



THE DOMINICANS

Advent 2022

The Magazine of the Dominican Friars in England & Scotland



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What is God calling me to do?

My niece Avery was born in 2020, and the circumstances of that fateful year meant I did not meet her in person until this year when she had turned two. However, I was able to follow her growth and see the development of her personality thanks to photos and videos that my sister shared with the family almost daily. Often when I see an infant, I wonder what will become of them, who will they grow up to be, what will they accomplish? I was led to such thoughts by the observation that this issue presents us with the stories of vocation, of God's call, which leads me to ask: *Who does God call me to become and what does he call me to do?* We see, in the stories of professions and the clothing of novices, the initial birth, so to speak, and development of a Dominican life. One is born into the Order, and I begin to wonder, what will become of him, what will they do? I am sure novice masters and student masters not infrequently have such thoughts.

Hence this issue gives an answer for three of our brothers who all responded to God's call and entered the Order in the same year, in 2013: Fr Toby, who began his priestly ministry in London with me; Fr Samuel, whom I had known for years before he joined the Order, through a mutual friend; and Br Jordan, who I knew from my first assignation as a newly-ordained priest: he was a student



who was deeply involved in the life of the University Chaplaincy in Edinburgh (St Albert's). There is an unavoidable sense, for me, then, of having watched these men and brothers grow in the Order, and to see where Providence has led them. I hope that their different yet similar paths of fidelity to the preaching of the Gospel will inspire you and give you a sense of how God works in our lives as Dominican friars. There is a fourth brother, of course, in that cohort: Fr Luke, who has gone from Leicester to Leuven for further studies. I hope he will share his thoughts and academic interests with us once he has settled into his studies. Likewise, Fr Samuel has now moved on to train as a Royal Navy chaplain, and I hope that he will share his reflections with us in due course. And Br Jordan has begun a time of ministry in Taiwan, where his

adventures have begun with attempts to learn to speak and write Mandarin Chinese!

God's Providence in the life and work of the Order is thus displayed through these individual vocations, but the telling of God's merciful governance and grace is told also through the work of the General Chapter, which we hear about from Fr Gregory, and see in the photographs, and also in the continuing story from our history of the Province's fated Roman priory; and finally in the obituary of our dear Fr Michael Dunn, whose 60th jubilee of profession we celebrated this year.

In these times of uncertainty and turmoil in temporal affairs, times in which we are more likely to ask what will become of us, and when we might wonder what God is calling me to do, there remains one certainty, which St Thomas Aquinas' theology of vocation states: Every Christian is summoned to a life of perfect charity, called to eternal happiness with God in heaven. Let us, therefore, fix our eyes on the goal of eternal beatitude, praying for the gifts and graces we need from Christ in order to grow in friendship with God until that final end.

Fraternally,

– Fr Lawrence Lew OP, Editor

You can send any comments or feedback to me via magazine@english.op.org

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Requiescant in Pace

We remember with affection and gratitude all the recently departed, including the following who made gifts to the Friars in their Wills.

- **James Finnegan** (Holy Cross, Leicester)
- **Nicholas Elwes** (Blackfriars Priory, Oxford)

May they and all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

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God of Surprises

Fr Samuel Burke OP, who has recently begun training as a Catholic Chaplain in the Royal Navy, reflects on his time at St Albert's Chaplaincy, Edinburgh.

Our Lord sent out his Apostles to preach the Gospel, to make disciples of all nations, and to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. Dominicans continue in this apostolic tradition in our preaching mission. We are sent to preach the Gospel in a particular place often with a particular ministry to fulfil, a specific mode of preaching the Gospel. In my own case, I was sent by our Provincial from our House of Formation in Oxford to St Albert's in Edinburgh. My mission was principally to serve as a University Chaplain, and also to assist in our vibrant parish, and to join the existing community of brothers already assigned. I had been told to expect to stay 'about three years', and so it was to prove. The thought of Edinburgh was both daunting and exciting: daunting because I didn't know Edinburgh very well, had never lived in Scotland, and knew few people up there; and exciting because in the unfamiliar lies great possibility and adventure. Edinburgh is an historic city, after all. It has been home to great thinkers like Adam Smith and David Hume. It is a place of great architectural and natural

beauty. It has a fine cultural and literary tradition. Not for nothing was it once dubbed 'The Athens of the North'. How was I to find my place in a place of such significance?

