Based in Rome, the Pontifical Beda College was established in 1852 as a seminary for the formation of diocesan priests. The College welcomes English speaking men over 30 and has students from 12 countries. It is under the guidance of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.
The Beda Review
2017 to 2018
The front cover illustration is the icon commissioned from Aidan Hart to celebrate the Beda 120 anniversary. In it St Bede is writing the words which comprise the College motto: Christo spectante curramus - We run our race under Christ's watchful eye.

The image on the back cover is the Cross of St Cuthbert, the logo of the Cathedral Church in Durham where St Bede is buried. This card was designed by Sarah Goudie.
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Editorial

REV. MIKE BROOKES

I have been greatly blessed in my role as Editor of the Review this year – blessed because many contributors have offered words and pictures with only limited persuasion from me, blessed because I was always able to rely upon the generosity and sound advice of my Assistant Editor Alan Hodgson and outgoing alumnus John Tabor, and blessed because the Rector and the formation staff were always supportive of the overall process despite their many other responsibilities. Blessed also because it was, in simple terms, a good year for me here at the College, with many high points and generative of a lot of happy memories. This leads me to consider what my time at the Beda – not yet over, but apparently more than half-way completed – has been about.

To arrive at the Pontifical Beda College and begin one’s priestly formation is to become part of an ongoing story, a long and complex tale involving many other hopefuls who have made their own mark upon the place in a history that has already lasted for more than 120 years. The contributions that any of us make to this story may be invisible to outsiders, alluded to only in the personal files of students long gone from the premises, or by fading images of past year groups and staff displayed in the offices and corridors of the College, or in lists and diary entries contained within yellowing copies of The Beda Review, wherever they may be found. This bright and shiny new edition will also lose its lustre in time and have limited significance to all except those who were present during its composition, but it will remain part of the story of the Beda even so, and it testifies to the reality that we were indeed here, and that we belonged to this history then, and that we always will.
The Beda then-and-now might be a subtitle for this particular issue inasmuch as the items herein contained look specifically to past and present, tracing links to other Church institutions and to the experience of staff and students before and after their time here: we have Mgr Peter Ryan’s recollections of how things were during the conciliar years, an account of the College’s relationship with Downside Abbey, a reflection on the connections between Douai and Ushaw, where several of our current formation staff previously taught, and also the opening section of a fascinating article by biblical scholar Fr James Downey relating his impressions of how scripture teaching has changed in recent decades, and with particular reference to how Beda men experienced those changes (the full article will be made available on our website). Representing the present life of the College we have the usual detailed accounts of the year just ended, including updates as to who has arrived to participate in the Beda story, and also details of those whose chapters have ended, and who are moving on to other stories yet to be written.

In Fr Peter Verity’s article we even have a sense of the Beda’s future, with thoughts offered on how the College can assist in nurturing the sometimes-untapped resource of older men who have the will and the desire and above all, the call, to minister as priests in the mature years of their lives. All of us here who have benefited from the generosity of our bishops and ordinaries – and also that of the people of our dioceses and religious communities – surely have a responsibility to be evangelical about the journey we have been privileged to make, and so help others to begin it as we did when we added our story to that of the College. Indeed, we would do well to write more chapters to the glory of God, individually as we pursue our Christian vocations, and together as we remember that we were once members of the Beda community here in Rome.

To arrive at the Beda and begin one's priestly formation is to become part of an ongoing story.
Photo: College website.
The happy sound of over 300 guests and family and friends gathered in the garden after the Diaconate comes through the open window as I write these few words. Due to a poor weather forecast we prepared for lunch indoors but, as it has turned out, the weather held fine for us and after the meal we were able to return to the garden for the continuation of the afternoon. The Diaconate Ordination is always the high-point of the Beda Year because it represents the goal and purpose of our common life; the formation of people of integrity, generous and appropriately prepared Ministers for the service of the Church. Pope Francis at a recent gathering of all the seminarians and student priests in Rome said that the presumption for Ordained Ministers is that they are “buoni Cristiani” – good Christians who are both disciples and who are now called to be – for the good of the Church – apostles, those sent to others in ministry and service.

It is as I look back on the past year through this prism of Diaconate Ordinations that I can affirm that the College continues in good spirits and in good material and structural shape, thanks in no small measure to the hard work and enthusiasm of our current student body to whom I express my gratitude and appreciation for the committed and positive way in which they engage in the process of formation in the seminary. This formation which the Ratio Fundamentalis from the Congregation for Clergy describes as an “initial formation” is both the daily discernment of God’s will for us and also the formation of “conscientious fellow works with the Order of Bishops” so that the work of proclamation of the Gospel, the Joy of the Gospel to use Pope Francis’ phrase, may grow and prosper in our dioceses and religious congregations.

In order to do this we seek to create and maintain an atmosphere of prayer, of study and of mutual respect and care. This initial phase of formation then opens out into the life-long formation which takes place in our parishes, our communities and dioceses.
Our thanks therefore go not only to the Vocations Directors in the respective dioceses but also to the Directors of Ongoing Formation, particularly in their work with and on behalf of the newly ordained.

**Student Body**

In this past year (2017-18) we had 36 resident seminarians along with 4 external students who joined us for lectures and also for House Functions as the requirements of their respective religious communities allowed.

Our September intake of 2017 was numerically slightly more hopeful than the previous year: 10 resident seminarians (4 England, 2 Ireland, 1 Wales, 1 Australia, 2 Sweden) and alongside them for the first 6 weeks, there was one Anglican exchange student. By Christmas one of the Irish students had discerned that formation was not right for him at this time. However his place was taken by an Australian student who, having spent one term in Beda some 4 years ago, has now been accepted by his diocese to continue the formation journey and has rejoined us.

Also resident with us since February, and for the second Semester only, was Mr Sam Randall who upon recommendation from Bishop Alan Hopes was beginning a Doctorate through the Angelicum. In September Fr Matthew Jolley of the Archdiocese of Liverpool will be joining us as he begins his studies for a (2 year) Licentiate in Spiritual Theology through the Angelicum.

In these past two years we have welcomed ecumenical exchange students. This year’s candidate, Joe Moore, is studying at Durham and it is particularly pleasing in this way to maintain our links with a city and cathedral so closely associated with St Bede. Marco Lopes, a 45 year old Portuguese ordinand at present studying at St Mellitus College in London will be joining us in September, albeit only for 5 weeks.

**Ministries and Orders**

The rhythm of the year has continued much as expected. Bishop Paul Tighe joined us in December to admit the Third Year students as Candidates for Holy Orders and the majority of that year group were ordained as Deacons on 13 June in the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura. Our ordaining Bishop this year was Bishop Alan Hopes who had three candidates in that year group.

- Michael Brookes (East Anglia);
- Benjamin Brooks (Hobart);
- Ronald Campbell (Argyll and the Isles);
• Graham Fullick (Maitland Newcastle);
• Patrick Harrigan (S. Andrews and Edinburgh);
• Alan Hodgson (East Anglia);
• Damien Louden (Salford);
• William McQuillan (St Andrews and Edinburgh);
• Anicet Munyugu (Kigoma);
• William Pillai (Melaka Johor);
• Paul Spellman (East Anglia);
• Thomas Varavunkal (Canons Regular of the Holy Cross).

During the Visitation in March Bishop Mark O’Toole instituted the two members of present Second Year into the ministry of Acolyte. In May, the current First Year were instituted by the Rector to the ministry of Lector: photographs of this and other celebrations during the year are accessible through the flickr facility of the College website, www.bedacollege.org

**Priestly Ordinations**

Of last year’s Fourth year, some will have been ordained Priest by the time you read this article, some will be exercising a further period of parish-based Diaconate as they return to their dioceses.

**Summer Ordinations**

• Gerard D’Silva (Belgaum, India) - 27 June
• John Tabor (Westminster, England) - 30 June
• Philip Carr, Anthony Kelly and Carl Mugan (Liverpool, England) 7 July

**Autumn and Winter**

• Brendan Gormley (Brisbane, Australia)
• John Lovell (Maitland-Newcastle, Australia)
• Alex Mariasoosai (Melaka-Johore, Malaysia)
• Brian Muling (Melbourne, Australia)
• Paul Sia (Melaka –Johore, Malaysia)
• Simon Sibisi (Durban, South Africa)
• Paul Smith (Nottingham, England)

To them all we wish a most sincere AD MULTOS ANNOS!
The unfolding year…

Fr Samuel from the Benedictine Community at San Paolo fuori le Mura has been transferred to the Benedictine Community at Sant’Anselmo on the Aventine and his new timetable sadly will not allow him to continue as our external Confessor; we are however fortunate that one of the other English-speaking members of the Benedictine Community, Fr Harold Fisher, has agreed to assist us in this regard.

In November we were delighted to welcome the Jubilarian Priests who were staying at Palazzola and we hosted them at lunch. Later that month, the Vocations Directors of England and Wales also joined us at lunch and we were able to share with them a vision of the resources on offer here at the Beda.

In January of this year we hosted the traditional Beda Unity Service, the preacher being the newly appointed Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome, Anglican Archbishop Bernard Nhatatouri. On 25 January Pope Francis came to the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura for Ecumenical Vespers and the student body were well represented, although sadly they did not need to call upon any of our Deacons to assist in the sanctuary!

Having taken examinations during the first week of February followed by a short break, the whole of the House benefitted from preached and guided Retreats, both at College (First and Second years) and at Bagnoiregio (Pre-Diaconate) and Rocca di Papa (Pre-Priestly). A study weekend on Safeguarding and the resources of CSAS (Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service) was held for students of Second and Third years in early March. This alternates in the years with a facilitated weekend on Human Sexuality.

This year we welcomed the Scots College for the Lenten Oasis (sadly the Irish were not able to join us this year) and Mgr Whitmore and the staff and students of the English College kindly invited us to join them for Mass and a meal in April, when we were also able to preview the excellent exhibition marking the 450th Anniversary of Douai and the 200th Anniversary of the return to Rome from exile of the VEC itself. Mgr O’Carroll (Irish College) also invited us to Mass and a meal in May – so our relations with the other Colleges are flourishing!

Those who have consulted the website recently will have seen photographs of the events of Holy Week and the Triduum.
– from the Procession in the Garden of Palm Sunday, to the 7 Churches Walk on Spy Wednesday and the Vigil and First Mass of Easter presided over this year by Fr John Carlyle. The website is a great way of sharing our common life with friends and family; we also need however to publicise the College facilities to a wider audience and with a view to this we are in the process of rewriting and printing a small booklet (which first saw the light of day in the 80s) and also contacting male and female religious houses in Rome reminding them that external students are welcome to join us for the academic component of their own formation processes and, according to the requirement of their congregational houses, College retreats and social events.

Our celebration of the Feast of St Bede on 25 May was an excellent opportunity not only to celebrate our Patron but also to express our thanks to those who in the various Vatican Dicasteries, in our sister Colleges, and in the Embassies and English speaking community in Rome, offer us their support and with whom we have a fruitful collaboration throughout the year.

To mark the year of BEDA 120, the poet Malcom Guite kindly allowed us to reprint his Sonnet for the Venerable Bede, a reflection of a visit to the tomb of St Bede in the Galilee Chapel of Durham Cathedral

I kneel above your bones and read your words.  
Church-Latin letters, shimmering in gold,  
A kingdom-glimmer through the dark and cold,  
A revelation gleaming on the shards  
Of all our broken lives and promises.  
Christus est stella matutina  
Qui nocte saeculi transacta  
Christ is the morning star. He promises  
The light of life when this dark night is past…  
Lucem vitae sanctis promittit  
You speak for all his wounded witnesses,  
The morning star will shine on us at last.  
Scholar and saint, illuminate the way  
That opens into everlasting day.
Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood

Sr Carmel had been alone in the convent the first months of the academic year but we were delighted that the FMDM Leadership Team were able to provide for Sr Mary Jean Rogers to join Sr Carmel and she is settling well to College life. There has been a good stream of FMDM sisters visiting the College, either on their way to or from Assisi or during breaks from the St Anselm Institute which has now relocated to Ciampino from England. The Institute, under the direction of Rev. Len Kofler, MHM, is an international training centre for leaders, formators and evangelisers in the Catholic Church.

A further piece of good news is that before Christmas the FMDM community will be further strengthened with the arrival of Sr Mary Kennedy.

Intellectual and academic

As to the academic life of the Beda we continue a fruitful collaboration with St Mary’s University, Twickenham who validate the Beda’s academic programme, consisting of a Bachelor of Theology degree (BTh) and a Graduate Diploma in Theology. Once again at the recent Examination Board in June our external examiner commented on the fact that we have many high marks given – but they were justified because of a high standard of work!

We continue to rely upon a wide-ranging group of external professors as well as the resident staff, for the provision of the teaching. We continued the employment through the first semester of an assistant Librarian to work alongside Sr Carmel in cataloguing the working library. Now that Gaetano has left us, we look forward to Sr Carmel and Sr Mary Jean continuing and furthering this necessary work.

Building and Personale

The College Community continues to be extremely well supported by the services of a faithful group of kitchen staff, Domestics, Bursar and Secretary.

During the past months, alongside the regular daily maintenance so efficiently taken care of by Larry and Ivano, we have had to make some unexpected and partial repairs to the roof following the spell of snow and frost. Now that the better weather is with us, we can look to making an aerial survey of the roof tiles and copings with a view, where necessary, to mending the roof while the sun shines…..

Preliminary work for this summer’s major project in the library entailed a structural examination of walls and floor - revealing once more that the building as planned is not exactly the building as built! This, alongside the requirements of the Vatican for review and report on the state of the buildings by next spring, will mean that we will have a full workload but also more up to date information regarding the state of the structure which will most certainly be of benefit to us in our continued programme of maintenance.
For a limited time we have contracted a consultant to review the working of the domestics in the House; this is to ensure that we are making best use of the personnel that we have and to check that we are not imbalanced in the expectations we have of individual staff members.

**Future**

As 2018 marks the 120th anniversary of the College being given the title of the Pontifical College of St Bede, a name change bestowed by Pope Leo XIII on 29 December 1898, the portraits of Pope Pius IX (College Founder) and Pope Leo XIII have travelled from the third floor corridor and are now gracing the walls of the Refectory. The present incumbent of the Bede Chair of Catholic Theology at Durham University, Professor Karen Kilby, will come and give a public lecture on 20 October 2018, also the anniversary of the visit of Pope John XXIII in 1960 to open our present College building.

