Graham paid tribute to those responsible for his formation. 'I thank Bishop Peter and the formation team of the diocese (Fr. Francis Higgins, Joanna Hale and Deacon Mick O'Leary). He thanked those responsible for preparing the ordination liturgy. 'For her superb artwork and sheer genius in designing the invitation, Order of Service and prayer cards I thank Sister Mary Lou FSP, of the Daughters of St. Paul, based here in Langley'. And of course he praised his wife. 'I thank God for my wife, Mary, whose joy knows no bounds to this day from the very start of discernment. Quiet yet determined, she is steadfast in her loving support, as are my three fine sons'.



Soft soap in school



The winning Congo Splash team (left to right) Emanuela Markuc, Nicole Kelly, Megan Gilnagh, Gabriele Skavidaite, Lawrence Potter and Fabrizio Zeolla

Students got themselves in a lather when they became soap entrepreneurs at St Paul's Catholic School's Work Related Learning Day on 8 July. Teams had to design, manufacture, package, market and pitch a brand new soap product from scratch in under three and a half hours in a SoapScience workshop.

The winning team of 'soap-preneurs', Congo Splash, took a jungle theme with trees, Easter Island heads, monkeys, exotic fruit and flowers, aiming their product squarely at the children's market. Andrew 'Bernie' Bernard, Director of Innovation Enterprise who set the task, said: "The St Paul's event was one of the top 10 SoapScience workshops ever. The winners on the day explained their design and inspiration very well, gave a confident pitch and explained their costs expertly. The icing on the cake was the way they introduced themselves to the judge and gave a 'private viewing' of their idea prior to the pitch, the personal touch!

"At the end students felt they had learned great teamwork skills, how to work under pressure, the importance of

planning and what enterprise skills really are."

The 'Soap Enterprise' task was one of a range of day long activities aimed at preparing students throughout the School for working life. Themes ranged from healthy schools, to Science at Work and Business Ambassador Briefings.

Activities including rocket launching, virtual bridge building, yoga, smoothie making, first aid, music, art and table tennis. A wide range of guests attended too – from Bryerley Springs Equestrian Centre (complete with horse), to universities, midwives and representatives from MK Dons.

Nicola Parkins, Teacher at St Paul's, who organised Work Related Learning Day, said: "Students from all year groups learned some important life skills that they will be able to use when they enter the workplace. Planning, time management and team work were strong elements of many of the Work Related Learning activities and it's brilliant that everyone participated so enthusiastically."

Sisters have their say

On Wednesday 13th May we were delighted to welcome Sister Carol and Sister Lydia from the Congregation of the Sisters of Nazareth in Northampton to St Thomas More. Their visit was a response to the call of Pope Francis to religious communities to leave their houses and share their lives and life choices as part of The Year of Con-

secrated Life. The Sisters talked to groups of Year 10 students in the prayer room and in RE lessons. The students were really challenged by the life experience the Sisters shared with them. In response, Year 10 asked the Sisters many thought provoking questions and the Sisters were very open in their answers.



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To be a Taize pilgrim



St. Paul's pilgrims 2015

Ten Sixth Form students from St. Paul's Milton Keynes spent the first week of July at the ecumenical monastery at Taize, in central France. Two members of staff and the school chaplain, Fr Paul Hardy, went with them. The trip has become an annual event at the school, linking up with around 1,500 other young pilgrims. Several of the boys in the group were returning for a second visit.

The group enjoyed the experience of prayer three times each day in the chapel with the hundred plus community of brothers, who reflect Protestant and Catholic traditions. In smaller language groups they were guided in reflections on the gospel by one of the brothers, and they enjoyed tropical weather. One of the lads, though, was unhappy with the daily housekeeping chore he had been allocated – toilet cleaning. Another enjoyed the spirituality, but disliked the technology. 'It was very different from last year, but is still one of the best experiences of my life.... although the vending machine stole seven euros from me. I hate that machine'.

Another said, 'Taize has taught me many things but the current most important thing I have taken from Taize is the importance of making time for myself. Also to be thankful for all I have in my life (e.g. to never complain about my mum's cooking!) Silence is special as is group singing/prayer. Thank you to all for a fabulous trip and many memories. PS: Take a cushion for your bum.

Language doesn't seem to be a problem. Over thirty nationalities are represented within the community itself, and no-one ever really knows where the young pilgrims are coming from. In a bible study group one evening the Brother said 'Has anyone just arrived, and where are you from?' They were from Albania, Austria and Australia. To break the alliteration there was also a couple from Lithuania.