In this article, I have been asked to reflect upon my time in Edinburgh, which by God's providence, has been full of surprises. In fact, while reminiscing, the book of the late Jesuit spiritual writer, Fr Gerry W. Hughes came to mind, *God of Surprises*. Surprise is, I think, part of the enchantment of the Christian life generally, and – in my brief experience – of the Dominican life, especially. I will limit myself to three in particular.

The first surprise ought not to have been so. It was the welcome and encouragement that I received from the religious community, student community and parish community of St Albert's: the stuff of legend. In Matthean idiom: I was fed whether I was hungry or not; I was thirsty and at Christmas and Easter given the elixir of the gods; I was a stranger – and an English one to boot! – who was taken in. Apocryphal tales of being received in Scotland with the presumption of having eaten already was at odds with my experience of hearty embrace, and lavish hospitality. Gestures of kindness are keenly felt by any newcomer and I could not have hoped for a more generous and friendly reception.

The second surprise was not a welcome one, for me or for anyone. I am emphatically unsentimental about COVID. The pernicious virus along with the draconian government restrictions imposed as a result served to wreak death, destruction and drear upon Edinburgh and the rest of the world. Students found the experience particularly difficult. Requests for spiritual support markedly increased seemingly in direct proportion with the decreasing ability to do so. It proved a great challenge to keep the student community together and to keep up morale. Yet we were able to provide continuity of pastoral care in the face of social distancing, state-sanctioned closure of churches, screen-fatigue and the general dispersal of people attempting to get home. Though deprived of so much, especially the fortification of the sacraments, through a combination of resilience, ingenuity, technology and – most importantly – grace, we prevailed. The students themselves did a great deal, and I remain in awe of their sense of initiative and admire their grittiness. When we cannot thrive in life, it is enough simply to survive. Weathering the storms and vicissitudes of life is sometimes all that we can do in the face of adversity, as the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us, along with any survey of human history. And even when we cannot endure, even when death



Preaching On Air

Appropriately for the Feast of the Archangels there was a great deal of fanfare as, in the spirit of the Archangel Gabriel, the good news was announced that the London studio of Radio Maria England was up and running.

Fittingly for a station with a Marian charism the new studio adjoins the Rosary Shrine, being located on the first floor of St Dominic's Parish Hall.

A beautiful Mass was celebrated by Bishop John Sherrington in the Shrine Church, with hearts and minds lifted, not only by the celestial choir of angels, but also audibly by a wonderful young schola directed by Rachael Shipard.

After the glorious liturgy, the throngs moved to St Dominic's Hall (beneath the new studio) which was packed to the brim, bringing together Catholic leaders, radio speakers and volunteers, parish friends and representatives of London's diverse Catholic groups and organisations, all united by a vision of bringing more of the Good News to more of the people.

Below is the speech given at the launch by new Priest Director, **Fr Toby Lees OP**:

The Bishop in his homily on this Feast of the Archangels spoke about young men choosing Michael as a confirmation name. Having taken the name Michael at confirmation, my ears immediately pricked up. He then mentioned that often such men come from socially challenging circumstances, and I thought to myself, 'My mother is not going to appreciate him saying that!' But then I went on to reflect that I was a future *Dominican* vocation at a *Jesuit* school, perhaps the Bishop is on to something! The Bishop is correct, of course, and it is a beautiful and good thing that young men in difficult circumstances are presented with the intercession and example of St Michael the Archangel and receive the courage to imagine a different future for themselves.

and defeat seem to win out, it is not the end. For Christ has gained for us life beyond death and victory beyond defeat. This message was more urgent than ever during those awful months, a message we rightly call Good News!

