

Friars Preachers



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LENT 2015

A marathon for the friars!

JOSEPH PECK HAS VOLUNTEERED to run a marathon this Easter for the friars' Training Fund Campaign. He writes here to tell us why.

Hello, I'm Joe Peck, and I am going to run the Paris Marathon on 7th April to raise funds for the English Dominicans. I first met a member of the order when I was just nineteen years old, and embarking on my first pilgrimage with **Student Cross**. This man had a warm smile, a ready ear, and was eager to listen, share, teach, and learn with me as I started to ask the first serious questions of my faith, my life and who 'I' was. I won't embarrass him here by naming him, but throughout my university life, I considered him to be an exceptional priest, and a great man. I sought him out in crisis, and he was always there. Now, at twenty-eight, living and working in Paris, and recently engaged, I find myself turning to him again in order to help me reflect and prepare on my upcoming marriage.

As a twenty (and then twenty-two) year-old, I spent a total of 11 months in Kenya, living with the **Poor Clares of Myanga**. I was born into a Poor Clare parish, and I found Myanga an ideal place to help in local schools, and work on building homes for the most needy – the elderly, sick, and single mothers. Here, too, I came across Dominicans from Kenya and North America. The Novice Master of the Province of St Joseph (USA), Fr Benedict, once said to me that "priests being parents, certainly wasn't in the job description". Yet, these friars saw the cries for hope, faith and love in an area ravaged by HIV, and set up an orphanage and school. They were Good Samaritans to so many. These men took on the role of older brother, father, mother, friend to hundreds of children, working miracles daily through their resolve to carry on, and an ever-growing love for God and Man. The friars put their own lives at risk by turning their compound into a refuge for people fleeing the election violence of 2007.

"I have often heard the phrase; "Once you meet one Dominican, you have only met one Dominican". It's true. They are so diverse, and so, too, is their work. From teaching at Oxford University, to trying to the heal wounds of prisoners, to running an orphanage in a hilltop village outside Kisumu, Kenya. There is no way to label all these men with the same description. And yet they are all alike. The English Province worked for many years in South Africa; it has its mission



in the Caribbean. Moreover, the friars all have that openness to truth, both learning and teaching it. They share that surrender to the Gospel and Christ. Both in word and deed.

The friars' appeal fills me with hope for the Church. Often, I hear appeals for retired priests, and for sick priests, and the elderly. This is the first time I can recall hearing an appeal for the next generation of young men looking to offer themselves to Christ in such a special way. These young men currently in formation, and those following, will be the next generation who can give what I received from others. They will be the friends, the teachers, the priests, the listeners and the preachers. And for that I ask for your support.

Please sponsor Joe at this website!
www.justgiving.com/OP-Vocations

The Training Fund Campaign seeks £1 million over the next few years to prepare the new generation of friars for England and Scotland. Information on this and on vocations can be found on our new website www.english.op.org



New Look for our Online Apostolate

SHROVE Tuesday marked the official launch of the new Province website www.english.op.org. Development Director, Richard Brown, invites us to explore a site already proving very popular.

Did you know that 73% of the UK population uses the internet every day, while 62% have the internet in their pocket in the form of a smartphone? Sadly our old website was not mobile-friendly, and the content was rather static and a bit behind the times.

The new site resizes beautifully for every screen size from mobile to tablet to desktop computer. But what I really like about it is that we have successfully brought within it a rich variety of content. **Torch** is our online homilies channel, with a fresh and original Dominican sermon for every Sunday and feastday. We have discovered that we have fans of this service from all around the world, including laypeople, religious and clergy. Secondly, **Godzdogz** is a blog from our Dominican student brothers, who offer Dominican perspectives on the world. Currently they are posting Lenten reflections, enriched by their studies in theology and philosophy. Thirdly, you can watch the **God Matters** videos, films of our friars giving pithy (and often witty) explanations of aspects of the Catholic faith, before a live audience.

The site also includes information on the history and spirituality of the Order, a very useful events calendar, news reports from around the Province, and online giving. Do please take a look at the site. **We would welcome any feedback you wish to give, as we want the site's users to be engaged with it and to help it to evolve and improve over time.**

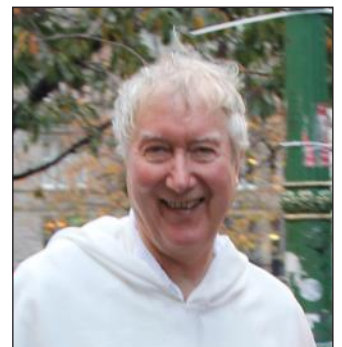


Finally, we offer our sincere thanks to those who responded generously to our appeal for funds to support this development of our online apostolate: **Buckfast Abbey** made a generous grant, and individual followers of Torch and Godzdogz made many gifts through our JustGiving appeal page.