The **Taizé Community** was founded in 1940 by Brother Roger Schütz, a Reformed

Protestant. He pondered what it really meant to live a life according to the Scriptures and began a quest for a different expression of the Christian life. The defeat of France awoke powerful sympathy. If a house could be found there it would offer a possible way of assisting some of those most discouraged, those deprived of a livelihood; and it could become a place of silence and work.

He bought a small house at Taize.. Only miles south of the demarcation line that separated Vichy France and the Zone occupée, Brother Roger's home became a sanctuary to countless war refugees seeking shelter. On November 11, 1942, the Gestapo occupied the house while Roger was in Switzerland collecting funds to aid his refuge ministry. He was not able to return to his home in Taizé until the autumn of 1944, when France was liberated.

There were only three of them in the community. Soon other men joined.. On Easter Sunday 1949, seven brothers committed themselves to a life following Christ in simplicity, celibacy and community

In the 1960s young people began to visit the Taizé community. The village church of Taizé, which had been used for the community's prayers, became too small to accommodate the pilgrims. A new church, the Church of Reconciliation, was built in the early 1960s with the help of volunteers, and expanded several times in the subsequent decades, first with tents, and then with simple wooden annexes.

In 1969, a young Belgian doctor became the first Catholic to pledge his life to the Taizé Community. More brothers from Reformed, Anglican and Catholic backgrounds arrived.

Since 1951, the brothers have lived, for longer or shorter periods, in small fraternities among the poor in India (chiefly in Calcutta), Bangladesh, the Philippines, Algeria, Brazil, Kenya, Senegal, and the United States (chiefly in the Hell's Kitchen

section of Manhattan, New York City).

The community has become one of the

themselves are clear, sometimes bluntly so: 'I thought it would be a strict religious trip. However, spending one week here surrounded by various nationalities has made me see that its about the community coming together, sharing their cultures and understanding different perspectives of belief'. 'The people I met were some of the nicest and most genuine people, from the first meeting. They were all open, friendly and not at all put off by the language barriers. I will genuinely miss them, despite having known them for only four days'.

The community, though Western European in origin, has sought to include people and traditions worldwide. They have sought to demonstrate this in the music and prayers where songs are sung in many languages, and have included chants and icons from the Eastern Orthodox tradition. The music emphasizes simple phrases, usually lines from Psalms or other pieces of Scripture, repeated and sometimes also sung in canon.

'Loved the songs, the atmosphere, the energy. Can't really remember the words but it echoes in my ears'. 'The music in the church was not at all as boring as I expected but really opened up a new way to pray'.

In August 2005 Brother Roger, aged 90, was killed in a knife attack by a mentally ill woman. At his funeral he had an ecumenical dream fulfilled. The leader was the president of the Vatican's council for the unity of Christians, Cardinal Walter



Brother Roger

world's most important sites of Christian pilgrimage. Throughout the year, meetings for young adults between 17 and 30 years old take place in Taizé. The number of visitors reaches more than 5000 during the summer. The gatherings usually last from Sunday to Sunday, though it is also possible to just come for a few days, or, for young volunteers, to stay for a longer time. Visitors experience prayer, Bible study, sharing, and communal work. Through the community's ecumenical outlook, they are encouraged to live in the spirit of kindness, simplicity and reconciliation.

What attracts young people to the community? 'I have no idea' admitted a staff member from St. Paul's. But the youngsters

Kasper. Anglican bishop Nigel McCulloch read the first reading in English. The second reading was read in French by the President of the Conference of European Churches, and in German by the head of the Evangelical Church in Germany. The funeral was attended by approximately 10,000 people. The community is currently led by Brother Alois, a German-born Catholic, who had been appointed by Brother Roger before his death.

'A week at Taize is like having the layers of your life unzipped, like the layers of an onion. Sometimes peeling onions makes you hurt and cry a little. By the end the onion is back together, though the layers may be re-organised'.