Aware that sometimes the “late” vocation can find it difficult to know how to discern clearly or indeed approach a diocese, Mgr Peter Verity organised a retreat in conjunction with St Beuno’s Retreat Centre in Wales and a fuller report on this appears elsewhere in this year’s *Review*. This venture was very well received and we intend to repeat it this coming autumn; we are grateful that the National Office for Vocations of the Bishops’ Conference and to individual dioceses who will advertise it through their websites and *Ad Clerum* letters. We hope that it will also prove an encouragement to Vocations Directors in their work with the older men who approach them and whose needs are understood and catered for by the Beda team. Alongside this project we also continue to offer the Beda Experience where Vocations Directors can arrange for their prospective candidates to visit the College and share in the life of the seminary either during Holy Week or if preferable at other periods.

The Beda website (www.bedacollege.org) is kept constantly updated and provides much useful background information about the regular life of the College and is used as a good way of spreading awareness of our life and work not only to members of the Beda Association but also to the families, friends and parishioners of students and staff.

In conclusion, I am happy to affirm the serious and committed way in which the students engage with their formation and express our gratitude to all the dioceses – both in the British Isles and further afield – who continue to support the work of the Beda and make our name better known. My renewed and continued thanks to Orietta Mariotti and Annalisa Bonanni - and through them to all the *personale* of the College - for the myriad ways in which they ensure and facilitate the smooth running of the College through the year.
Reflections
FR JAMES DOWNEY OSA

Fr Downey kindly agreed to the Editor’s suggestion that he compose an article for The Beda Review regarding his several decades of teaching at the College and submitted a wonderful reflection which is too comprehensive for inclusion in the printed version of the magazine. What follows is the first few pages of the article to whet the appetite of the reader, with the full version to be made available on the Beda website. Fr Downey’s thoughts are both entertaining and edifying and deserve a wide readership, for which our thanks to him.

Introduction
As I look back on my time at the Beda, the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins come to mind. Hopkins was reflecting on his time in Dublin in a letter to Robert Bridges (17 February 1887). He began: “Tomorrow morning, I shall have been three years in Ireland, three hard wearying wasting wasted years…In those I have done God’s will (in the main) and many many examination papers.”

To be clear, I do not see myself in that first sentence. It only serves to remind me of how much more fortunate I was. I spent much longer at the Beda than a paltry three years, though it may have felt like three years. That is because those years were anything but “hard wearying wasting wasted years”. Well, “wasted”? That’s not for me to say! But even if it is true, I can say only that I had a good time wasting my time.

But that second sentence does ring a bell. Hopkins does not say whether he appended any “helpful” comments to those examination papers. Perhaps not, wisely realising that such comments would likely have been cheerfully ignored and promptly forgotten. I did not show such restraint. I am more easily provoked.

Indeed, it is difficult not to be provoked by essays which looked like the Lough Ness monster, to borrow an image from the late Canon Bill Anderson, who in 1996 won The Times sponsored Preacher of the Year Award (the only time it was won by a Catholic). He knew what he was talking about when he inveighed against homilies which resemble the Lough Ness monster in that they “have a beginning, then a middle, a middle, and a middle,
and the tail-end is a long-time-a-coming”. And there was the occasional essay whose author seemed “more confused and confusing than a drunk driver negotiating Spaghetti Junction in the rush hour”.

Having more than once come face to face with the Lough Ness monster, I tended to invoke the Dale Carnegie prescription: Tell the audience what you’re going to say; say it; then tell them what you’ve said. I wish I had a euro for every time I sounded off about the importance of a brief, focused introduction. Let me practise what I preached.

My brief, at the suggestion of the Editor, is to reflect on the changes which have taken place in the teaching of Scripture over the years that I have spent at the Beda.

But the changes should be seen in the context of what has remained constant over the years. One should therefore begin by noting what has not changed – apart from the Lough Ness monster, which regularly surfaced over the years.

The Beda’s abiding spirit

Old fogies tend to pepper their farewell speeches with a good deal of fake modesty. One of the more common such professions at an institution such as the Beda is the claim that they learned more than they taught. But I tend to be more cynical. Yes, there were some things that I did learn at the Beda. I did not know that the words “do not be afraid” occur 365 times in the Bible. At a certain time of the year I would hear some very creative variations on “The dog ate my homework”. And there were the inevitable howlers which, even if they did not exactly contribute to the grades of the candidate, did add to the gaiety of nations – at any rate of the examiner!

But the Beda is not defined by its academic programme. It is wider than what is taught or what is learned. It is more than a sum of those who do the teaching and those who do the learning.

Homo Ludens

George Orwell described the BBC as somewhere between a girls’ school and a lunatic asylum. Obviously I do not know whether that is a fair assessment of the BBC. But it strikes me that it could serve as a pretty accurate metaphor for the Beda. Unlike Orwell, however, who did not have much time for the BBC, I mean it as a compliment!

Take the average girls’ school, or even your average seminary. Students are all of roughly the same age. They all have the same intellectual background. They have all reached the same standard of education. If the numbers warrant it, they may be divided into groups of roughly the same intellectual ability. They may even all dress the same.
None of that is true of the Beda. They come from widely differing age groups. They certainly do not have the same educational background. They have very different personal histories, which might be even more interesting were the thumbnail autobiographies in The Beda Review not written with such discretion. They are bound by different social mores. They come from quite diverse cultural backgrounds, more noticeable now than in earlier times. On any given day, the Beda can look like a miniature United Nations.

This situation is hardly normal. It is, if one is thinking of forging a community, a recipe for chaos. But it works. Here lies the difference with the United Nations who occupy a skyscraper in New York, but only for offices. Whatever unity obtains there is a nine-to-five type of unity. Indeed the word “United” probably reflects an aspiration rather than a lived reality.

The Beda therefore is best described, not as a United Nations, but as a lunatic asylum. The lunatic asylum too contains individuals from all sorts of backgrounds. They are united by the fact that they are all moonstruck (to give a proximate etymology of the word). The common factor in the Beda is that they are “struck” by another heavenly being. How about the Holy Spirit? This time those thumbnail sketches in The Beda Review are more revealing. I think it is fair to say that there is in general, though to varying degrees, a conscious awareness of having been struck by the Spirit – and somehow ending up at the Beda. Professional theologians might not agree, but for my money this is one of the proofs of the existence of the Holy Spirit.

A collection of individuals such as this is not supposed to work – at least not like a normal institution. And yet the Beda works with the efficiency and precision of your traditional girls’ school run by nuns. Lectures begin on time because punctuality seems to be taken for granted. (It is true that there is the occasional laggard who bustles in with a flustered look and generally in a state of confusion. But you will find that it is always the same person, and he is probably at the Beda only because he forgot to turn up at his own wedding.) Beda liturgies are a joy because, without any hint of fussiness, everything seems to purr over with a well-oiled rhythm. The same is true of the dining room especially one of those festive occasions (and they are not rare). The Beda has nothing to learn from even the classiest of Roman restaurants, nor from those prim masters of ceremony at papal liturgies.

All of this has a lot to do with the unobtrusive work of those officials who, if I am not mistaken, took office on the feast of St Bede every year. The official in the classroom was typical. In the days before the smart board, he ensured that chalk and a duster were available. If you wished to change the time of a lecture, it was simply a matter of consulting him and it somehow happened. He arranged exam timetables. He ensured that you, the examiner, had the relevant information. He managed to dragoon his classmates and you could bet on
it that, five minutes before the appointed time, each candidate was dutifully lined up at the door of the examination hall – and that included the chap who forgot to turn up at his own wedding. I suspect he (the class official, not the groom manqué) would even have conducted the examination if you allowed him.

The classroom, the dining room, and the chapel – and I speak only of the areas with which I had a passing familiarity. And it is not as though the Beda had a large pool from which to draw in selecting officials.

On the other hand, there is no mistaking what I have described for an institution run, for example, by the Legionaries of Christ, with lots of fresh-faced, well groomed, and earnest young men with dog-collars and in double-breasted jackets. I cannot imagine myself in the room of a Legionary rather late in the evening, casually dressed and quaffing whiskey on the rocks. That is one of my earlier memories of the Beda. I do not recall what the occasion was, but we guests – well, everybody – had been wined and dined in the Beda tradition. When I thought it was all over, a small group of students thought it would be a good idea if we adjourned to Paddy White’s room. Paddy, who would later be ordained on his deathbed by Cardinal Hume, kept the whiskey flowing and, to be honest, I no longer recall how it all ended.

When teaching Scripture – and not just in the Beda – I would find myself, every so often, being dragged into other fields. You might see characters like Aristotle, or Plato, or the Stoics looming ominously in the horizon. Or you might have to explain such deep philosophical questions as the immortality of the soul, Zoroastrianism, etc. The trick on such occasions is to pretend to an expertise you do not really have. One such topic that seemed to rear its head was a philosophical movement called Epicureanism. Fortunately, I had examples to hand, which I might not have found in more austere, correct establishments. But in the Beda there were the “celebratory meals” and the “bar nights” and the “mid-term breaks”, which seemed to dot the timetable with considerable regularity.

At the beginning of each semester, the Dean of Studies provided a detailed timetable of coming events. As an external lecturer, you had to keep a close eye on those mid-term and twixt-semester breaks. I am no longer sure if there is a difference. But they did have one thing in common – they seemed to occur when everybody else in Rome was working. So, unless you were attentive, you could, having negotiated the Roman rush hour, find yourself at the Beda facing an unaccustomed silence and empty classrooms. You had discovered too late that the Beda was celebrating a term break, and that the average student had availed of the opportunity to hie himself off to exotic places.

Then there was the notice board. It is certainly true that on the days when I had lectures at the Beda, I religiously kept an eye on the notice board, out of curiosity rather than necessity.
There was always interesting information about different things happening, people being conferred with one ministry or another, sundry visitors, distinguished or otherwise, passing through, etc. But such occasions invariably seemed to be marked by a “celebratory meal.” I thought I had seen everything until the day of my final exam at the Beda. On such occasions, if I could not finish the evaluation work before lunch, I would remain on, as a matter of convenience, for the meal. On this occasion, I strayed innocently into what I found is called the Leavers’ Lunch! And I thought I had seen everything.

One former Rector of the Beda – and I have been there long enough to have gone through several Rectors – at the end of the liturgy would recommend transitioning “seamlessly” to the next stage. The next stage was the dining room, or at least the aperitivi which softened you up for the dining room. The chapel, the dining room, the classroom: there did indeed seem to be a seamless transition, due I think to that pervading spirit.

In a word, the Beda seems to be a jolly place, where nobody seemed to take themselves too seriously. The fancy name for this particular philosophy is eutrapalia. And it is of course a very Catholic thing. I recall that Hugo Rahner SJ (brother of Karl) wrote a book about it called Man at Play. You don’t really have to know too much German to realise that the original title for the work is preferable: Der spielende Mensch. It is certainly closer to the Latin, homo ludens. The subtitle to Rahner’s book is “Did you ever practise eutrapelia?” I have never seen eutrapalia as a topic in the Beda academic programme. That may be because the Beda student is by nature a homo ludens! Or, if German is your thing, he is a spielende Mensch.

The Beda seems to be a jolly place where no-one takes themselves too seriously. Photo: College website.
Another thing I noticed at the Beda was that some seemed to participate in the Seven Churches Walk. They will have heard that the practice goes back to Philip Neri, who saw it as a way to counteract the raucous excesses of Carnevale. Philip’s walk also had a carnival aspect about it. But that was typical of Philip, who was after all a jolly individual. “A joyful heart,” he said, “is more easily made perfect than a downcast one”. Should he perhaps be a second patron of the Beda?

**Homo Sapiens**

But let us leave, at least for now, the *homo ludens*. Let us turn instead to the *homo sapiens*, which might be seen as a more appropriate term for the Beda student and for its existing patron. The Beda student is a character of some complexity. Not only is he a *homo ludens*, he is also a *homo sapiens*. Let us see if that is true, though, by definition, we shall confine ourselves to Biblical studies, which is admittedly but one dimension of the *homo sapiens*.

At the outset let me say that there is one constant over the thirty odd years since I first set foot on the Beda (that was in 1985). I am prepared to wager that every one of my courses over those years began with a reading from Heb 4:12-13. That’s the bit about the Word of God being alive and active more than any two-edged sword...

That’s the sword principle, which has guided me even before I was first inflicted on generations of Beda students (for life, also in my case, does not begin at the Beda). Let me explain, since the term is likely to be more familiar to readers of the evangelical persuasion. Evangelicals, who know their Bibles, apparently had a game which they called “sword drills”. It was designed to reward the child who was first to locate a given verse in his/her study Bible. That was their way of making the Word alive and active.

The average Catholic would not do well at the sword drill. I would acknowledge however that there was always the occasional Beda student who would have done very well. In this regard, I would consider myself very much an average Catholic. Let me say immediately, therefore, that I do not use the sword drill in the evangelical sense. If that sort of knowledge of the Bible ever made sense, it has long since been superseded by the concordance and makes little sense in the age of Google.

I use the sword principle in a very different sense. Indeed, I prefer to keep to the sense of Heb 4:12. This sense is very much the focus of the teaching of Benedict XVI, especially in *Verbum Domini*, the post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the word of God. There he gives a special section to the sacramentality of the word of God. The word is not merely informative but “performative”. “The sacramentality of the word can thus be understood by analogy with the real presence of Christ under the appearances of the consecrated bread and wine” (DV 52). Later in the document, Benedict quotes the well-known and, in this regard,
very significant words of Jerome: “ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ” (DV 73). Likewise, there are the words of Benedict XVI on 16 September 2005 to 400 participants in the international congress on “Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church”:

The Church knows well that Christ lives in the Sacred Scriptures. For this very reason – as the Constitution stresses – she has always venerated the divine Scriptures in the same way as she venerates the Body of the Lord (cf. Dei Verbum, n. 21).

The sword principle, in other words, is a matter of engaging with the living word rather than an ability to identify its source.

But this is hardly the time for Catholic complacency, as though we were more favourably situated than our evangelical friends. It is merely that in the matter of the sword principle we have different problems.

In our case, the problem is what one might call the Moby Dick paradox. D. H. Lawrence may have called the novel “one of the strangest and most wonderful books in the world”. But on this side of the Atlantic the great American novel is vaguely known and little read.

Needless to say, it is different in America. Or is it?

I recently read an interview given by Tom Hanks, who will be familiar to the average movie buff. “Have you read Moby Dick?” Hanks sheepishly asked Gaby Wood, the journalist interviewing him. “It took me forever to read Moby Dick,” he continued. “I was one of those guys who pretended I had read Moby Dick… I didn’t read it until I was like 50 years old.” (Hanks in an interview with Wood at the Southbank Centre’s London Literature Festival 2017).