A third surprise came in the form of invitations to teach. I had already done some teaching and research in constitutional law at St John's College, Oxford, but had not expected to do any teaching in Edinburgh. Through the encouragement of a professor who attends St Albert's, I was prompted to apply to do some teaching at the University of Edinburgh. I soon found myself appointed as a tutor on two courses to about a hundred students in all, a mix of undergraduates and graduates. This involved blowing the cobwebs off some of my law books, getting to grips with the fantastic law library, and buying some set texts. If you had told me when I was a law student that I would go on to teach law, I would have been dismissive of the idea. I had always wanted to practise and I had never really thought of myself as a teacher let alone an academic. Aside from a strong sense of 'imposter syndrome', I had not considered the great satisfaction that comes from sharing knowledge and helping students develop their skills. The privilege of a vicarious sense of achievement derived from seeing progress in others was a great blessing from my time in Edinburgh.

Teaching skills are also transferable. St Mary's University, Twickenham, seemed

to think so, at least. Out of the blue, I had a phone call asking me to teach Applied Theology on their MA Course at their new campus at the Gillis Centre, Edinburgh. Amongst other things, this brought together some of my own theological interests in Catholic Social Teaching and experience working in politics and public affairs. The interplay of a distillation of Scripture, Doctrine, and Ethics with the challenges of the modern world certainly made for some interesting and lively seminars. My students included a consultant gynaecologist, a religious sister, a financier, a lawyer and a Catholic priest. It never ceases to amaze you what you can learn from other people: from their experiences and perspectives. Honestly, I learnt as much from our discussions as I did from the reading that I had undertaken to prepare. Teachers, in my recent experience, are always a student first and last.

In his play *An Ideal Husband*, Oscar Wilde wrote 'To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect.' That may be accurate enough yet it sounds somehow inadequate, for it seems to me a statement more theological than modern. Experience, such as my three years in Edinburgh, suggests that you never know quite what is around the corner, be it a kindness like hospitality, a curse like COVID or opportunities like teaching. You never knows how God's providence will unfold, what adventures await, what surprises the Lord has in store.



I remember one time being at Walsingham for the launch of a new Shrine appeal and the then Chaplain Mgr John Armitage saying that at the end of the Mass there would be people with buckets on the way out to take up a collection; he also added, 'Don't worry if you fill up the buckets; if you fill them up, I'll get wheelbarrows.'

This launch isn't one of those events. It's not that we don't want your money; Radio Maria relies on donations, we have no adverts, no Vatican funding, no funding from the Bishops – I'm not trying to make you feel bad, Bishop John.

At this point I'm going to quote Marc Antony from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which seems a very appropriate thing to do at the launch of a new Radio Maria England studio in London, with so many members of the World Family from Italy present:

Friends, Romans, countrymen,
lend me your ears...

What we want from you is your ears. But there will be no buckets or wheelbarrows outside to collect them, we want them firmly connected to the rest of you!

Because, what we want most of all from this evening is not financial help, we want new listeners, we want you to listen, and we want you to get all your friends to listen, because it's our listeners who are our lifeblood. There's no point in a radio station without listeners and there's no

future for a radio station with no funding without listeners. We believe that if you listen you will want to support us in the long-term. We are doing something we think you will value.

Please go home from here and start listening, and then when you find something that you like, and I am certain you will, tell other people about it.

We are all sick of viruses, but we do want a super-spreader event of a certain sort tonight: we want viral advertising. If every person here tonight began to listen and encouraged their friends to listen, we would grow our audience very quickly.

There is so much that is coarse and crass in our culture, and we are not that. We want to be part of a restoration of our culture by providing something that genuinely nourishes, that genuinely raises hearts and minds to higher things, to the Person we were made for.

Like Mary, the job of this radio is to lead you to Christ.

If you have a story to tell that others need to hear, that tells of a lived experience of the power of Jesus, we want to hear from you. There is something very special and intimate about such stories on the radio, and we deliberately have very few interviews so that our speakers speak directly to you, in your homes, in your cars, maybe even when you are in the bath, although I promise you I am not imagining the latter right now, you are very much in your cars in my thoughts!

I spoke about listeners as lifeblood of the radio, but blood needs a beating heart to circulate it and give it life, and that is our volunteers, many of whom are here tonight, and who give so generously of their time and talents to make what we do possible. A special thank-you from me to all of you this evening. You are amazing!