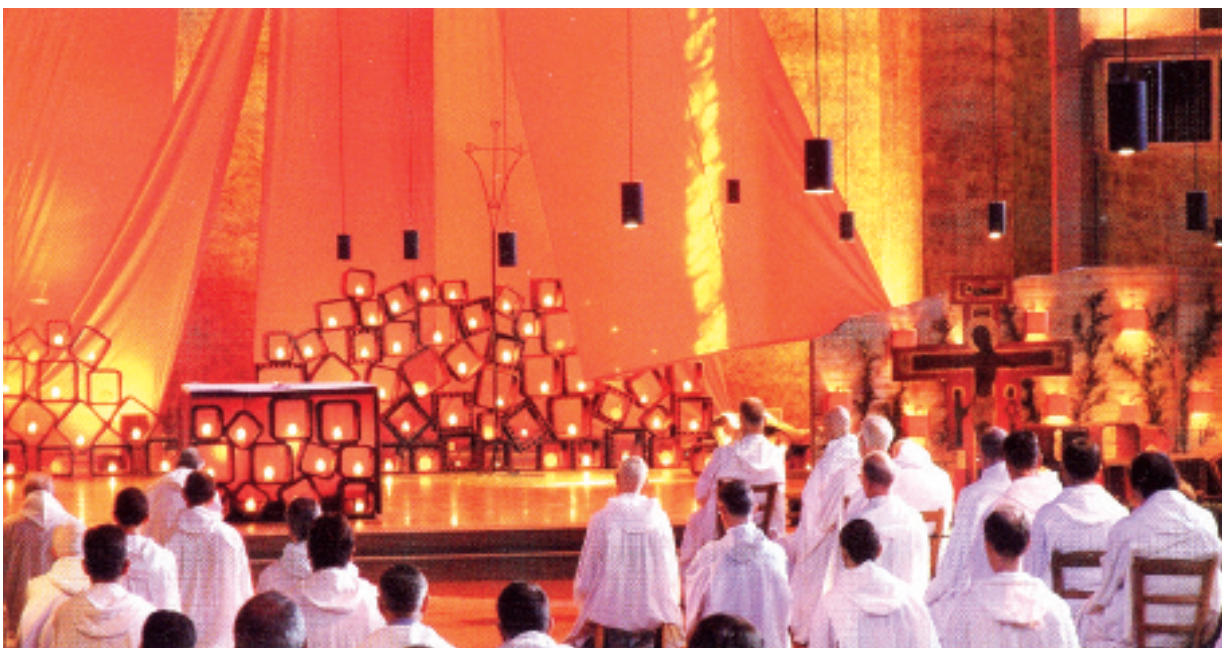
Pilgrims to Taize

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Taize and the Pope

Brother Alois, the Prior of Taizé, was received by Pope Francis at the Vatican in November 2014. It was his first private audience with the new Pope. He had already been received each year by Benedict XVI, and before that Brother Roger went to Rome every year to meet Popes John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II.

Brother Alois spoke to the Pope about the welcome of young people in Taizé and the pilgrimage of trust that the community is undertaking with young people on all continents. He also presented to the Pope the ecumenical concerns of Taizé, highlighting that baptism already unites all Christians.

Pope Francis expressed the deep respect he felt towards Brother Roger, the founder of Taizé, and strongly encouraged the community to continue on the road on which it is engaged.



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Preparing for the world of work

Representatives from 14 Milton Keynes' businesses including Barclays, Niftylift, Lynx Networks and Dentons had a chance to meet employees of the future at a speed networking event at St Paul's Catholic School in Leadenhall.

The event, organised by the employability education charity Worktree, gave Year 12 students the chance to chat to employers about their jobs and working in their organisations and to find out about apprenticeships, training and potential job opportunities. Students had around eight minutes to pose questions to each employer before moving on to the next guest.

Kinga Fita, Year 12 student at St Paul's, said: "I found the Apprenticeship session very useful, this is because it helped me understand that you don't always need to attend university to get a good employment. I have also found out that this experience has enhanced my ability to speak formally to people that I don't know."

Barbara Zamoyska, of music licensing consultants To Your Ears, said: 'I thoroughly enjoyed the versatility of questions and enthusiasm for work amongst the students'.

"We have worked with St. Paul's for over 20 years so we have a really good understanding of how the school wants to prepare its students for the world of work," said Worktree's Tom Bulman. "The students always respond politely and with interest to the diverse work guests we bring in and the guests always talk positively about the experience."

The activity was part of St Paul's Journey To Work initiative, a tailor made programme of work related learning activities that take place over a whole year. Through the programme, students undertake work experience, try their hand at practical tasks, get exposure to different types of jobs and develop their employability skills.

The picture shows students from St Paul's Catholic School 'speed networking' with Milton Keynes' employers.

Dear Friends

In the desire to serve and promote the common good, the poor and needy have to be given priority of place. Paraguay has done much to advance along the path of economic growth. Important steps have been taken in the areas of education and health care. May all social groups work to ensure that there will never again be children without access to schooling, families without homes, workers without dignified employment, small farmers without land to cultivate, or campesinos forced to leave their lands for an uncertain future. An economic development which fails to take into account the weakest and underprivileged is not an authentic development. Economic progress must be measured by the integral dignity of persons, especially the most vulnerable and helpless.