One might say that the Bible to is to Catholics (including the average Beda student?) what Moby Dick was to Tom Hanks. Ronald Knox, the Catholic convert and inter alia Bible translator, was also a popular preacher. In his 1949 book, On Englishing the Bible, he recalls his impressions of an average parish.

In my experience, the laity’s attitude towards the Bible is one of blank indifference, varied now and again by one of puzzled hostility. The clergy, no doubt, search the Scriptures more eagerly. And yet, when I used to go round preaching a good deal and would ask the pastor for a Bible to verify my text from, there was generally an ominous pause of twenty minutes or so before he returned, banging the leaves of the sacred volume and visibly blowing on the top. The new wine of the Gospel, you felt, was kept in strangely cobwebby bottles.”

It is true Knox was speaking of English Catholics of the 1940s. It is also true that the Biblical landscape has changed in the meantime. But there is one conclusion which is self-evident.
It goes without saying that the Word of God will never become alive and active (Heb 4:12) if it remains enshrined like a fossil on the seminarian’s bookshelf. This has a ripple effect. The seminarian/priest will no doubt turn out to be a caring pastor. But one will have to look beyond the caring pastor if the laity are to be aroused from their “blank indifference” or “puzzled hostility” to the Bible.

One might say, then, that, while the Beda represents a friendly environment for the *homo ludens*, this is probably less true for the *homo sapiens*. It bears repeating that I speak only of Scripture, and only of the “Catholic” student. The Beda has had a regular sprinkling of students from non-Catholic backgrounds. But they rarely turned up at my lectures, on the assumption that there was nothing I could tell them that they did not know already.

One is not unsympathetic to the dilemma of the incoming Beda student. His knowledge of the Bible is on a par with Knox’s parish priest. There is the added problem that his academic background may be spotty, and he is hardly ready for turgid lectures on Scripture. Indeed, academic lectures can be counterproductive. Instead of inspiring a love for the Word, they may well serve to inoculate against it.

The conscientious lecturer will try to address this problem, perhaps by turning to modern classroom techniques. There are lots of helpful suggestions as to how one might spruce up the lecture.

I recalled one of my modest efforts in this regard when Bob Turner, now a semi-retired priest in Milwaukee, reminded me of a piece of doggerel I had used in a course on Wisdom Literature (and many will probably agree that a course on Wisdom does need to be sexed up – as Tony Blair is alleged to have put it). It went like this:

King David and King Solomon  
Led merry, merry lives,  
With many, many lady friends  
And many, many wives.  
But when old age crept over them  
With many, many qualms,  
King Solomon wrote the Proverbs  
And King David wrote the psalms.

When I asked him if he remembered anything else from the course, Bob cheerfully replied in the negative. Could it be that modern pedagogical methods are not all they are played up to be?

*(Fr Downey’s reflections continue in the full text of his article as available on the Beda website www.bedacollege.org.)*
In September 2017, the Beda organised a discernment retreat with St Beuno’s spirituality centre in north Wales for men between the ages of 30 and 55 who might be considering a vocation to the priesthood or religious life. The weekend was run by myself and Sr Anne Morris from the St Bueno’s team. The retreat was mainly in silence because several other silent retreats were taking place in St Beuno’s at the same time. This also allowed the participants time and space for personal reflection. However, unlike normal silent retreats, those who came on this weekend were also offered times for meeting together formally and informally to share their stories and help each other with their discernment.

The story of the weekend

After arrivals, supper and introductions on Friday evening we offered some guidance to the group on praying with the Scriptures using some of the techniques of Lectio Divina.
Many participants were already familiar with this way of prayer and we suggested Gospel passages they might reflect on overnight, notably the call of the disciples in Luke and John. We began Saturday morning with a group session in which the participants shared more deeply on how they were feeling and what had emerged in their Scripture reflection. The depth of the sharing throughout the weekend was quite remarkable, especially considering that these men had only met for the first time on Friday afternoon. During the remainder of Friday morning, each person had an appointment to meet individually with one of the directors to discuss in confidence where they felt God was leading them.

The free time after lunch gave space for a walk in the beautiful Welsh countryside. This time also provided the occasion for them to chat together while walking or over tea in the common room. After Mass and supper, there was another meeting of the whole group to share how they were getting on. We gave them some points from the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises on discernment in order to stimulate their thinking. On Sunday morning there was another opportunity for participants to meet with their director individually and the morning ended with a group meeting to draw the weekend to a conclusion and to offer suggestions for taking this forward in the future.

That was the process; what was the result? The feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. They reported that they had found it a wonderful and supportive experience. Several said they had come to realise for the first time they were not the only ones trying to discern a vocation later in life. From a sense of isolation, not knowing which way to turn and unsure if this sense of vocation was “normal”, they came to a new confidence in the validity of what they were feeling through meeting with others in the same situation. They also sensed the affirmation of the Church and even the fact that such a retreat had been organised made them feel they were being taken seriously. While the sharing of their personal stories and experiences was a valuable part of the retreat, they also appreciated the times of silence and quiet with the Lord.

After the retreat they started contacting each other by email quite spontaneously. Eight months on, they are still in touch by email, sometimes sharing a new step in their vocational path and sometimes discussing deeper topics or thoughts. As one participant reported afterwards: “The emails have been all very respectful, supportive and positive and I think all of us feel the group has genuinely enriched our lives, whatever the personal outcomes of our discernment may be”. Three have visited the Beda during the course of the year and have benefitted from being with us. Several are now in touch with the diocesan Vocations’ director and one with a religious order, all indications of a developing process from discernment to commitment.
Are later vocations relevant?

The discernment weekend at St Beuno’s indicated clearly that there are a number of men in their 30’s, 40’s and 50’s who feel they might have a calling to priesthood or religious life. Sometimes this sense of a religious vocation has been with them since childhood but the circumstances of life have never worked towards realising it. In other people the call comes later in life but is no less insistent. This is a source of priestly and religious vocations which exists in our parishes and which is often neglected. The time may have come for the Church to put more energy and resources into promoting these potential vocations and supporting those who are discerning their future.

As we know from the Beda over many years, the men who put themselves forward to discern a vocation later in life have much to offer the Church. They come with a tried and tested maturity in dealing with relationships and in coping with the stresses and strains of life in general. They often bring with them skills from their work such as management, teaching and caring skills. Taking a step in this direction is not easy for an older man, but the fact that they do so indicates a mature spirituality related to life in the world and is often shown in a deep commitment to Christ. It also demonstrates a willingness to surrender many comfortable externals including jobs and security to follow a call to full time ministry.

Those who put themselves forward who are not suitable or who are seeking priesthood for the wrong motives will usually be rejected during the selection process. A person with personal problems who hasn’t coped well in secular life, or someone who thinks priesthood will be an easy option giving security later in life, will hopefully soon realise themselves that the priesthood is not for them. The experience at the Beda is that the great majority of those who have come through the pre-seminary selection process are generous, good and well-motivated people, discerning in a mature way whether God has truly called them to make this particular commitment for the rest of their lives.

Difficulties faced by older men seeking priesthood

Those who came on the weekend at St Beuno’s, had felt at times that they were regarded with suspicion in their dioceses when they expressed a desire for priesthood. They described a sense that they were “the only one”, or that nobody knew how to deal with them. This is not because of any ill will but simply because so much emphasis in talks, homilies and vocational literature has been directed to young men.

In addition to this, many diocesan Vocations’ Directors are young themselves and don’t necessarily feel comfortable or competent when approached by someone who may be old enough to be their father. At their meeting at Palazzola last November, the...
diocesan Vocations’ Directors of England and Wales expressed the unease some of them feel when approached by older men.

Following a vocational call brings many uncertainties, among which are the fear of losing the security and comforts of their previous life. Taking the initial step to approach the diocese is like walking on water, not knowing where the future will lead. All the more remarkable then, that so many are willing to take that step in the dark, entrusting their future to the providence of the Lord.

The role of the Beda College

The Beda has recently placed more emphasis on promoting vocations among older men alongside its primary work of forming those who have already come forward. The discernment weekend at St Beuno’s in September 2017 was one proactive way in which this is being done. A similar weekend at St Beuno’s is planned for September 2018. While these weekends have been publicised within the dioceses of England and Wales, there is no reason why other countries or regional areas could not hold similar promotional events. Following the discussion with the diocesan Vocations’ Directors at their meeting in Palazzola in November 2017, at least one diocese has held a regional day of discernment for older men.
At a national level in England and Wales, the website of the Vocations Office has a new section about vocations later in life with a Beda staff member as a point of contact. The Beda has also suggested through the Bishops’ Conference that bishops might consider appointing someone to their diocesan vocations’ team specifically responsible for “later” vocations. This person would be a first port of call for those starting a discernment and would also be able to befriend them and steer them through the initial stages of the process. The Beda would be willing to help and support such a diocesan representative.

For many years now, the Beda has offered a few days’ “Beda Experience” for those who want to “Come and See”. This used to be during Holy Week, with the possibility of staying into Easter week as well. In recent years this timing has become problematical in that many of the potential participants were involved in the Holy Week services in their parishes. We now welcome people at any time of the year, as long as it fits in with the Beda timetable. We encourage dioceses to make use of this option and to send men over 30 who are in the discernment process to share the life of the College for a few days.

**Role of the Beda Association**

As people who have themselves come to a priestly vocation later in life, members of the Beda Association have a particular expertise in helping to promote “later” vocations. Here are some suggestions as to how this may be done.

1. Be open in talking about your own vocational story and encourage others to explore possibilities wherever possible.

2. Suggest to your diocese that it might nominate someone as part of the diocesan vocations’ team to be responsible for promoting vocations among older men and to be the first contact point. If the bishop asks you to be this person, be willing to say yes.

3. Find ways to promote vocations to priesthood among older men through the diocesan website and the diocesan newspaper. Writing an article about your own story, possibly on the occasion of a significant anniversary, can be one way of doing this.

4. As well as promoting the idea of a vocation later in life, tell people about the Beda and point them in the direction of the Beda website where there is lots of practical information and photographs of Beda life. The website is at [www.bedacollege.org](http://www.bedacollege.org).

5. Keep the College, and those who are thinking about a vocational discernment later in life in your prayers.
The present Rector of the Beda College and former Vice-Rector of Ushaw College reflects upon the international origins of those seminaries tasked with the formation of clergy for England and Wales during the Reformation and beyond.

In 2008, Ushaw College celebrated its second centenary, but its origins go back further than its 200 years on its current site. The original foundation of Ushaw lies in the 16th century at a time of Reformation, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. In 1559, the Queen outlawed traditional Catholicism, and thereby made the practice of many people’s faith an illegal and treasonable activity.

Despite the oppression and terrible punishments that those who practised Catholicism in England faced, a number of laypeople and priests resisted the changes in their country and continued to practise their religion in secret, despite increasing fines, imprisonment, and the risk of death. Many escaped abroad to continue to practise their faith in lands where Catholicism was still accepted, such as France and Spain. Among these was William Allen, who opened a house of studies for Catholics at Douai, in Flanders. Until the late 17th century, Douai was under the rule of the Catholic Kings of Spain, but was later annexed to Catholic France.

Douai College opened its doors to six initial students in September of 1568. Allen’s ambition was to train priests to minister to the hard-pressed Catholics back in England, who could not keep bibles or discuss their religion with those around them. The College grew rapidly and by the time Elizabeth I died in 1603, nearly

Douai College in the 18th century, from a drawing at Ushaw College.
500 priests had completed their training at Douai. These young men travelled to England in secret, for it was a treasonable offence for them to minister as priests and say Mass. If caught they paid the price for their perceived treason: death by hanging, drawing and quartering. Over 160 members of Douai College were martyred in this barbaric way and they are often referred to under the general title The Douai Martyrs, their Feast being kept in the English Liturgical Calendars on 29 October.

In 1579 a second overseas seminary was established – an English College in Rome, the present day Venerable English College. Frequently students who had begun their studies in Douai would transfer to Rome to complete their training – as happened with Ralph Sherwin, the proto-Martyr of the VEC.

Despite the danger that came with ministering in England, the number of men seeking education and training for the priesthood at Douai continued to increase. Over time, the English College became known as the principal centre of education for Catholic priests and laymen of England and Wales for more than two centuries, continuing to send newly ordained priests back to preach in England. When the French Revolution broke out, Catholics at Douai were once again threatened.

The aftermath of the French Revolution signaled the end of the College as it stood at Douai, when Britain found itself at war with France. The French Government confiscated all British property within their country and imprisoned the few remaining staff and students of the College who had not fled elsewhere. These events coincided with a gradual lifting of the laws which had for so long restricted Catholics in England and Wales, so those that escaped persecution in France, or following the release of those who were captured, the students were able to return home.

They founded two Colleges to continue their work; Crook Hall, County Durham in the north (afterwards in 1808 it moved to Ushaw College, County Durham) and St Edmund’s College, Old Hall, at Ware, Hertfordshire in the south.

Although the seminary at Ushaw was closed in June 2011, the buildings are still very much open and at the service of the local northern Catholic Community as well as Durham University and the local region. Ushaw is hosting a series of celebrations this year for the 450th anniversary of the founding of Douai as it is, in a very real sense, a continuance of the Douai Tradition.
First Year Induction

DAMIEN LOCKE

For eleven men, six from the UK (including an ecumenical exchange student for the Anglican ministry), two from Ireland, two Third Order Regular Franciscans from Sweden and one from Australia, our respective journeys to the Beda College brought us together in the third week of September 2017. No doubt everyone was wondering what lay ahead and experiencing a range of emotions associated with leaving family and friends back home. We were greeted with a very warm and sincere welcome by everyone at the Beda and a very well thought through induction programme which allowed us to get to know each other, the staff and some other students of the College and to familiarise ourselves with the new environment.

I know I speak for everyone when I say that the induction period exceeded our expectations and will be something which will be looked back upon fondly. As the days unfolded and in a relatively short period of time many memories were made. During our first full day together, Mass was celebrated at the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura. Among meetings with the staff to introduce us to their roles and how they aim to support us, we were acquainted with the local area and received practical advice from the contingent of senior students who kindly offered us their time. We were treated to a wonderful trip to the Castelli towns of Nemi and Frascati, where Mass was celebrated on the feast of the Archangels. A walk around the Castel Gandolfo precinct preceded what can only be described as an impeccable Italian meal which we enjoyed together on the shores of Lake Nemi.