I want to just finish with one story which gives an example of why this project of Radio Maria is so vital and what is so special about radio.

We had a wonderful young lady on air recently called Grace. She spoke about her journey of faith whilst at performing arts college and she told of how, in her final presentation, she announced to everyone that everything that she had been doing all year was out of love for Jesus. That takes guts in this day and age to say, and she said she lost some friends because of it. I am pleased we could give her a platform to tell her beautiful and brave story.

After we opened the phone lines a young man phoned in and he spoke of how he had been inspired and that he wanted more people to hear stories like that of Grace. He had said that it had made him think again about the need for religion. It was really very beautiful to hear.

Anyway after we went off air, Grace said that she knew the young man and that he had given an alias when he spoke on air. That showed me the power of radio. That the witness of someone heard in this special intimate way, not on a YouTube video, but live, such witness compelled him to call, and to say something, even though he did not feel confident enough to say his own name.

I hope that as you listen you might hear many more such stories and I thank you for your help in making the telling of such stories possible.

Any friends of the Dominican family who have a story to tell or who would like to volunteer in some way with the radio are invited to email: director@radiomariaengland.uk You can listen to Radio Maria England via the website (www.radiomariaengland.uk), the Radio Maria Play App, or DAB/DAB+ in the London and Cambridge areas. Alternatively, wherever you are, you can just ask Alexa to 'Play Radio Maria England'!

Aquinas & Vocations

Fr Nicholas Crowe OP considers the Theology of Religious Vocation according to St Thomas Aquinas and its Implications for the Promotion and Direction of Vocations, the theme of his recently-completed Licence in Theology.

St Thomas's views on who should enter a religious order are well documented thanks to his involvement in the tempestuous thirteenth century debates over the role of the Franciscans and Dominicans in the University of Paris. Broadly speaking, we can identify four related axes around which his thinking on this question turns.

The first of these axes is the end or goal of the Christian life. Every Christian is summoned to a life of perfect charity. The full and lifelong embrace of poverty, chastity and obedience which in St Thomas's mind is synonymous with the religious life is meant to facilitate this journey by placing certain spiritual tools at our disposal. If used well, these tools dispose us to enter into a deeper love of God and neighbour via a life of contemplation and works of mercy. Religious life, then, is a means to the end of the Christian life in general: perfect charity. On this basis St Thomas concludes that all that is required of a Christian proposing to enter a religious community is a lack of canonical impediments, a good intention and a firm resolve to make good use of the resources that the religious life puts at our disposal.

St Thomas's clarity around the question of who might enter a religious community therefore follows directly from his clear vision of what a religious house is meant to be. For complex reasons, the contemporary Church no longer shares this clarity. Whilst this complicates the application of St Thomas's thinking to our present circumstances, we would do well to learn from St Thomas's direct simplicity. If we as religious are vague and confused about the meaning and purpose of our life, then we make it harder for young people to judge whether this way of life is appropriate for them. Much of the confusion and

anxiety experienced around the question of vocational discernment among the young is simply a reflection of the confusion that priests and religious themselves project about the nature of their calling.

The second axis is God's call. Put simply, a divine vocation is God's summons to a definite goal or end. Ultimately, this means that every Christian has the same voca-

surely begin with the Scriptures. Each person, according to St Thomas, ought to receive the Word of God as if Christ was addressing them personally. A heart that is open to the Word in this way will find in the Scriptures assistance, guidance, and inspiration for the journey of discipleship. If we extrapolate a little from St Thomas's writing, we find a link between



The clothing of Br George, Sept. 2022.

tion: we are all called to eternal happiness with God in heaven. However, within this universal call to beatitude there are various other analogous experiences of divine calling which lead us into an ever-deepening friendship with God even now in this life. For example, God might call us to one-off tasks such as a particular work of mercy; to longer-term commitments such as a job or mission that shape certain seasons of our lives; to life-long commitments such as the religious life or the priesthood or marriage. All of these are true vocations but in an analogous or secondary sense: they share in the goodness of heaven without yet being its full consummation in us.