*Pope Francis
July 12, 2015
Paraguay*



Becket's monastic prison

The well-documented arrest and trial of St Thomas, in 1164, was a stormy period for king and country, riven with strife at home and abroad. What is perhaps less well-known is the whereabouts of the archbishop during his enforced stay in Northampton.

Thomas was the 'guest' of the Cluniac monks in their Priory of St Andrew, Northampton, situated quite close to the castle, now occupied by the town's railway station. The monks owned extensive land in various parts of the town, as well as the appurtenances of numerous churches and property in several villages in this and other counties. Their foundation was set up by Simon de St. Liz towards the end of the 11th century and he established a cell of monks from the powerful priory of St Mary de Caritate, France.

The life-style of the monks was a simple one initially and they followed the Rule of St Benedict in a very strict manner that included a meat-free diet. As the name suggests, the origins of this branch of the Benedictine family are centered upon Cluny with its great monastery, ruled over by an abbot. As a sign of their subservience to the Mother House, all Cluniac communities were actually priories, with a few exceptions. The nuns of Northampton's Delapre 'Abbey' was actually a priory of Cluniac Sisters. It never had abbey status. There are no remains to be seen above ground today but excavations during the 1960's and '70's revealed some interesting evidence of the monks' occupation. It is recorded that an archbishop was buried before the high altar of the priory church – but who was he? The Cathedral of Our Lady and St Thomas is said to have been built on land formerly owned by the monks of St Andrew's Priory. A modern

outline map prepared for the Northampton Development Authority indicates where monastic buildings would have existed.

Over the span of many years, the Order became gradually more powerful, both in numbers of monks and possessions through royal and other grants. The Priory was certainly large enough to play host to a General Chapter of the Benedictine Order on at least occasion(1246). Unsurprisingly perhaps, conflicts within the Order and external agencies cropped up and there were many differences to be resolved until finally, in March, 1538, Prior Frances Abree, surrendered the Community during the so-called Reformation. Ironically, this turn-coat accepted a role as the first Dean of what became Peterborough cathedral, previously a powerful Benedictine abbey. The dispersed monastic brethren were pensioned off but little is known of their fate in the world outside of the cloister.

My own, well-thumbed copy of WORK & PRAYER – is a simple guide for lay-folk to



the Rule of St Benedict. It is recommended reading with its relevance on every page to everyday living. Written jointly by the late Revd Dom Cary-Elwes, OSB and Revd Dame Catherine Weybourne, OSB, this can be purchased from Downside Abbey Bookshop and on-line too I believe.

Dennis H. Sear

Young man in Argentina

Michael Yeates, of Milton Keynes, has just arrived in Latin America as part of his language degree. Read what he has to say about Pope Francis' home country.

I have now been here for three weeks and I thought that it was a good time to reflect on some of the many cultural differences that I have encountered in Argentina thus far. Here here are some of the weird and wonderful things that I have come across in daily life.

Highway code

This is something that is fairly easy to explain as all you need to do is envisage the proper rules and regulations when driving a car and then think the opposite. In the UK, using a mobile phone at the wheel is something that people will occasionally do whilst driving. Here in Argentina, driving is something that they will occasionally do whilst sending whatsapp messages, finding out the name of the song currently playing on the radio or simply just browsing the web. It is remarkable, and having been in the car with a number of different drivers, something that they all do. As is the case in many countries across the globe the seatbelt is just for show. While I am laughed at for ensuring that I am safely strapped in, (something I find even more necessary because of the point highlighted above) the Argentines just simply do not bother. They even manage to combat the problem presented by modern car

systems which bleep when the driver's seatbelt is not fastened...do the seatbelt and then sit on top of it.

To finish off on the road, they do not indicate when changing lanes which makes motorway driving a bit of a lottery. Pedestrian crossings do not exist so British etiquette when attempting to cross a road could literally leave you standing there all day. It is illegal to put your own petrol in your car so a man at the petrol station must do it for you and when travelling in larger groups the car itself fits however many people you are taking. Four people....four seater. Same car, eight people....eight seater.