Visit the new website at www.english.op.org and please share with social media friends!

Fr Timothy Radcliffe on his visit to Iraq

FR TIMOTHY Radcliffe OP recently returned from an eight-day visit to the Dominican Friars and Sisters in Iraq undertaken with fellow Dominican Fr Brian Pierce.



They said of their visit to Baghdad: "If we let terror prevent us from visiting this city, or if it keeps us imprisoned behind the high walls of an impregnable fortress, the terrorists have won. Iraqis feel forgotten and betrayed, but if one visits our brothers and sisters in Iraq, the welcome is beyond words."

From Baghdad they flew to Erbil, in Kurdistan, where they were hosted by the Iraqi Dominican Sisters and visited the refugee camp at Ainkawa Mall.

In the aftermath of the Paris terrorist shootings at 'Charlie Hebdo' and the reaction across France they heard from Christians who feared a fundamentalist backlash. As one sister noted: "As they march in Paris for freedom of expression, we are the ones being killed in retaliation for the cartoons." Yet they were also struck by the powerful witness of Christians who had lost so much yet nonetheless doing what they could in the service of others.

Full report at www.english.op.org



Stop Press!

Fr Bruno Clifton OP is taking a short break from his Old Testament studies on 27th June this year, to run in a gruelling 110km **Ultimate Trail Challenge** through the Lake

District. The ultra marathon begins and ends in Ambleside and goes through 6 mountain passes, beside 5 lakes, and takes in 14,000 feet of ascent and descent! Running, like Joe, to raise money for the Training Fund, Fr Bruno is also looking for sponsorship. **You can support Fr Bruno by going to his webpage at:**

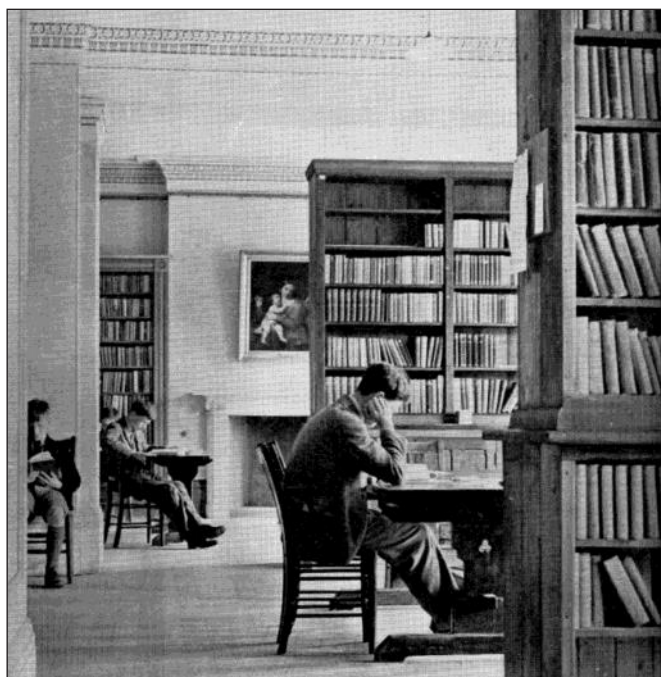
www.justgiving.com/BrunoCliftonOP



An Education in Freedom - Laxton remembered



FROM the early 1660s until the late 1960s, the English Dominican friars ran at least one boys' school as part of their apostolate. Until the French Revolution, there was a thriving school at Bornhem in the Low Countries. The 19th century saw a new boarding school founded in Hinckley (after a false start at Carshalton), and day-schools in Leicester, Newcastle, and London. As the century closed, the school at Hinckley transferred to Spode House next to the new priory at Hawkesyard. In 1924 this 'Apostolic School' moved again to Laxton Hall in Northamptonshire. Under the headmasters Fr Jerome Rigby, Fr Henry St John, and Fr Gerald Vann, it became a small, highly distinctive school. What was it, though, made Laxton special?