How do we hear these divine calls? Much could be said about this question, but any Thomistic response must

hearing God's call and the proclamation of the Gospel. Through her ordinary ministry of preaching and teaching, the Church mediates God's call by handing on his Word. This suggests that the raising up of new vocations is profoundly linked to the Church's evangelising mission. If we wish to reap a harvest of new priests, religious, Catholic marriages and so on then all of us must sow the Word at every level of the Church from the family to the parish to schools and universities and beyond. The crisis of vocations is, on one level, a symptom of a deeper sickness in the Church's evangelising mission.

The third axis is the response of the person who is called. It is not enough for the Word to be sowed: the Word must find good soil if it is to bear fruit. One of the great strengths of St Thomas's thought

Vocations News

is the immense sophistication he brings to his analysis of human life and moral development. He shows us that nature, nurture, acquired virtues and vices, and decisively the gifts of grace can strengthen in us a generative docility and openness to God's Word or entrench a hardness of heart that is ultimately sterile.

It seems, then, that in addition to a clear understanding of the meaning and purpose of the lay, religious, and ordained states within the Church, and a strong ecclesial culture of evangelisation, we ought also to emphasise the importance of formation and communal mentoring for the raising up of vocations. Good pastoral accompaniment helps young people to cultivate in their hearts soil that is deep and rich, free from the rocks and stones that might impede the Word from taking root and so hamper a generous response to God's call.

Finally, an often-overlooked aspect of St Thomas's vocational thinking is his insistence on the communal verification of a call. No secondary state in the Church is discerned individually. Ordination, religious profession, and marriage all require at least one other person to confirm our judgement or our sense of calling. This judgement is made on the basis of what we can see. The discernment of a vocation is not a private and introverted business. Instead, it is an inherently ecclesial reality made visible in a certain sense by acts of virtue. St James famously declared: I will show you my faith by my works. By the same token, we can to a certain extent see the vocation of another in their manner of life. The interior principles that animate our lives are to some extent made visible by our acts. For this reason, those we share a life with often able to verify a sense of vocation because they can see truths about us that remain hidden from us.

This final axis draws attention to the importance of the shared life of the Christian community be it a religious house, a parish, a family, or some group or movement within the Church. We do not always see ourselves as we really are. When it comes to verifying and confirming a sense of calling, we need those who know us and love us to confirm our intuitions if we are on the right path and encourage us in another direction if we have gone astray.

We celebrated on 17 September the first professions of Brs Reginald and Augustine in Cambridge (*pictured, first photo below*). Having completed their novitiate, they have moved to Oxford to begin their philosophical studies.

Cambridge Priory also saw in September the profession of Br George (*see facing page*), our sole novice for the

current year.

Later in the month, Brs John Church and Daniel Rowlands were solemnly professed in Oxford (*second photo, below*), a significant milestone in their vocational journey.

Please pray for these and all the brethren!



'I was in prison and you visited me'

Br Jordan Scott OP shares his experience of ministry to prisoners.

When I was asked, or maybe it was told, to move to our London Priory to begin work in prison ministry it could not be said that I was brimming with zeal at the prospect. In truth the news was as unwanted as it was unexpected. I knew there were friars who worked in prison but I had been to one a few times in my youth, visiting my mum's then-fiancé – it didn't work out – and it seems that I formed such an aversion to the place that the mere thought of going back to such an establishment was alien. As far as I was concerned prisons were grim, depressing and dangerous – not nice places to be and best avoided. To be fair to me, I got that part mostly right.

Still, as one quickly has to learn about prison ministry, the experience is not about 'me' – which is for the better as one encounters folks with far more interesting stories in prison than one's own – too much navel-gazing and you will miss the many lessons people inside have to teach! One could say that in the prison drama the chaplain belongs to the supporting cast, though that does not mean they do not have lots of lines to say and a key role to play in helping the 'lead character' get on with their journey. It is perhaps worth suggesting that working with a person in prison is not quite like working with someone in any other environment. Every day, every minute, can be an existential crisis. The question of the future and of freedom weighs on the mind of the inmate with a potency that cannot be appreciated by those of us who take the ability to open our bedroom door for granted.

Perhaps at its simplest a chaplain's role is to help individuals in this position keep going. They want to talk about God?