Two other very special Masses were celebrated, one in the Irish Chapel of St Columbanus at St Peter’s Basilica and a few days later at the Catacombs of St Callistus very near to where St Cecilia is buried. We then had a very moving visit to the site of the Ardeatine massacre which took place in 1944 and resulted in the loss of 335 lives.
With the support of Tish Nichol we hosted a special evening of prayer and reflection in the Chapel with each of us making contributions which told a little of our stories and spirituality. The highlight of the induction period was yet to come. On the feast of St Francis of Assisi, we attended the Papal audience where we were fortunate to have seats very close to the Holy Father. We were thrilled to get a specific mention when Pope Francis assured us of his closeness in prayer as we begin our studies for the priesthood. What a blessing!

Very swiftly the initial induction period drew to a close and lectures began but the sense of belonging and the rhythms of seminary life had been introduced to us both gently and distinctly. The fact that this can be done in such a short period of time is a testament to the generosity of spirit and the patience of everyone involved.

With a sense of thanksgiving we reunited for the First Year Gita on All Souls Day to formally close the induction programme. The day was spent visiting the Franciscan shrines in the Rieti Valley. Mass was celebrated at Fonte Colombo where St Francis completed the Franciscan Rule before travelling to Greccio where Francis introduced the Christmas Nativity scene.

We now join our brethren in living out the motto of the college: *Christo spectante curramus* – we run our race under the watchful gaze of Christ.
An Interview with Mgr Peter Ryan

REV. MIKE BROOKES

In October 2017 we were honoured by the presence of Mgr Peter Ryan, a former student of the Beda who marked the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination by returning to Rome in the company of his cousin Margaret Robinson. During their time as guests of the College, both seminarians and staff were greatly entertained and informed by Mgr Ryan’s memories of his student days, and thus I tentatively suggested an informal interview so as to bring these recollections to a wider audience. The project was generously undertaken by Mgr Ryan, to whom I express my sincere gratitude. What follows is an edited account of his reflections upon the Beda and life in Rome, then and now.

I began my talk with Fr Peter by commenting that I had imagined that very few ex-Beda men achieved 50 years of priesthood; he told me that he could think of two other students of his year who would be celebrating their Golden Jubilees in 2017, men who like himself had begun their formation when the Second Vatican Council was underway. “I arrived in 1963,” Fr Peter said. At the time, there were several bishops staying at the Beda, and there was a lot going on in Rome in those days. It was very lively. I asked if the students were receiving updates about what was happening at the Council, such as which documents were being discussed or what the points of contention were, but was told that this rarely happened, and that although there was a great deal of excitement and energy in the city, there was also some anxiety. “I remember being out with one of our lecturers one day, and he was pouring out all his fears about the Council and what might happen in the Church. I was rejoicing at the possibilities, and this poor chap saw the Church as about to fall away from her mission of proclaiming the truth; he felt the Council could endanger his faith.” Clearly this was a challenging time for the Church, and what an experience it must have been to witness it up close.

Fr Peter was formerly an Anglican priest, and I asked him how many of his contemporaries were also convert clergy. “In my year there were five students who had been in the Ministry of the Anglican Church and there also a number of former Anglican clergy in the other three years. The total population of the College in those days was, I think, between 70 and 80, and of that number a few were external students.
There were men from America, Australia, India, one from Germany and one Italian.” I wondered how his academic formation at the Beda contrasted with his previous studies. His answer was very frank. “I studied at Lincoln Theological College – in those days if you had a university degree in no matter what subject you only had to spend two years in Theological College; without a degree you did three or occasionally four years. It used to be said at that time that when Anglican and Roman Catholic clergy met up with each other, the Catholics were amazed that Anglicans could know so much theology after only two years whilst the Anglicans were astonished that the Catholics could know so little after six! When I arrived at the Beda I found that quite a lot of the teaching was not very professional and that academic standards were not very good, and sadly, unlike the situation at the Beda today, there was no possibility of engaging with other academic institutions and receiving additional degrees or diplomas that way – it was a purely Beda course.”

I expressed interest in the content of this course and was told that there was a very different emphasis compared to now. “When I was here we had three lectures a week in canon law for the first three years, an incredible amount really, for people who weren’t going to become canon lawyers. We only had one Old Testament lecture a week for the four years. New Testament studies started only in the second year, and that was only one lecture a week as well. Our theology teacher was Michael Bowen, later Archbishop of Southwark, and he got a lot of important theology across to us. What I valued particularly was that he gave you very good reading lists and put you on to things. We did quite a bit of systematic theology: we went through Ott [Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma by Ludwig Ott] – that was a standard textbook then. But there was also endless stuff coming out in relation to the Council and newer thinking, it was a very exciting time.” The new theology was not always welcome, however. “I remember one of the bishops who was staying here asking a student what the teacher of moral theology did in his classes, and the student said: ‘Well, he has books by Bernard Häring on his desk;’ and the bishop said: ‘well, I hope he never opens them!’ After leaving the Beda my first posting was as an assistant priest on the staff of the new Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool, and while I was there Father Bernard Häring was invited to give a series of lectures in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. While he was in Liverpool, he stayed with us in Cathedral House, and listening to his conversation around the meal table was an education in itself. It’s a pity the bishop who made that remark didn’t have the same opportunity!”

I asked Fr Peter if he could tell us something about the daily routines and the atmosphere of the Beda at that time. He noted a significant transformation that occurred as a direct result of the Council. “I struggled in my first year here, because it all felt so archaic. I had become a Catholic in March 1963 and came out here in the autumn. The parish church I had attended was not enormously progressive, but even there they had a dialogue mass, where the whole congregation joined in the Latin responses. I came to the
Beda, and we seminarians sat in complete silence during the mass, and only the server said the responses. We had quite a lot of priests here in those days doing licenses and doctorates, and they celebrated mass individually down in the crypt, and you had all these priests saying mass separately in Latin at the same time. This struck me as quite bizarre, and not what the Eucharist should be.”

I commented that it seemed that the Council Fathers had agreed: “Indeed, and one of my great joys was that by the time I left the Beda there was concelebration all the time. It made a great difference to the whole atmosphere of the College.”

The use of the Tridentine rite was not the only difference in liturgical practice with our current *horarium*. “We said no office in common, except compline. In the evening everyone trooped into the chapel and said five decades of the rosary. After compline, it was silence until breakfast the next day. There was great stress on the keeping of the *Magnum Silentium* - and I must say I think there was a lot to be said in its favour.” I asked if there was a generally more monastic regime in operation than is now the case: “Very much so. We wore cassocks all the time in College and outside the College the wearing of the cassock was still obligatory. You were also supposed to wear the old-fashioned round clerical hat – the actual wearing of the hat was not insisted on, but you had to have it with you! It was a ghastly object and when I left the Beda I happily bequeathed it to the theatrical department of one of the international schools in Rome! You rarely saw women in the College, except for the ladies who did the cleaning. The sisters had their own chapel and kept themselves very much to themselves. They organised the catering arrangements and provided some medical care for the students. I remember on one occasion being very well nursed by them when I had a severe slipped disc incident. In those days there was no talking at meals (except breakfast and on feast days) and instead we were read to from books chosen by the Rector. We were all allocated seats in the Refectory for a whole term at a time and if one found oneself with tedious neighbours this could be a real trial – in such a situation the custom of reading at meals could be a great blessing!”

I also wondered about entertainments and recreation. “After supper and the rosary, we had a little fellowship in the common room, where coffee was served. There were no bar nights, although there were some aperitif parties, officially frowned-upon. As students we could invite friends to tea in
our rooms and on occasion even have them to a meal in the Refectory. One frequent guest of mine was a Greek Orthodox Deacon who was spending some time in Rome studying some aspects of Roman Catholic theology in connection with his PhD studies. He used to help me to improve my modern Greek (I had spent some time in Greece working with the World Council of Churches). His name was Bartolomeo Archondonis and he is now the Patriarch of Constantinople – I have stayed with him a couple of times in the Patriarchate and he spent a few days with me once when I was a priest on the Isle of Man.” Cheap air travel means that European students can now go home at times other than the summer vacation, but this was a rarity 50 years ago. Fr Peter recalled one notable exception. “I remember one American student (very wealthy!) who asked for permission to go and see his dentist, and this was granted, because it was assumed he meant someone here in Rome; but he actually meant his dentist back in the US!”

These years marked the beginning of Pope Paul VI’s pontificate, and Fr Peter was fortunate enough to have a very personal encounter with the pontiff. “I was ordained by him. He had been suffering from flu and his doctors wouldn’t allow him out, so the service was held in the Sistine Chapel. There were 17 of us.” Mention of such a crowning event led me to ask Fr Peter to sum up his experience of the Beda over these last few days: is the College so very different 50 years later? “Now it’s so much more informal here, which is good to see. But the feeling of the place hasn’t really changed; I’ve been here on several occasions since I left, and I’m always made very welcome.” Finally, I asked him for his overall impressions of the formation he received. “I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Rome, and I think it’s good to experience fully the culture of the Church in that way. But my great memories are making friendships with fellow students and beginning to assimilate the Catholic culture. Becoming a Catholic is not just about theology – in a sense that’s easy enough to do, the much more difficult thing is becoming used to Catholic ways. It takes a lifetime. But I have never regretted becoming a Catholic; I’ve always felt completely at home.”

As another Anglican who was received into the Catholic Church and who now hopes to minister within her as a priest, I would echo those sentiments strongly. It was my great privilege to spend this time with Mgr Ryan, and so to realise that despite the passing of the years, and without prejudice to all the practical transformations that the College has undergone, both the mission and the charism of the Beda remain largely unchanged.

Homily preached at the Beda College by Mgr Peter Ryan on Sunday 15 October 2017

As you are well aware, one important task for the priest celebrating a Sunday mass for the people is to deliver a homily in which he will try to bring out some of the teaching of the scripture readings set for the day for the benefit of those present. However, I think it is permissible on some special occasions to set aside this obligation and to let the homily take a different direction.
This Sunday falls within the year in which I am celebrating my Golden Jubilee of Priesthood, and the Rector is kindly allowing me to celebrate the Community Mass and to preach. For me, this constitutes a special occasion, and so today I shall not feel bound to expound the scriptures of the day. I shall also take another liberty and speak for rather longer than I normally would at an ordinary Sunday mass – and for this I ask your patience.

When my mother was nearly 90 I remember an occasion when she looked me in the eye and said to me: “Peter, life is a total mystery, isn’t it?” And of course, she was absolutely right.

Life is a total mystery and none of us can ever know what it is going to hold for us. If anyone had told me as a young boy that I would end up as a Catholic priest, I should have thought they were crazy.

I was brought up in the Church of England and from the age of about six I used to attend a church near my home. It was a very run-of-the-mill church and nothing very exciting ever happened, but in the dull routine of Sunday worship in that church, the foundations of my Christian faith were laid, and I took in far more than I ever realised at the time. In my mid-teens I began to feel the whole business was rather pointless, and I made a rather half-hearted attempt at rebellion, but my father resisted this attempt and made it clear to me that as long as he fed and clothed me and paid my school fees he expected me in return to respect his wishes and go to church each Sunday. I capitulated and my regular church-going continued, even though it all seemed to mean little to me.

Then, when I was in my 19th year something happened. One of my brothers who had come home after his war service in the army used to come to church with me, and on the last Sunday of January 1948, we set off together for our usual church, but we missed the bus we had intended to catch – however, there was one going in the opposite direction and my brother suggested we should take it and go to a different church – St Faith’s – and that’s what we did. Now St Faith’s was what is called a High Church of England church – a church where the style of worship and teaching were much closer to those in the Roman Catholic Church. I went back the next Sunday, and the next, and the next; and I gradually began to experience a spiritual awakening – all the teaching I had unconsciously taken in over the years started to come alive for me. I began to have a real encounter with faith, and though I don’t think I recognised it at the time, my life was being totally changed.

And it all began with a missed bus! As my mother said to me, “Life is a total mystery”: I often wonder how my life might have turned out if my brother and I hadn’t missed that bus all those years ago.

I think it’s likely that many of you here this morning will have had similar experiences – a moment when an apparently insignificant incident has been used by God to change
your life’s direction and which eventually led you into a new and better way of living your life. I want to suggest that those of us who have had such experiences should be profoundly grateful for them.

In my case, that discovery of faith in the opening months of 1948 led me into the ministry of the Church of England and to service in two parishes in Cumbria, and eventually to the discovery that I was being called to enter the Roman Catholic Church which I did in March 1963. Once in the Catholic Church it was recognised that I had a vocation to the priesthood, and after four years at the Beda College I was ordained a priest on the 25 January 1967 in the Sistine Chapel by Pope Paul VI, and I am asking you this morning to join with me in thanking God for my ordination and for the many blessings that have been given to me during my 50 years of priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church.

One of those blessings was to have been allowed to play a small part in the ongoing work for Christian unity, and in the Archdiocese of Liverpool I was actively engaged in the ecumenical cause through my appointments as chairman of the Archdiocesan Ecumenical Commission and also a member of the Ecumenical Commission for the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

In the years following my religious awakening in 1948 I had quickly become aware of the importance of the movement towards Christian unity – the so-called ecumenical movement. At university, I joined the Student Christian Movement – which encouraged Christians of different traditions to work, study and pray together – and then after university, I moved on to my Anglican Theological College at Lincoln to begin my training for the Church of England ministry. The principal of the College was Oliver Tomkins, a leading ecumenist who had for many years held a prominent position in the World Council of Churches, and during my years at Lincoln he had a profound influence on me. Whilst I was a student, a wealthy American lady sent Oliver a sum of money to allow two of his students to take part in an ecumenical pilgrimage to Rome, and I was one of the two chosen to participate in this venture. Taking part in this pilgrimage there were a number of French Roman Catholic priests and lay people and through them I made my first contact with the Catholic Church in France, where the whole religious atmosphere was much more open than it was in the UK at that time. It was through this contact that I began to read French Catholic theological books – this reading expanded my horizons and fed my growing attraction to the Catholic Church. Through my reading I was also introduced to the well-known ecumenical pioneer, the Abbé Paul Couturier; and from him I learned a great deal about how ecumenical issues should be handled. It has to be noted that the Catholic Church’s approach to ecumenism was not very positive in those days, and there was very little participation in the growing ecumenical movement – but
all that changed of course as a result of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. I had the good fortune to be a student at the Beda during the Council, and I remember well the excitement in the air when the Council published its decree on ecumenism in 1964. This decree totally changed the whole Catholic approach to ecumenism and it certainly provided great encouragement for budding ecumenists like me.