The library at Laxton

The friars have left us two parts to an answer. When in 1948 Henry St John became head of the new prep school at Llanarth, his address to the Laxton boys stressed an education in responsible freedom: boys were 'not stampeded into accepting anyone's ideas or opinions'. Instead, the accent fell on 'development of character and experience' to promote wisdom rather than pumping in knowledge for exam results. And religion was set out and lived as 'the very basis of life'. Boys attended the friars' daily liturgies. Some ten years later, the school prospectus set out a vision of education that enabled pupils to critique the values and 'false judgements' implicit in contemporary life 'in the light of Catholic principle'. There was a stress placed upon the arts, especially drama and music.

A SECOND WAY to appreciate the ethos at Laxton comes from the memories of its alumni. Several generations of boys from the James family, for example, went through the school between 1910 and the 1960s – fifteen members of the family were schooled either at Spode House or Laxton! The second, Stephen, would enter the Order as Hildebrand James, and went on to serve as Vicar Provincial in S. Africa during World War Two, while a Bernard James was the first Head Boy at Laxton. Peter James (Llanarth 1949–1953; Laxton 1953–1957) remembers how he was helped to grow by being given specific responsibilities: singing in the schola, captaining at Rugby, and appointment as a prefect. Though there were sometimes problems (he recalls a lay master being dismissed), his abiding memory is of 'one general happy family'. He recalls both the impact of studying Aquinas – his understanding of predestination – and being impressed by a spirit of tolerance, how to understand other religions while still retaining one's own faith.

The Old Howardians Association for alumni of Laxton meets next on the weekend 24th/25th October 2015. To find out more about the Association and its reunions, contact Mr Anthony Carter: anthonycarter1@talktalk.net

To contact us about receiving this newsletter, or to receive it by email, please write to newsletter@english.op.org



Witness & Outreach at Imperial

Fr Thomas Skeats OP, Parish Priest & newly elected Prior of London tells us about his recent work as a university chaplain

IT WAS IN SEPTEMBER 2013, as I was completing a Masters degree in Durham, when the invitation came to be chaplain at Imperial College in South Kensington. It is enormously inspiring to witness the enthusiasm and commitment of young, intelligent, Catholic students who are keen to practise their faith and demonstrate the joy that comes from a life dedicated to Christ. Part of my job is to build up this core of students who can promote Catholic life and culture among their contemporaries, reaching out to students who are searching for a deeper sense of meaning and for sustaining values in their life. One thing that helps in this is to encourage a more dignified celebration of the liturgy. We now have a weekly Sunday Vigil Mass in the beautiful setting of the Brompton Little Oratory.



Fr Thomas flanked by students at the Oratory

Another development this year has been establishing links between the Catholic Society at Imperial and Catholic groups in other universities, including Leicester and Cambridge.

One recent success was a joint pilgrimage to the cell of St. Thomas More in the Tower of London. There have also been enjoyable visits by Cambridge students to Imperial, and by Imperial students to

Cambridge, where they were welcomed by Sr Anne Catherine Swailes OP at Fisher House. The work at Imperial has been greatly supported by a grant from the **Dominican Chaplaincies Fund**. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the students, to express our gratitude to the benefactors who have made this possible.

The Dominican Chaplaincies Fund supports the friars' work with university students. If you would like to support, please use the form on the back page.

The Dominican Seminar in Leeds

THE DOMINICAN SEMINAR was a moment of hope for our mission. Each year Dominicans from the UK and Ireland meet to explore a chosen topic and, while there are formal talks, there's a much discussion, with contributions from our laity, sisters and friars. The great thing is that nobody dominates and everyone is heard. Archbishop Malcolm McMahon opened with an overview of how Christ is present in his body the Church. Saturday morning was given to "Meeting Jesus in his little ones and the poor". Sue McQuinn, a lay Dominican from London, spoke movingly of her work with prisoners and seeing Christ in them. Karl Grobicki talked of teaching RE in secondary school. Nick O'Brien discussed his work as a lawyer in dealing with appeals from people sectioned under the Mental Health Act. Sr Albertina Bongo of the Crawley



Sisters talked about their work in Zimbabwe among the poor and those born with HIV. These were thought-provoking and inspiring presentations. In the afternoon, fr Simon Gaine explored how a theology of Jesus is related to a theology of the Trinity. To round off Saturday, the Bushey Sisters led by Sr Ann shared a beautiful meditation with us on Jesus in the gospels as depicted in art and poetry. On Sunday, Dr Sara Parvis, a lay Dominican who teaches Patristics at New College, Edinburgh, examined scholarship on Jesus in the Gospels and Paul. She related each of the four presentations above to one of the gospels. We also prayed together and celebrated Eucharist with fr Tom

McCarthy presiding on Saturday and Archbishop Malcolm on Sunday. The preachers were fr David Goodill and my good self. A weekend well spent!
– **Dermot Morrin OP**



A Glimpse of Glory

Fr Gregory Pearson OP, a member of **St Dominic's Priory** community in London, shares the good news of how friars and parishioners have worked together to recover the full beauty of a precious place of worship.