You talk about God. They need a book, you get them a book. Perhaps they are facing homelessness, or are struggling to get to see the doctor or their mother is ill – you identify the problem and you fix it, or at least try. If it strikes one as odd that a chaplain should be involved in everything from providing clothing to organising visits to sick relatives that is, perhaps, because of the peculiar way that we in these days might identify 'religious' work. Sacraments and prayers, anything that looks 'churchy', plus tea and biscuits, is probably what most people think of as the key tools in a chaplain's arsenal, and it is true that prominent amongst a

the truth and deal with him honestly. Or perhaps it was that he presumed I would be softer and help resolve the situation he was protesting in the way he wanted. Either way I got him to come down and, doing my best vicar impersonation, talked things through over a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Prisons are violent, desperate and unforgiving places. Fights are routine, self-harm is constant and the resources simply do not exist to make rehabilitation a plausible reality for most. How does the chaplain help folk keep going? You do your best to mitigate the austerity of human emotion where you can, you listen and advise, sometimes you even remonstrate. You are there, as Mr X believed, simply to care, even if, as sometimes happens, you do not. It is easy to get frustrated and tired: the system and experience can quickly make one jaded. In such moments, as noted at the beginning, one simply remembers 'this isn't about me', and just keeps listening.

If you've read this far you might be asking, 'What's stopping me from visiting a prisoner?' All you need is a pair of ears and a moderately plausible poker face. Chaplaincies across

England and Wales run an 'official prison visitor' scheme which trains people to go into prison and 'visit' the men who have no one else. Volunteers are the backbones of Chaplaincies and you will find it is not too hard to make a big difference. I would encourage you to get in touch with your local prison if you thought you might be able to help. You won't regret it. In the end, I didn't.

Br Jordan has recently, at the invitation of the Master of the Order, moved to Taiwan to assist the friars there.



chaplain's duties is confessional work. However, most of the time, even from the more religious prisoners, one encountered far wider expectations of what the chaplains could and should do.

On one occasion, twenty minutes back in the office from annual leave, some nurses came to find me to tell me Mr X had tied a noose around his neck and that he was going to jump from the roof. He had said he would only talk to a chaplain. It was not that Mr X was particularly religious, but rather that he laboured under the, perhaps mistaken, belief that chaplains were more likely than officers to tell

An English Dominican Home in Rome, Part III

Fr Simon Francis Gainé OP

By 1677, through the efforts of Cardinal Howard, the English Dominicans were in possession of the ancient basilica of St John and St Paul, Rome

With the establishment of St John and St Paul, Cardinal Howard was able to petition for the English Dominicans to regain their full status as a province. The rule was for there to be three priories, and with Bornhem and the monastery of nuns at Brussels, the requirement was taken to be met. Vincent Torre, who continued to reside at St John and St Paul, attended the General Chapter of 1686 as Prior Provincial, the first English friar to do so since the Reformation. He was accompanied by Green, who delivered a theology lecture before the capitulars to great applause, as Torre reported to the new King and Queen.

In 1685 the community numbered fourteen friars all told. However, by 1686 it had fallen to ten, and from 1686 to 1687 there were no students resident in the priory. One priest, John Tarleton, seems to have refused repeated assignments from the Master General to go there. The prior, Ambrose Grimes, resigned early to become the chaplain to James Cecil, the Earl of Salisbury and one of Howard's converts. He was later appointed preacher to the dowager Queen in London.

Grimes was succeeded by Tommaso Bianchi, who had originally helped Howard in obtaining St John and St Paul. Bianchi had joined the community early on, working as a confessor in the Dominican 'Penitentiary' at the basilica of St Mary Major. Not long after he became prior, he transferred from the Roman to the English province on becoming its Provincial in 1688. During his term of office, the Dominican Cardinal Orsini, the future Benedict XIII, consecrated the basilica's new altars.

While on visitation to the brethren in England two years later, Bianchi was arrested on Christmas Eve, together with Martin Russell, who ran the Dominican mission at Little Malvern. The two friars found themselves as fellow inmates of Hereford Gaol. However, Bianchi was back in Rome by 1692 and participated in the General Chapter of 1694.