During my time in Rome I had many useful experiences which helped my ecumenical education and perhaps I could share one with you. During the Vatican Council various events used to be held in Rome in connection with it, some of which I used to attend. On one occasion Bishop Christopher Butler – at one time the Abbot of Downside Abbey and later an Auxiliary Bishop in the Westminster Archdiocese – gave a press conference for the journalists covering the Council during which he introduced them to the Council’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. After his talk he took questions and one journalist asked him whether *Lumen Gentium* has changed any of his views regarding the boundaries of the Catholic Church in relation with the other Christian Churches. I have never forgotten Butler’s reply. He said: “Before the Council I knew precisely where the Church of God was. I still know precisely where the Church of God is – but I am no longer as certain as I used to be where the Church of God is not.”

I suggest that Butler’s reply is worth pondering. It certainly helped me as I slowly developed my own understanding of ecumenism. In my first year at the Beda I was frankly horrified at the unimaginative way in which the Week of Prayer for Unity was celebrated, and when it was over I went to the Rector to put in a strong complaint. The Rector heard me out with great patience and then said to me: “Thank you Mr Ryan – next year I should like you to organise it.”

I accepted the invitation and the next year the Beda’s Week of Prayer was observed in a much more open way, incorporating many of the insights of the Council’s Decree on Ecumenism. One student was not impressed. Like me he was a former Anglican priest, and he finished by saying to me: “Peter, do you know what my prayer is during the Octave of Prayer for unity?” And when I replied “no”, he told me: “My prayer is: Lord, make the so-and-sos submit like I had to!” I include that reminiscence this morning because I think it catches very well the sort of attitudes held by many Catholics in those far off days.

Let me now try to draw this rather overlong homily to a close by saying that on this special occasion I am simply over-flowing with thanksgiving. Thanks for the wonderful foundation of Christian teaching given me through my upbringing in the Anglican Church.

Thanks for all the multitude of living saints whom I have encountered in my long life, so many of them in the Anglican and Catholic parishes in which I have served: their examples of faith-filled lives have given me enormous support and encouragement.
Thanks for the welcome I found in the Catholic Church and for the richness of doctrine and devotion that I found within it which has nourished me over the years. Thanks for my years at the Beda and for the experience of getting to know Rome, and to form friendships with fellow students which have endured for a lifetime.

Thanks for the many priests with whom I have worked in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. As an assistant priest at the then-new Metropolitan Cathedral I served for 8 years with 3 priests to whom I owe much. They were open-minded and full of enthusiasm for the teaching of the Second Vatican Council: they prepared their homilies carefully and were patient with the newly ordained priest in their company. They had all kept up their theological reading and I learned a lot from our conversations round the meal table – I owe a lot to them and to other priests with whom I have worked over the years.

And finally, I should like to express my thanks to my cousin – Margaret Robinson – who is sharing with us in this mass this morning. We have been friends since childhood, and when I retired she very kindly invited me to share her home. Her friendship and support have helped to make my retirement to be one of great contentment and joy.

I hope that you who are now students will have as happy an experience of priesthood as has been granted to me. Deo Gratias.

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**Message for all Beda Association Members**

Under the Data Protection Act, we have contacted all Beda Association members asking them to confirm they are willing for us to retain their details on the Association database. Many thanks to those members who have already replied.

If you have not replied so far please do so, suggested wording: “I am happy for the Beda Association to retain my postal address and email on its database on the understanding these details will not be released to any third party without my consent.”

Please send your response by email or post to:
Fr Michael McLaughlin
Beda Association Secretary
Our Lady of Mount Carmel
7 Wesley Place
Silsden, West Yorkshire BD20 OPH
email: michaelmclaughlin5@gmail.com
Downside and the Beda – a very English Connection

REV. JOHN TABOR

To the cursory reader, the two names, Downside Abbey, an English Benedictine monastery in Somerset, in the south-west of England and the Pontifical Beda College, situated in Rome, and during the war years at Upholland in Lancashire, would have little if anything in common. Nevertheless, over many years of the Beda’s existence, the presence of members of the Downside community within its walls, whether as teachers, students, old boys of the school, or simply as friends of the College has had a quiet but significant effect on various aspects of life at the Beda. This short article aims to throw light on some of the characters and events that have brought the two institutions together, both in earlier times and even up to the present day.

Mgr Charles Duchemin

No history of the Beda can really be told without mention of Charles Duchemin who served as Rector for a record 33 years, from 1928 until 1961. His was an extremely formative influence on the life of the House. Duchemin was an old boy of the school (former Downside pupils are known as “Old Gregorians”, after Downside’s Patron, St Gregory the Great), having also attended the Oratory School at Edgbaston. His time as Rector saw the development of the Beda “programme”, which remains at least in outline, similar to that which is followed today. Monastic life, with its emphasis on order, stability and balance, within a framework of *ora et labora*, has much to recommend to the life of a secular priest. Duchemin, having spent his formative years within the shadow of a great monastery with its rapidly expanding network of a growing school, parishes, and importantly, a commitment to scholarship and a high standard of liturgical observance, would have absorbed much which he could later pass on to the men in his care in the seminary setting. At a time when the tales of rigour if not downright hardships of seminary life, especially in the interwar and immediate post-war years, were legion, the somewhat mitigated conditions which prevailed at the Beda under his regime, could be
said to owe more than a passing acquaintance, to his time at Downside. A high standard of liturgy and learning was maintained at the Beda, as attested by former students such as the late Mgr Michael Hollings,¹ but always with a humanity and warmth that bore the hallmarks of balance and practical wisdom.

Some notable Downside figures

Cardinal Francis Aidan Gasquet was, in the early years of the 20th century, Cardinal Protector of the English College, and at a time when both the Beda and English College were housed together in the Via Monserrato, this included the Beda, until its departure to new premises in 1917/18. Gasquet had been Prior of Downside (1878-1885) and subsequently Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation from 1900. He was president of the Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Vulgate in 1907 and created Cardinal in 1914. He became Vatican Librarian from 1919 and from 1920, Vatican Archivist, until his death in 1929. A Westminster man by birth (his mother lived in Kensington), he was accorded the honorific title of Abbot of St Albans and may well have come into contact with the future Mgr Duchemin, when he was a student at the Beda. Gasquet’s portrait hangs on the 4th floor stairwell in the house and shows someone of auctoritas gravitasque as befits his role as Protector – the link between the College and the Vatican.

¹ For a fuller treatment on this and life at the Beda more generally, see The Beda Review 2010.
At a more immediate level with the student body a few years after this, during the 1920’s and 1930’s was the figure of Dom Placid Turner. Dom Placid was Professor of Moral Theology in a time when students learned propositional theology (in Latin) by rote and any form of variance from the official line was discouraged. Little is known of Dom Placid’s time at the Beda. Afterwards he returned to Downside where he played his part in community life, dying in 1949.

Dom Eric Philipps, who began his monastic life at Downside in 1929 (as Br Cuthbert, going on to be a founding member of the community at Downside’s dependent Priory at Worth in Sussex in 1933), transferred eventually to the Diocese of Northampton and was sent to the Beda for priestly studies. In 1977, having retired from parish ministry and having had a packed career culminating as a Canon of Northampton and establishing the annual Order of Malta Pilgrimage to Lourdes in the 1950’s, he returned once more to Downside where he lived on well into his 90s, becoming something of a character within the Downside familia.

A Synoptic interlude…

In the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council, in the early 1970’s another Downside notable came to be on the Beda staff. Dom Bernard Orchard, noted Biblical scholar, was Spiritual Director for four years in the House. Born in 1910, Dom Bernard had been educated at the then Downside offshoot, St Benedict’s School Ealing, (as was Dom Eric) before joining the community at Downside, in 1932 having been up at Cambridge. He was ordained Priest in 1939 and in 1945 was sent to Ealing where he would later become Headmaster. He might have expected to have been second Abbot of Ealing (which gained independence in 1947 and was raised to the status of an Abbey in 1955), in the abbatial election of 1967, but the community chose another, leaving Dom Bernard free to pursue activities outside the confines of the cloister. All his life he was a proponent of what he termed the “Two Gospels Hypothesis” which sought to maintain the primacy of Matthew in the order of composition of the Synoptics. This view, dating from an earlier time, is now largely disregarded, but Dom Bernard clung to it with dogged determination for the rest of his life. It would be interesting to consider what his directees, filled with fresh cutting edge scriptural scholarship in the classroom would have made of this contrarian yet passionately held position. Dom Bernard was nothing if not vigorous in his views. He would later hold the position of Professor of Scripture at the University of Dallas in Texas, before returning to Ealing, where died in November 2006 aged 96.
Other Gregorians

At around the same time as Dom Bernard’s time at the Beda, there was a young Portsmouth priest who was an Old Boy of Downside – Fr (later Archbishop) Michael Bowen, who, like Dom Placid Turner before him, taught Moral Theology. As Bishop of Arundel & Brighton and later Archbishop of Southwark, he would send men to study here, hoping no doubt that they would appreciate the gracious application of a balanced discipline and structure, initiated by Mgr Duchemin and continued by his successors.

In 1980, a young Downside monk, Dom James Hood, who himself had been in the School was sent to the Beda for part of his priestly studies. Presently, Dom James is the only member of the Community in recent times to have been to the Beda, but there have been monks from other English Benedictine houses, most recently St Louis and Belmont, who have done their studies here. From 2006-2013, Abbot Timothy Wright of Ampleforth was Spiritual Director, thus maintaining the Congregation’s (if not specifically Downside’s) teaching link with the Beda.

The present

There is however, a more nuanced, though no less real and valuable link between Downside and the Beda. It lies in the fact that quite a few men who have passed through the House have received their initial formation at Downside, either as those seeking full reception into the Church, or as the recipients of spiritual direction, or (as in the case of the present writer) as boys in the school. This influence is not easy to measure, but it is very definite – a sense of order, stability and balance, a pronounced Englishness, that is nonetheless open to new ideas and experiences, and most importantly an “eye for the underdog”, something invaluable in pastoral ministry.

Though vocations to the monastery and the priesthood are perhaps fewer now than they once were, both Downside and the Beda continue by their work and witness, to build up the Church both at home and abroad, so that both are living schools of the Lord’s Service.
The Beda website is well and truly up and running! Many past students already use it to keep up with current events in the life of the College as do the families and friends of present students. It is often the first point of contact and information for diocesan bishops and their prospective students. The news is updated regularly during term time and the 4000 plus photographs on the College Flickr account give a pictorial record of events in the College since 2011. During holiday times the website remains static but when the College is in session, there are news items and photographs of all the main events.

Readers of the *Review* might be interested to know that full copies of the Beda Review for the past five years can be viewed and downloaded as pdf documents from the website (click on the Beda Life tab and then Beda Review).

These are the ways you can keep up to date with the College through the Website.

1. Visit the website and be aware that it updates frequently. The address is: www.bedacollege.org
If you are on Facebook, look at the College Facebook page where news and photographs appear regularly. This can be accessed through the Facebook logo (yellow circle with f in the middle, on the top right corner of the Home page).

If you follow Twitter, some news items are on the College Twitter account. The yellow circle with a black bird inside on the Home page gives access to this.

If you want to find photographs, there are over 4000 photos on the College Flickr account going back to 2011. They are organised in collections covering each academic year. You can access the Flickr account by clicking on the yellow circle with two black dots in it on the top right of the home page. Any photos you might want for yourself can be downloaded from here.

Please encourage your family, friends, parishioners and anyone who might be interested in the life of the College to look at what the website has to offer.

In particular, if you know of anyone who might be thinking of a possible vocation to the priesthood, especially someone over 30 years of age, point them in the direction of the website. Doing this might provide an opportunity to talk about the Beda, and, who knows, it might just be the spark to set someone on a new vocational journey towards priesthood.
The monks of The Abbey of Saint Paul outside the Walls have opened a monastic workshop of sacred vestments and liturgical art, Agorà Atelier San Paolo.

The opening hours are: Monday to Saturday from 9am to 6pm and by appointment.

The entrance is at Via Ostiense 186 (the Monastery entrance) and then via the monastic pharmacy shop.

How to reach us:  
Metro B - Basilica San Paolo  

www.abbaziasanpaolo.org  
sartoria@abbaziasanpaolo.org  
Phone: +39 06 4543 5574
The Beda Year

First Year Students

(Standing, left to right) Colin Dunne, Matthew Bond, Br Markus Ohlsson, Alex Chow, Canon Philip Gillespie, Kevin Conmee, Tony Grant, Mike Smith (Seated) Chris Butler, Br Ludvig Ludvigsen, Damien Locke

Second Year Students

(Left to right)
Norm Allred,
Canon Philip Gillespie,
Adrian Lowe
Third Year Students

(Standing, left to right) Br Thomas Varavunkal, William Pillai, Mike Brookes, Patrick Harrigan, Canon Philip Gillespie, Damien Louden, Willie McQuillan, Anicet Munyugu, Graham Fullick, Ronald Campbell

(Seated) Paul Spellman, Alan Hodgson, Ben Brooks

Fourth Year Students

(Standing, left to right) Anthony Kelly, Brian Muling, John Lovell, Carl Mugan, Paul Sia, Canon Philip Gillespie, Philip Carr, Gerald D'Silva, Brendan Gormley, Alex Mariasoosai

(Seated) Paul Smith, Simon Sibisi, John Tabor
The Beda Year - House Photographs

External students

Lodovico Torrisi
2nd year

Modestus Aloys
3rd year

Rev. Ignatius Tully
3rd Year

Rev. Richard Masanja
4th Year

Resident Beda Staff

(Standing, left to right) Mgr Peter Verity, Fr John Carlyle
(Seated) Fr John Breen, Canon Philip Gillespie, Sr Patricia McDonald SHJC
FMDM Sisters
(left to right) Sr Mary Jean, Canon Philip Gillespie, Sr Carmel Spratt

Personale
Back Row L-R: Orietta, Theresa, Canon Philip Gillespie, Maria Grazia, Ivano, Annalisa, Pina, Fabrizio Delle Castelle,
Front Row: Edna, Gabriella, Anna, Lucia, Ida, Larry
04 October 2017
After their induction period the first year students were introduced to the rest of the House as we all slowly arrived from various parts of the world. We then began our weekend of recollection given by Canon John Carlyle before the academic year started in earnest on the Monday - 09 October 2017.

09 October 2017
After Mass the Rector invited the community to the garden for the launch of The Beda Review. We were in awe of Deacon John Tabor, the Editor, for producing this year’s edition in record time.