BY KIND BENEFACCTION of the parishioners at St Dominic's, London, the saint's altar in the Priory church has now been restored to its full glory! This has been the latest stage in a longer-term project where friars and parishioners are working hard together to make the most of this beautiful church.

One of the largest Catholic churches in London, the church of St Dominic and Our Lady of the Rosary was inspired by the wish of a Catholic layman, Thomas Walmsley, to see a church dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. Designed by **Charles Buckler**, the church has fourteen side chapels, each dedicated to a mystery of the rosary, while the crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven is depicted in the stained glass above the high altar. Originally completed in 1883 with financial support from the papal countess, **Miss Helen Tasker**, and many other donors, it is a place where sacred art lifts heart and mind to God.

The Lady Chapel in which St Dominic's altar stands had been damaged over time by water from a leaking roof as well as rising damp. Once these problems had been fixed, Our Lady's altar was restored in 2002, but urgent repairs to the roofs were then needed costing £250,000 – paid for by successful parish fundraising efforts and a grant from English Heritage. Only in 2012 could work re-commence on the Lady Chapel at St Joseph's altar.

Finally, it was St Dominic's turn! The altar is unique among the 19 originally in the church by having a painted reredos, the work of **Philip Westlake** (whose brother **Nathaniel Westlake** was one of the leading artists in the Gothic Revival movement, and whose studio painted the church's Stations of the Cross). The smoke of many years has now been removed from the scene of St Dominic's deathbed, so that the figures in the foreground stand out against the golden background of heavenly light – where Christ rules in majesty adored by the saints and angels.



The repainted stonework surrounding the altar highlights the Early English style of arcading. The altar itself was originally the gift of a Mrs Langley at High Warden. Her successors have matched her generosity and revealed the beauty of her gift. To help raise funds, they established a **Guild of St Dominic**, which members of the parish could join in order to support the maintenance of the church and to pray for the life and work of the parish. Members raised over £4,000 towards the £25,000 cost of the restoration, and a parish sponsored walk brought in over £2,000, while the remainder came from individual gifts including a substantial legacy.

The completion of the works was celebrated just before Christmas, with a Mass followed by a Blessed Sacrament procession to the newly restored altar, at which the Provincial, Fr John Farrell OP, gave Benediction. The Lady Chapel, and indeed, the whole view down the right hand side of the church, has been transformed by these works: what was a dark and crumbling corner of the church has become a new focus for devotion.

Please come and visit our beautiful church. Every Saturday after 10a.m. Mass there is a Rosary Holy Hour with Adoration and a procession. It is situated on Southampton Road, NW5 4LB. Nearest tube stops are Belsize Park and Chalk Farm. www.haverstockhill.org.uk



The Holy Cross at Holy Cross

Fr David Rocks OP, Prior of Holy Cross, Leicester, tells the story of its famous relic and of its recent restoration.

ONE OF THE MOST TREASURED possessions of Holy Cross Priory, Leicester, is the Relic of the True Cross that gives its name to the Priory. Its history is intimately connected with that of our formal return to England after a long exile. Once owned by the 17th-century Dominican, Cardinal Howard, it first came to Leicester in the early 19th century from Bornhem in the Low Countries. After some years in London, it was returned to Leicester in 1928 when the foundation stone was laid of the new Holy Cross church. Since then, it has been a focus of unity for our community across the generations, and has been at the centre of many celebrations that have marked the development of our apostolate in the heart of Leicester. As we approach the 200th anniversary of Holy Cross in its present location, it has again come into its own.



The whole community came together for the main celebration. University students helped parishioners organise a celebratory lunch and keep things going in the church. People involved in various ministries worked together to pull out all the stops, while our classical, African and gospel choirs provided different music suitable for the occasion, celebrating our different traditions coming together. A very nice surprise was that some members of the Kimberlin family, on hearing of the event, travelled back to Leicester to celebrate the restoration of their benefaction.