From 1692 Edward Bing, who had avoided prison during the Titus Oates Plot, was prior. Bing had been an officer in Oliver Cromwell's army and a member



Thomas Cardinal Howard OP

of Charles II's bodyguard. After the death of his wife, he became a Catholic and a Dominican. In 1672 he had been chaplain to the Catholics in a regiment commanded by the Duke of Monmouth, and was known as 'Captain Bing'. Another new member was Thomas Dryden, son of the poet laureate, who joined the Order from the English College. He had studied philosophy, after converting to Catholicism, at the seminary in Douai, France, before coming to Rome. One day he would succeed his uncle as baronet, though as a Catholic he could not inherit the estates.

The community endured much during this time from the peril of malaria, which was a danger to all the inhabitants of the Caelian Hill. It is easy to see why some would have come to doubt the good sense of maintaining a priory there. Patrick Ogilby's death (*see part 2*) had been followed by that of Dominic Smith in 1686 and of Robert Proctor in 1690. Neither had progressed beyond subdeacon. Dominic Pegge, who had been at St John and St Paul from the beginning, except for studies at Naples, and who taught both philosophy and theology, died while prior in 1691 at the age of 35. Another lector, Joseph Broughton, was so affected by illness that he was moved to Bornhem but died soon after.

Perhaps more significant for the fate of the priory than even these losses was the passing away of Cardinal Howard on 17 June 1694. Howard had bankrolled St John and St Paul and, as long as he was alive, the priory was financially secure. In his will, however, he left money to the Ursulines and Oratorians in Rome and to the Dominican nuns in Brussels, but nothing to St John and St Paul. The bulk of his estate went to found a new college for the province in Flanders. Howard had clearly concluded that the future lay in a study house not in Rome but nearer Bornhem and England.

With money to cover the Roman priory for no more than a year, several brothers departed for Bornhem to await the opening of the new college. The only resident student, Thomas Worthington, who was preparing to be ordained deacon, was sent to Naples. A mere two priests and two lay brothers, including Henry Peck, who had been Howard's personal servant, remained behind. Peck later went to work for the nuns in Brussels.

One day in 1697 Pope Innocent XII paid a surprise visit to the priory. It was not good news.

To be continued ...

United in Mission

Fr Gregory Pearson OP reports on the recent General Chapter.

Dominicans from around the world came together for three weeks in July and August in the tiny hamlet of Tultenango, three hours' drive north-west of Mexico City, for the General Chapter of the Order. Tultenango is the place where the Mexican Province of the Order was reborn after the anti-clerical persecutions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – quiet and out of the way, to avoid attracting attention, rather like our own province's first post-reformation foundation at Hinckley – and it is now the site of a retreat house run by the brothers, set not in a landscape of desert, beach, or jungle which one might associate with Mexico, but amidst lush green hills and with a climate that was more than comfortable for a northern European.

The General Chapter is the highest decision-making body in the Order, and takes place every three years. Its composition is always representative of the Order as a whole, but in complementary ways: either the priors provincial or brothers called 'diffinitors', elected specially for the purpose, represent their provinces, with both attending when a new Master is to be elected. This Chapter it was the turn of the diffinitors, and so I found myself representing the English Province as one of the forty-five voting members of the Chapter. I was not, however, the only Englishman there. Although the General Chapter legislates directly only for the friars, its conversations are also informed by the contributions of other branches of the Dominican Family, whose representatives attend and can speak at the sessions of the Chapter. The representatives of the nuns, apostolic sisters, lay Dominicans, and Dominican Youth Movement were all from the host country of Mexico, but the guest from the priestly fraternities was a member of the fraternity in England, Fr Michael Hall of the Diocese of Leeds. Fr Benjamin Earl of our Province, who works in the Order's headquarters at Santa Sabina in Rome as

Procurator General, was also present as the Chapter's legal adviser. Besides the members of the Chapter assembly, a gathering on this scale is of course also a complex logistical operation; not least of the tasks is that of providing simultaneous translation between the three working languages of the Order – English, French, and Spanish – and this was shared by a team of friars including our own Fr Matthew Jarvis.