15 October 2017
Mgr Peter Ryan and his cousin Margaret spent a week with us as a celebration for his Golden Jubilee of priesthood. It is not often that a Beda student reaches this remarkable milestone. Mgr Peter celebrated Sunday Mass in the chapel and preached the homily. He told the community the wonderful story of how he came to be ordained priest by Pope Paul VI in the Sistine Chapel all those years ago.

20 October 2017
The anniversary of the opening of the Beda College in its current building in 1960. Fr Rector celebrated Mass in the evening with prayers particular to the blessing of the College and church.

23 October 2017
Tish Nichol returned to the Beda to help all of us with our reading, singing and preaching.

29 October 2017
The new bar in the Students’ Common Room was officially opened today with the Rector and academic staff visiting for drinks before lunch.

05 November 2017
Vice-Chancellor Professor John Charmley joined Sr Patricia and the rest of the academic staff in our annual Academic Mass to congratulate the graduates of 2017. Congratulations to all - after the Mass we celebrated in the usual Beda way with a delicious meal.
12 November 2017

Our annual pilgrimage to the church of San Silvestro in Capito for the Remembrance Sunday Mass followed by the generous hospitality of the Pallotine Community. After Mass we were free to go our separate ways as the College dissolves for our mid-semester break.

28 November 2017

Some 32 priests came to the Beda to celebrate their Jubilee Anniversary of ordination. All priests of England and Wales who celebrate either 30, 40, 50 or even 60 years of ordination are invited to Rome for a week to spend time together and to celebrate. As a College we always look forward to their joining us for lunch and then spending time chatting together afterwards. A great witness and congratulations to all.

02-03 December 2017

The start of Advent and, as always, we had a weekend of reflection hosted this year by Fr Tom Norris from the Irish College. He gave us all much to think about and I believe the House enjoyed the period of silence too.

06 December 2017

Our third year students received the ministry of Candidacy this evening. The presider for the liturgy was Bishop Paul Tighe, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications at the Vatican. This was, of course, followed by a wonderful meal in the refectory and drinks in the common room.

09 December 2017

Eight North American students from South Dakota came to lunch to share their stories with us and us with them.

10 December 2017

An afternoon of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament gave the staff and students time to reflect about, not only their own vocations, but also to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

13 December 2017

The first year students entertained the rest of the House and invited guests with the traditional Christmas Concert in the common room. For this year’s special guest, we were entertained by the really smooth moves of Larry. A great time was had by all with the first years showing some real talent.
17 December 2017

Our annual Advent service followed by the kitchen personale showing off their skills with a delicious and varied buffet. Everyone breathed a sigh of relief as many of the residents of the College then departed for their Christmas break.

07 January 2018

The House reassembled today, refreshed from their holidays and ready to tackle the rest of the semester before exams start.

20 January 2018

The annual Beda Unity Service to celebrate Christian Unity Week was celebrated with many of our friends from across Rome and further. The homily this year was given by Archbishop Bernard Ntahoturi, the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Representative to the Holy See and the Director of the Anglican Centre in Rome.

29 January 2018

The feast of the Conversion of St Paul. Papal Vespers were celebrated across the road at the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura today. The monastery kindly arranged tickets for members of the Beda community to attend should they wish to do so.

21 February 2018

After a week’s vacation and a prayer-filled retreat for all (first and second years in-house and third and fourth years away), we returned to lectures and to settle in for another semester.

26 February 2018

Today, Rome woke to a thick layer of snow, which seemed to continue for most of the morning. All schools were closed and buses cancelled throughout Rome. The Beda, however, continued valiantly with lectures running throughout the morning. The temperature is forecast to drop to -7°C this evening.

02 - 04 March 2018

The second and third year students, with Fr John Breen and Sr Patricia McDonald, went to Nemi for a weekend to work on safeguarding and the requirements of the Church. The weekend was ably led by Fr Dennis Tindal from Hexham and Newcastle diocese.

06 March 2018

The Lenten Penitential service was held in the Beda College this evening.

11 March 2018

Our annual Lenten Oasis on Laudate Sunday with our guests, the full community from the Scots College. This is an occasion that seems to be enjoyed by all as we swap stories between Colleges and enjoy celebrating Sunday Mass with our guests.
14 March 2018
An early start as we strolled over to the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura for the Lenten Station Mass and then invited everyone over for breakfast at our College. It is always interesting sitting with people we do not normally get a chance to meet and learn about other communities in Rome. Although for this particular Mass we provide the liturgy and breakfast, our thanks go to the North American College for arranging the whole of the Station Mass programme throughout Lent.

In the evening our second year students, Adrian Lowe and Norman Allred, were conferred with the ministry of Acolyte. Bishop Mark O'Toole (Plymouth) presided.

It is always encouraging and exciting to see our students progressing to another ministry.

14 March - 16 March 2018
Archbishop Bernard Longley (Birmingham) and Bishop Mark O’Toole (Plymouth) visited the College to carry out their annual assessment.

16 March 2018
All seminarians in Rome were invited to the Pope Paul VI Conference Centre in the Vatican for an audience with Pope Francis. Approximately 3,000 seminarians were in attendance for a question and answer session with the Holy Father.

17 March 2018
St Patrick’s Day - this was celebrated with great joy as it coincided with the Diamond Jubilee of Sr Carmel Spratt FMDM. During morning Mass Sr Carmel renewed her vows; this was followed by the community gathering in the common room before a special lunch was served in the refectory.
28 March 2018

Lectures having ended yesterday, some brave souls (including the Rector) embarked on the Seven Churches Walk with packed lunches and sun hats. Thankfully the weather was fine, and the walk was completed, two Stations of the Cross being said at each church.

29 March - 01 April 2018

Tickets were available for the Chrism Mass at St Peter’s on the Thursday and many of the House attended. In the evening we celebrated the Mass of the Lord’s Supper and this was followed up with the Easter Triduum. There was a wonderful atmosphere of anticipation and prayer throughout the House and everybody contributed in some way. On Easter Sunday about ten students, having been invited by the Other House (the VEC), went to sing at the Papal Mass. After the Triduum we all relaxed for a week on our mid-semester break until lectures resumed on 09 April.

13 April 2018

We welcomed a pilgrimage group, led by Mgr Rod Strange on behalf of The Tablet, for lunch after their visit to San Paolo fuori le Mura.

18 April 2018

The whole College was invited to the VEC for dinner. It is always great to visit the Other House, we enjoyed sharing a meal with them and then a short period of social recreation followed.

24 April 2018

We were delighted to host the recently ordained priests and Archbishop Malcolm McMahon from Liverpool diocese who joined us for lunch. They were visiting Rome for their annual retreat with their bishop.

06 May 2018

We fulfilled our annual day of prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life today. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament was held all afternoon in the chapel and this was concluded with evening prayer. This is an extremely popular day amongst the community and one that is fast becoming close to our hearts. The chapel was well attended throughout the afternoon by all members of the House.

06 May - 12 May 2018

Tish Nichol joined the community this week to help prepare the first year students for the ministry of Lector and to help the rest of the students with vocal coaching.

09 May 2018

Eight of our First year students received the ministry of Lector this evening, ably supported by two of their brothers who had received the ministry previously. Fr Rector celebrated the ministry and Mass which coincided this year with the Ascension of Our Lord. A wonderful celebration for the entire community as well as invited guests.

16 May 2018

The Rector of the Irish College, Mgr Ciarán O’Carroll, and his community invited our community to their College for evening Mass and dinner. After celebrating the Eucharist
together, we retired to the refectory and were happily entertained with good food and excellent company. We could not have been made to feel more welcome and our thanks goes to our gregarious hosts.

25 May 2018

Today we celebrated the Feast of St Bede with Morning Prayer followed later by Mass with many guests in attendance. Fr Rector had commissioned an icon of St Bede for the chapel, designed by Aiden Hart. The whole community then celebrated in our usual style with a delicious lunch.

04 June 2018

Leavers’ Lunch today to say farewell to all the students who have completed their studies with us and are returning home. Always a poignant feeling at this particular meal.

06 June 2018

We held our annual barbecue today as a way of celebrating the end of the year and to gather before the forthcoming ordinations in a week’s time and the departure of all students and many of the staff. This is always a very relaxed and enjoyable celebration in the life of the College.

08 June 2018

The community enjoyed a day off and out of the College with the Rector as he treated us all to his annual gita. We went to Montefiascone, celebrated Mass along the pilgrim route and then retired for lunch. Despite a typical Italian cloudburst, which seemed to last for a couple of hours, we all managed to leave with dry clothes, full stomachs and happy hearts.

13 June 2018

The last day of the semester and of the year at the College. We all celebrated Mass at the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura to ordain ten of our students. Bishop Alan Hopes (East Anglia) was the main concelebrant for the Mass and the ordaining bishop. Many family members and friends attended to offer prayerful support and encouragement. The personale created a magnificent buffet for all who attended which was enjoyed along with the beautiful gardens that had been so carefully tended by our resident gardeners.

Among those enjoying the Leavers’ Lunch on 4 June were l. to. r. former Rector Mgr Rod Strange, Fr John Carlyle, Sr Patricia McDonald, Mgr Peter Verty, the Rector, Fr John Breen. Photo: College website
Jubilee Celebration 2018

SR CARMEL SPRATT FMDM

Give thanks to the God of heaven for his loving kindness, graciousness, mercy, compassion, endure forever (Ps 136:26)

In this, my Diamond Jubilee of Religious Profession as a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood, my heart overflows with gratitude to God, my family, Congregation and friends for their care, concern and support over the years.

I joined the FMDMs the day after my 18th birthday in 1955. I declared my first profession in 1958 at Ladywell Convent, Surrey. After profession I studied for three years at Digby Stuart College in London. Subsequent to graduation, Divine Providence saw me in Rome for studies at the Pontifical Institute of Regina Mundi. I lived here at the Beda College and went out daily for lectures. It was a special time interacting with religious from around the world. Little did I imagine that I would return here some fifty plus years later!

In 1962 I was assigned with six other sisters as pioneers to Holy Spirit School, East Greenbush, N.Y. My twenty years in the USA was a time of growth and of being open to very varied experiences with the people, in the school, the parish and on educational
campuses. There were great opportunities for further studies in the States. I made some enduring friends. I loved my time in the USA; of course there were trying periods, but I knew that the Lord was with me even though there were times when I said: "Where are you, Lord?"

In 1982 after our sisters withdrew from New York, I was sent to Australia, to a country town, named Nathalia in Northern Victoria. In all I spent 30 years in that sunburnt country, and loved my ministries, way of life and the great people I met while living in Nathalia, Melbourne and Bendigo.

Now as I celebrate my Diamond Jubilee of Profession, and having travelled around the world, it was my joy to return after more than half a century to celebrate my Jubilee here at the Beda College. We certainly have a "God of Surprises"! My special thanks to Sr Mary Jean, the Rector, Staff, Students and Personale for the way in which they contributed to making the day such a memorable one. The Liturgy was special and my heart is still full of gratitude for such an unforgettable day in my life.
The New Men

Matthew Bond

I was born and raised in Derbyshire to an Anglican/Methodist background. From the age of 16, I became aware of a religious vocation. From leaving school I took an apprenticeship as a sacristan at the Crooked Spire Church in Chesterfield from 1979-80. This was only short term, but it enabled me to discern one of two vocations: either the religious life (Franciscan) or to be a missionary.

By April 1981 I lived and worked with the Missionaries of Charity in Hong Kong and Macau ministering to the sick, poor and dying at the nearby hospice. However, I still had a sense of wanting to become a Franciscan back in the UK, so I entered the Anglican Society of St Francis from 1982-1989, working mainly in parish missions and helping to run a retreat centre, as well as ministry with ex-offenders.

As I grew into the Franciscan life I reconnected to art and produced icons, by which time I had already entered into vows in 1986. With encouragement, I followed the path towards art and graduated from Glasgow School of Art in 1992. Choosing this option eventually led to the sacrifice of my religious vocation.

I spent a number of years following a career in the financial and tax sector, which I found unrewarding. Nevertheless, I continued to live out my Christian vocation as an Anglican involved in parish life and ministry until 2007. At this time my spiritual life and faith journey came to a crossroads when I decided to become a Catholic, which again enabled parish involvement as a RCIA catechist until 2010.

By 2009 I began my discernment towards priesthood but in doing so I found myself re-entering the Franciscan tradition a second time within the Conventual Catholic Order in 2010. After making vows in 2012 it seemed appropriate to reconsider that vocation to be a priest as I began formation and studies towards that end. It was not until 2016 that I found myself connecting with the diocese of Wrexham to discern that process as a diocesan priest instead.
Christopher Butler

My name is Chris Butler and I am a seminarian for the Diocese of Leeds in Yorkshire, England.

I was born in Chesterfield, Derbyshire of Irish parents. Prior to entering priestly formation I worked for 39 years in the English National Health Service. I initially trained as a psychiatric nurse, followed by further training in physical healthcare. After a number of years in clinical practice I was asked to go into management, and for the last 20 years I have been an executive director of different healthcare organisations, most recently as Chief Executive Officer.

During my childhood and adolescence I was a regular church goer. As a student I fell away from the Church and did not attend for a number of years; despite this I always knew where the local Catholic church was and I found myself calling in from time to time. Years later, for no apparent reason (though I now believe through the prompting of the Holy Spirit), I decided to go to Sunday Mass and I experienced a warm and welcoming community. It was a very busy inner-city London parish in a community with a lot of problems, but it was characterised by a priest and people working their way towards God and helping each other as best they could. It was very much the “field hospital” referred to by Pope Francis. This reconnected me with Christ and the Church and over time, despite some ups and downs, I deepened my spiritual life and my involvement in parish activities.

During my time in healthcare management I continued to work clinically including working as a nurse with my Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. It was in Lourdes that I first thought that God might be asking me to totally change direction and serve him and his people in the priesthood. Having led a very busy but settled life this was particularly challenging to me; however, after a lengthy discernment process, including spiritual direction, the Bishop decided that I should proceed with a formal application and at his invitation I commenced at the Beda College in September 2017.

To be honest, I simply do not know what to expect of seminary life, from living in a community to academic expectations, but the two-week induction process was invaluable. What I do know is that I have to trust in God and to be open to his will for my life in return for the very many gifts I have been given over the years: the phrase “Jesus I trust in you” sums this up for me. It is great to be part of a group of men with such a wealth of life experience and I am looking forward to the next four years which I suspect will pass by very quickly.
The New Men

**Alex Chow**

I am Alexander Chow from the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Australia. Like a prodigal son returning to his father’s unconditional love, I am very grateful and blessed that I am given a second chance to return to priestly formation. My first was back in September 2013 till February 2014. Four years later, I am back at the Beda to answer the call to serve God and God’s people as a response to God’s Merciful Love.