Visit our website: www.holycrossleicester.org for pictures and information on the church.

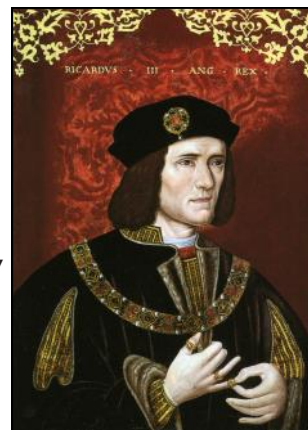


Members of the Kimberlin family with Fr David Rocks OP

After the success of the recent fundraising drive to refurbish our buildings – we exceeded an ambitious target of £10,000 at the annual Blackfriars Market – it was decided to make the celebration of Holy Cross Day on 14 September extra special. Our Relic has had two reliquaries fashioned for it in the past – a wooden processional reliquary in 1932, and a golden, permanent reliquary in 1948. The latter, a gift of the Kimberlin family, had lain empty for many years on the Altar of St Helena in the church. Using some of our newly-acquired funds, and with the help of further benefactors, both the altar and reliquary were restored in time for the feast day, when the relic was solemnly carried in procession from the High Altar at the end of Mass to its permanent location in the Kimberlin Reliquary for public veneration.

The last Plantagenet

This March, the friars and church at Holy Cross, Leicester, will also be involved in the events surrounding the re-burial of the remains of King Richard III, last of the Plantagenet kings. On March 23rd, Holy Cross will host a Requiem Mass celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols. On the next day, friars from around the Province will process from Holy Cross to Leicester's Anglican cathedral where they will lead the celebration of Solemn Vespers.



Future Events

God Matters? talks. Blackfriars, Oxford. 10 Feb 2015 – 17 March 2015 (Tues evenings, 8pm).

'Thomas & Thomisms' – Aquinas Institute Annual Colloquium. Blackfriars, Oxford. 7 March 2015

For details email: richard.conrad@bfriars.ox.ac.uk

Requiem for King Richard III. Holy Cross, Leicester. 23 March 2015. Special requiem Mass celebrated by Card. Vincent Nichols. Entry by ticket. For details nearer the time see www.holycrossleicester.org

'Oscar Romero – Mystic and Prophet'. Special lecture at Blackfriars, Oxford. 5pm on 25 March 2015.

Dominican Pilgrimage to Walsingham. Sunday 17 May 2015. The day begins with Mass at noon in the Reconciliation Chapel.

'A Millennium of Christian Exegesis'. One-day conference at Blackfriars, Oxford. 27 June 2015.

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'Narratives of Poverty'. London, June/July 2015. A Las Casas Institute one-day conference. See next issue for details.

Aquinas Institute Summer School at Buckfast Abbey, 6–10 July 2015. Exploring a vision of the Catholic Faith. For students and young adults. Organised by the Aquinas Institute at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford. For further details email nicholas.crowe@english.op.org.

The Dominican Way. 29 July – 8 August 2015 Pilgrimage for young adults. If interested, contact Matthew Jarvis OP: matthew.jarvis@english.op.org

Thinking Faith: 'Faith and the Arts', Boarbank Hall, Cumbria. 1–8 August 2015. Fr Martin Ganeri OP is chaplain to this annual study week hosted by the Augustinian canonesses. For details see: www.boarbankhall.org.uk



Friars Preachers Lent 2015



Please support our work

In committing their lives to serve God, Dominican friars give up all personal property.

The generous support we receive from others is therefore essential and sustains the fruitful variety of ways that we serve. In making a gift you become a participant in this work. We truly value this assistance, and remember all our benefactors daily in our prayers.

If you feel able to support us in any way, please send us your donation using this form. *May God bless you for your generosity.*

MY GIFT TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE DOMINICAN FRIARS:

£

You can also make one-off or recurring donations online at www.english.op.org

- My gift is for: ☐ The Dominicans' Training Fund
☐ The University Chaplaincies Fund (see p.5)
☐ General work of the Dominican Friars
- ☐ I do not require an acknowledgement

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English Province of the Order of Preachers

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Please return this form together with your cheque or postal order payable to 'The Dominican Council' to: Development Office, 17 Beaumont Street, Oxford OX1 2NA. If you wish to give by other means, such as by standing order or bank transfer, please call Richard on 01865 610208 or email development@english.op.org