RSPCA is definitely not a thing

Animals are treated slightly differently here. While they still look after their dogs



they are very much outside animals and often used more as guard dogs. One particular abode that I was at last week housed 2,000 chinchillas. Bred to have their necks rung and skinned for their precious fur. Slightly nauseating for those not accustomed to such practices and slightly disconcerting as both practices are carried out by a 13 year old girl that I am teaching! (The same girl then proceeded to force feed her horse an orange and take great delight in watching it froth at the mouth, before finally removing her pet pigeon from its cage and waving it around.

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Book Review

Spiritual Letters

By Sister Wendy Beckett
Bloomsbury. £14.99

Almost all these letters were exchanged between Sr Wendy and a nun identified only as “Anne” who, a fellow art lover, was close to her during the period when she was undergoing the transition from a South African teaching Order to living the life of a hermit in the grounds of the Carmelite Convent in Quidenham, Norfolk. They also pre-date her emergence as a TV art critic. They reveal an aspect of Sr Wendy recognisable to those who have listened to her TV commentaries or read her books: someone caught up in wonder at the truth and beauty of God and blessed with the gift of being able to describe this with brevity and passion.

It will not surprise readers of this collection, edited by a nun from the Quidenham Carmel, that their author chose not to reread them before publication. Sr Wendy writes that she simply “cannot bring myself to do so.” This is because it would mean having to focus on herself and, as with all truly humble people, it would pain her to do so. She describes herself as a “monolith of selfishness” and in a letter dated 20 May 1974 she writes, “Coarse, crude woman

that I am, I fear the words are so often too violent.” To an outsider her words don’t seem like this at all, or indeed her view of herself – but that is the point: if you view yourself always in the sight of God, as Sr Wendy does, you will see your faults laid bare in a way that the distractions of ordinary life usually conceal.

As letters written in response to a friend, the collection naturally lacks the completeness and roundedness of Sr Wendy’s essays about her favourite paintings in her books. But they do provide flashes of insight to the kind of austere life she has chosen and why she has done so. Writing to Anne on the 20th December 1974, she says, “Think of me...just looking at one picture, until the impact of the glory it gives to God forces me to shut my eyes.” This conveys the intensity of her response to art and why it provides her with the stimulus to contemplation. Quite simply, beauty leads her to God. As she writes elsewhere, in a comment that might surprise those who do not understand the intimate dynamic of prayer, “Art is a form of prayer I value because it deepens in me my womanhood. It

makes me more “there” for his possessing.” Again, for those who wonder how it is possible to spend most of one’s days in the solitary, confined space of a caravan, she provides the answer in a letter of 1978: “I am always living in the reality of Jesus and can cope best when exterior life is monotonous and undemanding.” One realises how hard it must have been for Sr Wendy to emerge under the glare of the TV spotlights and how only the realisation that her audience might come closer to God through beauty could compel her to do so. There are tantalisingly brief references to artists which one wishes she had expanded, such as mentioning a love for Paul Klee and also Matisse, yet finding Picasso “a very poor



third [by comparison]. All power and no beauty”; how true.

Can you help CAFFE?

The Luton mother of Luke Doyle, a charity worker in India, has written to The Vine asking if any readers can help in their charity shop in Bedford

My husband and I attend Holy family Church Marsh Farm Luton Fr Tony is the parish priest .

4 Years ago our son Luke Doyle founded a charity in Dhaka Bangladesh called CAFFE (Computers are Free for Everyone) Charity number 1147000. What the charity does is provide IT skills completely free to the most marginalized children and young adults in Dhaka. Caffe now has about 220 students and employ’s 3 local teachers and also employs some of the older more experienced students part time to help teach the younger children basic IT skills .

To fund the Caffe school, my husband

and I who are both retired, run a charity shop in Bedford, address 4 Clair Court Lime Street Bedford MK40 1NH. We hope people will support the shop and the charity. Also we are looking for volunteers to help in the shop and anyone who feels they have any skills that could help ie secretarial, fund raising etc. We do get a lot of support from Holy Family and St John’s Sundon and our Justice and Peace group, but sadly as the shop is based in Bedford it is too far for them to help with the shop.

Please look at the website to see the wonderful work that Caffe is achieving in helping these young people to obtain skills they otherwise would never have had the opportunity to learn.



Computers are Free for Everyone

For an item from Luke Doyle’s website, turn to page 11

Obituary

Brother Peter E. Simmonds SDB

Brother Peter Simmonds was resident in Bedford from May 1928 when his parents moved to Bedford when he was six months old. He was the eldest of five children and was sent to Bedford Modern School and then worked for some years at De Havillands factory in Hatfield. He saw a film about Don Bosco’s life and decided to join the Salesian Order in 1950.



lous, innovative, responding to the call of duty and never fearing a challenge. He was a model Salesian Brother, deeply spiritual, exemplary in self-discipline and a faithful religious.