I was born in Brunei Darussalam “Abode of Peace”, a tiny Islamic sultanate on the island of Borneo. I am one of three children of a devout Catholic family of Taoist ancestry. In 1995, I graduated as a scientist (Chemistry) in Melbourne. I returned to Melbourne in 2006 as a migrant. I have worked for 22 years as a Quality Assurance Scientist for various international oil and gas companies in Brunei Darussalam, The Netherlands, as well as various parts of Africa, Asia and Australia. I had the call to the priesthood back when I was in my teens. The lure of money, career opportunities as well as the adventure of expatriation to amazing places and cultures took the better of me. However, there has always been a stirring in my heart for a deeper relationship with God and hunger for belonging. Along with it, I felt a strong desire to bring Jesus to people as well as to bring people to Jesus. I realised that a vocation to the priesthood is where this desire can be fulfilled and where my true self can be expressed. I am excited as well as terrified as I began this new chapter of my life into the Great Unknown. I believe that I can do all things through Jesus who strengthens me (Phil 4:13) and leads me where no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Cor 2:9).

Please pray for us seminarians as we journey together, pray together, discern together with the Church to seek God’s will in our lives, to lay down our lives for others and to enter into and share the compassionate, humble servanthood of Jesus Christ, the hope of the world.

**Kevin Conmee**

I was raised in Birmingham in a family of five children, of first generation Irish Catholic parents. My mother ensured that we grew up in the faith, with daily rosary before the Sacred Heart picture; my three brothers and I supported the local parish as altar servers for many years. My life, however, was not always one of keeping the faith, for after a grammar school education at the Birmingham Oratory, I stopped going to church when I went to Manchester University to study maths. I continued to have a personal prayer life as I retained a strong sense of God in my life, but I could not relate that to the practice of going to church on Sunday.
However, in my first year after leaving university, when I began what I hoped would be a lucrative career working for an insurance company, God intervened in my life one day and said: “Leave all and follow me”. The calling was quite emphatic and so was my response, but God never told me where I was to go. So my Abrahamic journey in faith began, which was to last for the next 30 years until I arrived here at the Beda. Looking back, it was a very interesting journey which also had its dark periods just like the Israelites who wandered in the desert for 40 years; maybe that is why I like the psalms as they give expression to all the human emotions before God. My winding path led me through various Christian communities including L’Arche, monastic life and serving the Missionaries of Charity. When I wasn’t serving the Church directly I earned my keep as a maths teacher in various secondary schools but I never felt that this was my vocation in life.

In 1996 I entered the seminary the first time for my home diocese of Birmingham. However, after 4 years I felt that I was not ready to go forward for ordination to the diaconate, so I made the painful decision to leave. My journey continued for the next 12 years, which took me back into teaching and on to South America where I lived for 7 years in Peru and Argentina. Despite enjoying those years my heart remained restless and I knew that God was still calling me to serve him in another way, so I took a year out of teaching to give myself one last chance to discern a vocation. I was now 47 years old. That one-year discernment period became a journey in itself lasting another five years, until I finally found my place with the diocese of Portsmouth. I hope now to put down roots and serve the Church as a priest, while helping others to find Christ in their own journey of faith.

**Colin Dunne**

Hello, my name is Colin Dunne. I was born in 1985 into a loving Catholic family in Tullamore, Co. Offaly, Ireland. I am the eldest of five children. Some of my earliest memories are those of my parents reading Bible stories to us as a family. I went to St Bride’s Primary School and for secondary education to Tullamore College.

After leaving school I became involved in Youth 2000, which ministry was to set up retreats and summer festivals for youth. I enjoyed this work as it gave me the opportunity of bringing young people into the Church and to experience what it really means to be Catholic. It was through Youth 2000 that I learnt about Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer in Scotland which runs weekend retreats for youth. The prayer house is a home to a youth community, the members of which give a year to the community. The day at this Craig Lodge was very structured. It started at 7:30 with the Prayer of the Church followed by rosary and adoration. After
breakfast there was manual labour and after lunch we went for a walk as a community. In the evening we had Evening Prayer and rosary.

The idea of becoming a priest came to me as a young boy and was strengthened over these years. I had the opportunity of meeting many priests at Craig Lodge, including those from religious orders like the Franciscans and Carmelites. However, the idea of being a diocesan priest appealed to me the most as I felt that I would be involved for most of my time with people. I came home from Scotland in 2015 for the ordination of a friend and it was at that ceremony I felt confirmed in my thoughts of following Christ as a priest. After some time, and speaking to my Diocesan Vocation Director I applied for the priesthood. Here I am at the Beda College responding to the call.

Tony Grant

I come from the East End of London, so coming to Rome with its charming eccentricities was not much of a change for me! I left school at 18 and decided to travel around Europe for the next ten years, working in many different jobs from fisherman to plasterer. I returned to England in the late 80’s to discover a country that seemed to be overly obsessed with the motto, “Greed is Good”. I noticed a spiritual vacuum in society that progressed as the years went by. I studied for ‘A’ Levels in evening courses and for a HNC in Structural Engineering, and worked in the Building Industry.

My mother and my father were devout Catholics who raised us to have a great love of God and Holy Mother Church. We were blessed to have a Franciscan community that ministered to us in the parish, and my love for the OFMs has stayed with me all my life. My journey of faith has not always run smoothly, and I have stumbled a few times on my path, but God has never been far from my thoughts, buried deep in my heart, and I have never been far from him. So it was through my love and adoration of the Blessed Eucharist, in unity with the Holy Spirit, which lit a fire in my heart, and thus truly began my journey of faith to follow Christ.

I have been caring for my elderly parents for the last twenty years until their deaths, and it was at this crossroads in my life, and after much soul-searching that I decided to put myself forward for discernment to the priesthood. This year I received the wonderful news from my bishop that I was accepted, and now I find myself at the Beda College in Rome, for formation as a priest. The staff have been very kind and hardworking, welcoming us to the Beda, and I look forward to the coming year in anticipation, that through wisdom, fortitude, patience, and understanding, I will embrace the discipleship of Christ with joy. Everything comes full circle, just as our journey of life begins with God and ends with God.
I was born in Armidale in the Northern Tablelands of New South Wales, Australia in 1977 and grew up in and around Uralla. Before starting secondary school my family moved to a property and I have fond memories of a very happy childhood. I attended the local Catholic primary and secondary schools and was active in my local parish growing up. After finishing school I seriously considered entering the seminary but was persuaded by a member of my family to pursue some life experience first. Having become particularly interested in the study of Indonesian language and culture during secondary school, I decided to pursue an undergraduate degree in Asian Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra. This evolved into a specialist degree which provided an opportunity to live in Indonesia to conclude my studies. I was very happy during my time at the Universitas Gadjah Mada in the city of Yogyakarta in Central Java and continued to develop my passion for Indonesia and its people.

After completing my degree, I was considering a number of opportunities, including staying in Indonesia or taking some time to travel around other parts of Asia. At that time, I saw an advertisement for the role of cabin crew with Emirates Airline in Dubai. Attracted by the opportunity to travel more extensively I attended the interview and within a few months I found myself arriving in the United Arab Emirates. At the time I thought that I would stay for a year or two before returning to Australia to re-visit my vocation. However, the Lord, in his wisdom had other ideas. I remained in Dubai for almost 18 years although I only flew as crew for 10 of those years. The subsequent 8 years was a period of significant personal and professional growth and I found myself in training and management roles. My most recent role was managing the cabin crew community at Emirates, a community which now exceeds 25,000 individuals from over 140 nationalities.

During my time in Dubai I was blessed to have been very actively involved with the parish of St Francis of Assisi, Jebel Ali. Some people are surprised to hear about how vibrant the Catholic Church is in Dubai. There are two parishes and the larger of the two, St Mary’s, Dubai is said to be the largest parish in the world in terms of the number of parishioners. At St Francis’ I was a catechist and the Master of Ceremonies for solemn liturgies. I also trained and led the very large team of altar servers. There is no doubt that the ongoing discernment of my vocation was very enriched by the priests and people of Jebel Ali and I miss the warmth and support of the community very much.

Despite the many years that had passed since the first experience of my vocation, the sense of its presence never left me. I describe it as “bubbling” away, at times very
strongly. In 2016 I decided to plan my year around making a decision about whether to pursue my vocation further. This resulted in some time with the Missionary of Charity Fathers in Calcutta and a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. These powerful experiences left me with no doubt that I needed to test my vocation more deeply and after further prayer and discernment about what direction to take next, Bishop Michael Kennedy generously accepted me as a seminarian for my home diocese. So, here I am at the Beda where I hope to grow in my love for Christ and my desire to serve his Church.

Br Ludvig Ludvigsen TOR

Ever since I was a young boy I have loved history and particularly old buildings. In Sweden the only old buildings that you can see are castles or churches from the 12th or 13th century, and there are more churches then castles. In this environment as a young kid it was natural for me to also study the living history behind these structures: why did people build these churches? And the answer is because they loved God. As I was beginning to learn more about the Church I also wanted to know more about God and so I started to attend the Protestant Church of Sweden. At the age of 17-18 I was thinking of becoming a priest, but I worked as a youth leader instead.

I entered a Lutheran Bible school at the age of 32 to find out more about my faith. My first paper on the creed opened up my eyes for the Catholic Church. And I converted one year later. Getting to know a new parish and the Catholic Church was in the beginning overwhelming. Two years later the vicar asked me if I wanted to become a priest and I immediately said no, because I didn’t feel worthy. Later, he became the principal for the seminary in Sweden and again he asked me the same question. A second time I said no, this time because I was thinking of joining the TOR Franciscans and I felt too old to engage in higher education.

When I had entered the TOR at age 43 the question started to grow. As a part of my formation, my superior sent me to our University in Gaming, Austria for two semesters, taking classes in theology and philosophy. When I completed my studies, I felt more convinced that God was calling me to the priesthood. A lot of people asked me why I wasn’t a priest, and I could not give them a good answer. My devotion to the Blessed Sacrament became deeper and this gave me so much peace that it was painful to know that not everyone could see what I saw.

Having gotten to know the Lord in such an intimate way, I want to devote my whole life to helping other people get to know him in the same way; to bringing the gospel of our Saviour and redeemer; to help people to come to heaven as our final goal, and,
most importantly, to administer the sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist and the sacrament of Confession to members of the Church. Furthermore, I want more people outside the Church to be aware of this tremendous treasure that we have and let them know that they also can be members of our Church and receive these treasures in the sacraments that we as Catholics have.

**Brother Markus Ohlsson TOR**

I am a fully professed friar belonging to the Swedish delegation of the Third Order Regular of St Francis of Assisi. When I made my solemn vows this last summer, our Minister General, Nicholas Polichnowski, suggested that Brother Ludvig and I continue our formation and education at the Beda College. I had already studied philosophy for two years at the Pontifical University of Comillas in Madrid.

I was raised in a secularized Lutheran family. After a period of searching for the truth, I realized that Jesus is the Son of God, and became active in the Lutheran Church of Sweden. But my searching was not yet over. The congregation that I came to was quite charismatic and open to other traditions. This meant that I naturally came in contact with various conflicting teachings. I needed to find out what was right in all of this, and how true unity was to be found. After a couple of years in that context I came to the belief that the Roman Catholic Church is the Church that has remained true to Christ, its founder.

As I went through this period of searching I felt called to the Franciscan Order, and after having received the sacrament of confirmation, it wasn’t many years before I was finally able to join the Third Order Franciscans. I had previously had moments when, in the back of my mind, I thought about becoming a priest, and as a Franciscan friar I started thinking more seriously about this. The superiors and I discussed it, and two years ago the Order let me begin my theological studies in Madrid. At the university there I found myself in a mixed group of students, not exclusively consisting of people who were discerning a priestly vocation. I am grateful for the years in Madrid, but I would say that our Generalate made a good choice in sending me to the Beda College where there is a more solid formation programme that involves the whole person and an everyday life with a group that’s trying to discern the same thing.
Michael Smith

I’m originally from Burnley in Lancashire, the youngest of four sons, and was born in 1964. We were a practicing Catholic family and I attended Catholic primary and secondary schools in the town. I studied biochemistry at university in Sheffield followed by further studies in Edinburgh. In both locations I very much enjoyed getting involved in Catholic student chaplaincy activities.

After a few years of work in science publishing, and after being involved in my local parish, I entered the Discalced Carmelites near Oxford - attracted to a life of prayer and priestly ministry. However, I became unsure of my vocation during my subsequent studies in Dublin and chose to leave. The last 20 years have seen me working in various roles for the Royal Society of Chemistry in Cambridge. I’ve enjoyed both the technical and the inter-personal aspects of that work, but thoughts around priestly vocation have never completely gone away. Along with my background in science I have a life-long love of the natural world, as well as art - especially paintings. As a hobby, I very much enjoy sketching and painting in watercolour.

A few years ago I joined a Secular Carmelite Order group which meets in Norfolk once a month. This was in response to the need for a deeper and more committed prayer life. I subsequently attended an individually guided retreat for the first time in a long time and have now been seriously discerning a vocation to the priesthood for the last two years with the help of a spiritual director. As a result of the application process I was delighted to be accepted as a seminarian for the diocese of East Anglia and to be given this opportunity to come to the Beda to take further steps.
Maurice Whelan

My name is Maurice Whelan from Galway in the west of Ireland. I am a student for the Archdiocese of Tuam. I received my primary schooling at Sylaun National School and later attended boarding school at St Jarlath’s College in Tuam.

I had a traditional Catholic upbringing. Prayer was important in our household. My mother gathered us around the fire each night to say the rosary. When the family rosary ended when I was nine, I went to my room and said the rosary each night on my own for many years. During this time, I came very close to God and Our Lady. It was at this time that I first sensed that God was calling me to the vocation to ordained ministry at some time in the future.

I thought often about being a priest, but after sitting the leaving certificate exam, I decided to study to be a teacher in St Patrick’s Training College, Drumcondra in Dublin. I taught in Scoil Mhuíre, Moycullen, Co. Galway for 8 years and I was principal of the same school for 23 years. I enjoyed my time as teacher and principal.