The work of the Chapter was divided between plenary sessions of all the participants and a number of smaller commissions which handled particular areas of the Chapter's work – questions of mission, for example, or studies and teaching, or the Constitutions of the Order, which was the commission to which I was assigned. Though at one level it was bread-and-butter committee work – receiving reports, discussing issues, drafting resolutions, and debating their final form at some length – at another level it was quite a profound experience of the feedback mechanisms which are built into the Order's structure and help maintain its unity of purpose and healthy functioning. Questions came before the Chapter, either sent in as petitions from particular brothers or entities in the Order or arising in the course of the Chapter's initial discussions. These were distributed among the commissions and discussed, before the commissions drafted a proposal to put to the plenary. There, the diffinitors from the different provinces were able to comment on the question in the light of the wide range of contexts in which the Order finds itself, and if necessary amendments were made before a definitive text was adopted.

Not every challenge facing the Order can, of course, be addressed by a sentence in the Acts of a General Chapter, and we sought to focus our work on those areas where the decisions of the Chapter might make the greatest difference. Considerable attention was devoted to the question of ensuring a full and authentic formation for those entering the Order, to enable them to flourish in the life

and so carry on the Order's mission; the coordination of the Order's international undertakings, especially its academic institutions, was also addressed, as were questions of good governance and fidelity to Dominican life at local and provincial levels.

While the whole of the General Chapter's Acts, the official document which is the fruit of its labours, might be slightly heavy reading for those not directly affected by them, their Foreword (nn. 57–89) expresses very well the interests and concerns of the Chapter, and captures the mood and feel of its conversations, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who would like to get a better sense of what the Tultenango Chapter did.

As well as the formal business of the Chapter, the capitulars, guests, translators, and logistical staff, along with the brothers of the house in Tultenango, formed a temporary community which prayed together, ate together and had times of recreation together like any Dominican community. It has to be said, though, that at no other Dominican recreation have I ever seen a brother running round the cloister carrying a cage of lit fireworks on his back! Performances such as this are apparently the modern substitute for bull-running in Mexico, and thus a feature of local fiestas: it was certainly quite an impressive, if slightly unnerving, display. Firework-running aside, though, the sense of community at the General Chapter was a strong witness to the unity of the Order across such a wide geographical and cultural range, and to the reality of the bond of fraternity which our vows establish.

Praise must go to the brothers of the Mexican Province for the huge amount of work put into hosting the General Chapter, especially amidst so much uncertainty, for much of the period of preparation, about whether and how it could take place in the light of the pandemic. We look forward, now, to the next General Chapter of priors provincial, which will be hosted by the Province of Poland in Krakow in 2025.



Frs Matthew (top left) and Gregory (top right), in action at the General Chapter.

View the full photo album at https://bit.ly/OP_GC_2022



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Fr Michael Dunn OP

Fr Michael's funeral was held in his home town of Clitheroe on 16 August 2022. Fr Martin Ganeri as Provincial preached the homily, recalling details of Fr Michael's life and service.

'Michael served his fellow men and women in the Church as a Dominican friar for 60 years. He entered in 1961 to be a lay brother and for the next 25 years worked to make possible the life of the Dominican communities he lived in, whether it be Hawksyard or Leicester, as well as serving the local communities in those places.

'As a brother sent to Hawksyard he trained as a nurse to work in the local hospital. [...] And at Leicester, of course, a particular form of ministry he valued doing and in which he was very much valued by those he worked with, was the Boys Club [...]. Whether the sick, or the young, he visited them, and welcomed them, gave them food and drink, gave them encouragement and friendship.

'In 1988 Michael was ordained as a priest, first then going to London until 1992, then on to Leicester, to be prior there for three terms. [...] Being a prior is not always an easy job to have, but Michael flourished as prior of Leicester and by all accounts loved playing an active role as prior in the wider community of the city, known as the lord prior of Holy Cross because of his involvement in the civic life of the city and with its mayor.

'Having then been bursar at Oxford for a while, Michael spent the rest of his years as a priest in London. Always active, and always keen to be useful.'

Born 1931, professed 1962, ordained 1988, died 29 July 2022. R.I.P.

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