Peter’s health had not been good for several years. He had been very ill early this year and

not expected to live but he rallied so his only remaining brother Michael Simmonds went out to Cape Town from Bedford, in March and spent two very happy weeks with Peter and the Community.

Peter died early on Thursday 28th May with his Rector Father Jeffrey beside him. The Requiem Mass took place at Lansdowne Church on Wednesday 3rd June 2015. May God reward him for his 61+ years of service to the Good Lord *

The Salesians of Don Bosco are a religious congregation of Brothers and Priests founded in 1859 by Saint John Bosco. His mission was clear and simple: to be a friend to young people who were poor, abandoned or at risk. There are currently almost 16,000 members (priests and brothers) in the congregation, working in 131 countries around the world. They work in schools, youth clubs, in homes for homeless or abandoned children.

He was professed on 8th Sept.1953 & in 1954 was sent out to Cape Town, South Africa where he has worked all his life. He has been technical instructor in cabinet making and metal work, he was headmaster of the school, manager of the press and of the repository which supplied religious items to the whole of South Africa. He was 87 years old and in the 61st year of his profession when he died on 28th May 2015.

I quote from his obituary from his Rector Father Jeffery Johnson SDB. “ Perhaps the highlight of his life was when he was given permission to start the street children apostolate in the 1980’s. This work had long been his dream and he made it a reality, setting up the Learn to Live school programme and the Don Bosco Hostel, approaching it in his characteristic way; dedicated, efficient, meticu-

CAFFE students develop app for Sesame Workshop BD

*By Luke
Doyle
- CAFFE
chairman*



or the past 2 months the students and staff at CAFFE have been working together with Sesame Workshop Bangladesh to produce an educational application for Bangla speaking children. Sesame Workshop Bangladesh, better known as Sisimpur, produces the Bangladesh version of Sesame Street. We were delighted when they chose to work with CAFFE to turn one of their story books into an interactive mobile application. This project has given 5 of our students the chance to work on a real life project for an internationally recognised organisation.

Not only has this been an incredible learning opportunity for the students, it has also given them an excellent piece of work for their portfolio and will hopefully help them later on when they leave CAFFE and begin looking for work. For this application, the students worked on graphic design and animation. They used tools such as *Adobe Illustrator*, *Adobe Photoshop* and, *Spine* to bring the still images from the book alive through animation. It's worth remembering the students at CAFFE come from underprivileged back-

grounds and still live in very challenging conditions in the slum areas of Dhaka. Without coming to CAFFE they would have had no opportunity to develop computer skills, let alone carry out a major project for an internationally renowned organisation. It is the generous help of all our donors and supporters that has made it possible for us to deliver such life changing opportunities. As a reward, the students were invited to a special event to mark the launching of Sisimpur's new TV series in Bangladesh. Here they were able to see the puppets up

close and they also got to meet local TV celebrities. They students were extremely excited and we hope this will serve to inspire them to continue developing their skills with us at CAFFE. The application is currently awaiting launch on Google Play and iTunes but a special preview can be downloaded from : <http://sisimpur.bengalfamily.com/> Once again, thank you so much for your support. We look forward to sharing more good news stories with you soon.



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Here's a taster

Pupils from five primary schools in Milton Keynes got a taste of secondary school life when they visited St Paul's Catholic School to participate in a range of Design and Technology activities. The two Technology Taster Days held on 22 May and 2 June were part of a series of taster sessions St Paul's runs each year to help children with their transition from primary to secondary school.

Gill Berry, Textile Specialist Teacher in the Design and Technology Department at St Paul's, said: "The days are a great way for children to experience what it's going to be like at secondary school. They take part in some really interesting and fun lessons, get a taste of moving from classroom to classroom and learn about taking responsibility for their belongings."

The visiting pupils got the chance to take away with them something they had made at each lesson. This included a phone case from Textiles, a pop-up card from Graphics, Smartie cookies from Food, an electronic bug from Electronics and a picture frame from Resistant Materials.

Over the two days St Paul's hosted over 400 pupils from Bishop Parker, St Mary Magdalene, St Thomas Aquinas, St Bernadette's and St Monica's.

St Paul's will be holding more Primary Taster Days allowing pupils to discover more about Languages, Maths and Science.

Picture shows pupils from St Bernadette's Primary School with their electronic bugs.



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