I’m very thankful to God and my parents for the gift of faith. At all levels of my education, my faith was nurtured by good teachers and priests. I have a sister and four brothers. I am grateful to God for his precious gifts in the sacraments and I look forward to administering the sacraments as a priest. I found the induction period helped greatly with settling into life at the Beda. It is fantastic to be in Rome with so much to see all within a short bus or train journey from the College.
Ordinations

Ordinations to the Priesthood 2017-18

**Gerard D’Silva** – Archdiocese of Belgaum
- Ordination: 27 June 2018, Fatima Cathedral, Belgaum
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 28 June 2018, Fatima Cathedral, Belgaum

**Rick Fernandez** – Diocese of Brentwood
- Ordination: 30 June 2018, Parish Church of the Holy Family, Dagenham
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 1 July 2018, Parish Church of the Holy Family, Dagenham

**John Tabor** – Archdiocese of Westminster
- Ordination: 30 June 2018, Westminster Cathedral
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 1 July 2018, Holy Trinity Parish Church, Brook Green

**Philip Carr** – Archdiocese of Liverpool
- Ordination: 7 July 2018, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 8 July 2018, St Benet’s Parish Church, Netherton

**Anthony Kelly** – Archdiocese of Liverpool
- Ordination: 7 July 2018, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 8 July 2018, St Mary’s Parish Church, Wigan

**Carl Mugan** – Archdiocese of Liverpool
- Ordination: 7 July 2018, Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral
- Mass of Thanksgiving: 8 July 2018, St Jude’s Parish Church, Wigan

Fr Philip Carr, ordained in Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral on 7 July 2018. Photo: Liverpool Diocesan website
Ordinations to the Diaconate 2017-18

Parish Church of St Charles Borromeo, Liverpool, 29 December 2017
- Carl Mugan – Archdiocese of Liverpool

Porta Latina, Rome, 27 January 2018
- Richard Masanja – Institute of Charity

Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, 13 June 2018
- Michael Brookes – Diocese of East Anglia
- Benjamin Brooks – Archdiocese of Hobart
- Ronald Campbell – Diocese of Argyll & the Isles
- Graham Fullick – Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
- Patrick Harrigan – Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh
- Alan Hodgson – Diocese of East Anglia
- Damien Louden – Diocese of Salford
- William McQuillan – Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh
- Paul Spellman – Diocese of East Anglia
- Ignatius Tully – Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of St Benedict
- Thomas Varavunkal – Canons Regular of the Holy Cross

Deacons to be in the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura, 13 June 2018. Photo College website
The Beda Association

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To be appointed

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**Diocese of Portsmouth**  
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**Diocese of Salford**  
To be appointed
Annual General Meeting 2018 Report:

This year celebrates the 93rd Annual General Meeting which was held on Thursday, 17 May 2017 at The Oblate Retreat Centre at Wistaston Hall in Crewe. Sr Catherine the deputy director of the Centre welcomed those attending the AGM.

Opening prayers were led by Mgr Roderick Strange.

Apologies were given from Mgr Joseph Branson, Frs Tom Breslin, Martin Williams, Michael Boland, John Clarkson, Joseph Carter, Bryan Irving, Peter Ryan, Chris Hogan, Tom Hoole, Felix Au, Jonathan Rose. Peter Slocombe, Jaime Marques, Jhoen Buenaventura, Jim Lynch, John Leybourne.
Those who attended were: Mgr Rod Strange, Canon Philip Gillespie, Canon John Weatherill, Fr Michael McLaughlin, Fr Andrew Broster, Fr John Dale, Canon Peter Gooden, Fr David Craig, Fr Douglas Lamb, Fr Michael Thomas, Canon William Isaac, Canon Michael Buckley, Fr David Savoury, Fr John Peyton, Fr Kevin McLaughlin, Mgr Brian Dazeley, Fr James Mulligan, Fr Tom Montgomery.

### Dead remembered at 2018 AGM

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<tr>
<th>Reverend</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
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<tr>
<td>Revd Fr D. Harding Rees</td>
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<td>1988</td>
<td>14 May 2018</td>
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The Beda Association

Previous Minutes

The minutes of the 2017 AGM were accepted:

Proposed  Canon Philip Gillespie
Seconded   Fr Douglas Lamb
Signed     Mgr Roderick Strange
Date:      17 May 2018

Rector’s report

The Rector’s statement was given, much of which is covered in his report in *The Beda Review 2018*. In addition he presented the following on the College website on behalf of Mgr Peter Verity.

1. Beda Association members are encouraged to look at the website which is regularly updated: www.bedacollege.org. Any suggestions as to way this could be developed further would be most welcome. Please send any ideas to Mgr Peter Verity at p.verity@bedacollege.com.

2. Members are also invited to follow the Facebook page where there is sometimes additional information. To get there click on the ‘f’ inside the yellow circle at the top of the home page of the website.

3. Please express your appreciation by “liking” the posts which are made – and also encourage family members, friends and parishioners to follow us and to support the work of the College in whatever ways they find possible.

4. There are over 4000 photographs of College people and events since 2011 on the Flickr account. This can be accessed by clicking the yellow circle with the two back dots in it on the Home page of the website. Many members of the Association would have been students or staff during that time and might like to look back at the photographs from their time at the College.

5. Mgr Peter Verity would be very grateful for assistance in maintaining a Beda Association page on the website: if there is anyone who would like to be involved, please contact him on the email address in section 1.
The Beda Association

Financial Report

The Beda Association
Income and Expenditure
1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018

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<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>2017/18</th>
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<th>Expenditure</th>
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<th>Funds at Bank</th>
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Revd Canon John Weatherill, Hon Treasurer
5 May 2018
It was suggested by Fr Michael Thomas that a donation of £2500.00 be made to the College, this being seconded by Canon Peter Gooden. This was accepted by the meeting with a suggestion that the money be spent on goods for the use of the students.

**Secretary’s Report**

I offer my apology for the trouble with my email addresses since my computer was hacked last October. This has caused untold trouble and annoyance from not receiving emails, to them arriving weeks after they have been sent and some of them arriving with a mixture of English and Cyrillic font. However I am hoping that the problems this has caused will be completely rectified shortly.

**Data Protection Act 2016 came into force 25 May 2018**

Due to the changes in the Data Protection Act 2016 coming into effect on the 25 May 2018, the Association requires your permissions to hold your personal details as itemised on the membership petition and also to hold your email and postal addresses and use them to inform you of events, both for the College and the Association. At the moment I hold approximately 300 email addresses and 480 land addresses. Without your permission to hold and use them, I will need to delete them thus stopping contact from the Association. Obviously I don’t want this to happen.

Consequently, I have attached a copy of the new Petition for Membership which covers the details I am asking your permission to hold and use, especially the details allowing the Association to keep in contact with you. I urge you to respond to this ASAP. For those attending the AGM on the 17 May, I have the forms with me.

**Anniversaries of Priesthood 2018**

**1993 – 25th Anniversary**

Revd Fr Neville Atkinson, Leeds  
Revd Fr John Cross, Birmingham  
Revd Fr Julian Shurgold, Southwark

**1978 – 40th Anniversary**

Revd Fr Peter Blundell, Birmingham,  
Revd Fr Barrie Cummins, Leeds  
Revd Fr Peter Slocombe, Clifton

**1968 – 50th Anniversary**

Revd Fr Donald Carver, Denver,  
Revd Fr Neville Faulkner, Bunbery, Aus.  
Revd Fr Julian Friend, Oratorian  
Revd Fr Joseph Cunningham, Liverpool  
Revd Fr Carlos Franco, British Honduras  
Revd Fr Donald Guertin, Springfield
Revd Fr John Guischard, Burlington  
Revd Fr Charles, Kelly, Los Angeles  
Revd Fr Samuel Mayhall, Burlington  
Revd Fr Geoffrey Parfitt, Leeds  
Revd Fr John Lambert, Burlington  
Revd Fr Peter Morris, Montreal  
Revd Fr Terence Perkins, Plymouth  

Ad multos Annos to all.

**New and Renewed Membership**

Mgr Rod Strange – Life membership  
Revd Fr Peter Crowther – Life membership  
Revd Fr Neil Byrne – renewed Annual membership  
Revd Fr Jonathan Rose – renewed Annual membership  
Revd Fr John Hyland – new Annual membership  
Cash donation from Revd Fr Victor Walter of Diocese of Wrexham

The students attending the College at the present time are encouraged to fill in the Petition to become Associate members of the Association. Copies of the Petition are held at the College.

A request was made to think of holding a Mass for Vocations to the Priesthood around the feast of St Bede, with a mention during the year in the Prayers of the Faithful for other events – Lectorate, Acolyte and Diaconate.

In my parish, we pray the Rosary every Tuesday and Thursday morning for vocations to the priesthood with a mention of the Pontificio Collegio Beda and every Thursday the morning Mass is offered up for Vocations to the Priesthood.

**Beda College Cuff Links**

On sale at this year’s AGM were the College cufflinks. The design of the cufflink is off the Cross from the door of the Chapel in the centre and Pontificio Collegio Beda engraved around the edge.

The cost is £75.00 sterling; $100 dollars US; $130 dollars Canadian and €90, including insurance and postage.

If anyone would care to purchase a set, please send a cheque in sterling made payable to “Pontificio Beda College” to me at the address above.
## Election of Officers

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Role</th>
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<td>President</td>
<td>Revd Mgr Roderick Strange</td>
<td>Revd Mgr Brian Dazeley</td>
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<td>Revd Fr James Mulligan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Revd Fr Michael McLaughlin</td>
<td>Revd Fr Douglas Lamb</td>
<td>Unanimously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>Revd Canon Michael Buckley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Revd Canon John Weatherill</td>
<td>Revd Fr Andrew Broster</td>
<td>Unanimously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proposed</td>
<td>Revd Fr Michael Thomas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-Presider</td>
<td>Revd Fr Michael Thomas</td>
<td>Revd Mgr Roderick Strange</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Revd Canon Philip Gillespie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seconded</td>
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*Attendees at the Beda Association AGM, 17 May 2017*
Venue for next year

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 8th May 2019 at 10.am in the Pontificio Collegio Beda, Roma. Accommodation can be made available at the College from the Monday until the Friday morning if required. If you require accommodation please contact the college.

Closing Prayer was led by Mgr Roderick Strange.

We celebrated Mass with Canon Philip Gillespie being the main celebrant as we celebrated the votive Mass of St Bede remembering those of our membership who have died in the last year. We also remembered those who are ill and need our prayers: remembering Frs Robin Sutton, Tony Magnall and Vincent Naylor and all those we don’t know who are ill.

This was followed by a reception and dinner.
Obituaries

**Revd Fr D. Harding Rees**, Diocese of Menevia  
**Ordained:** 1996 **Died:** 26 June 2017

Private funeral at the request of Fr Harding Rees.

**Revd Fr Ronald McGivern**, Archdiocese of Liverpool  
**Date of Birth:** 30 March 1934 **Ordained:** 27 March 1999 **Died:** 18 September 2017

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr Ron McGivern, who died on Monday, 18th September 2017. He was 83 years of age and was in the 19th year of his priesthood.

Ronald McGivern was born at Liverpool on 30 March 1934, the son of Joseph and Lilian McGivern. He was educated at St John’s School, Kirkdale, St Elizabeth’s Central School, Liverpool, and at the Printing Department of Liverpool Art College. He spent more than forty years in the printing industry, firstly as an apprentice printer at J. Kilburn, Liverpool (1949-1954) and then as a printer at H. Evans & Son (1954-1958), Elliot & Yeoman (1958-1959) and J. & C. Moores Ltd. (1959-1994).

He married Maureen Doyle at St John’s, Kirkdale, on 2 April 1956 and together they had six children. In the early 1960s Ron and his family moved to Hindley and he became quite active in St Benedict’s parish. His involvement in various parish activities eventually led to him applying to serve as a permanent deacon. He was ordained deacon by Archbishop Derek Worlock at the Metropolitan Cathedral on 4 July 1982. Ron served in three parishes as a deacon: St Benedict’s, Hindley (1982-1984), St William’s, Ince (1984-1991) and St Mary’s, Wigan (1991-1995).

Ron retired from the printing industry in 1994, planning to spend more time with Maureen. However, his wife died just weeks later in December 1994 and he then had to reassess how he would spend his remaining years. After careful consideration, and after seeking advice from his family and others, he offered himself for service as a priest.
Archbishop Worlock accepted his application and he was sent to the Beda College, Rome, for his seminary training. He was ordained priest by Archbishop Patrick Kelly at St Mary’s, Wigan, on 27th March 1999. Later that year he was appointed assistant priest in the parishes of Holy Trinity and St Francis of Assisi, Garston. Two years later he returned to St William’s, Ince, as parish priest and in 2004 took on the additional responsibility of St Patrick’s, Wigan. He ministered in these two parishes until March this year, when the increasing effects of motor neurone disease forced his retirement.

**Revd Fr John Elliot,**
Archdiocese of Westminster

**Ordained:** 23 July 1988  
**Died:** 30 September 2017

The Funeral Mass took place at St Mary’s Church in Bath on Wednesday, 18 October. Bishop Nicholas Hudson presided and Fr James High preached.

**Revd Fr Sean O’Toole, Archdiocese of Westminster**

**Date of Birth:** 15 December 1962  
**Ordained:** 5 September 1998  
**Died:** 1 October 2017

Born on 15 December 1962 in London, Sean was ordained to the Priesthood by Cardinal George Basil Hume on 5 September 1998. Fr Sean stepped back from the exercise of priestly ministry some years ago. He bravely endured failing health and continued to be supported by family and friends. He died peacefully on Sunday 1 October 2017.

At Fr Sean’s request, his funeral was a private family funeral.

**Revd Fr Bernard Ratlidge, Diocese of Leeds**

**Born:** 10 May 1936  
**Ordained:** 6 April 1974  
**Died:** 29 January 2018

Fr Bernard was born on 10th May 1936 and as a young man tried his vocation with the Benedictines. He was later accepted as a seminarian for the Leeds diocese by Bishop Wheeler and went to the Beda College in Rome to study for the priesthood. He was ordained at St Anne’s, Keighley on 6th April 1974 and it was there that he started his priestly ministry in the diocese.

Fr Ratlidge left Keighley in 1978 to become assistant priest at St Francis of Assisi parish in Morley. Ten years later Bishop Konstant appointed him as Parish Priest of St Peter’s, Belle Isle in South Leeds. In 1994 he became Parish Priest of St Ignatius, Ossett. Fr Ratlidge retired in 2005 when he chose to remain living in Ossett and it was here that he died after a period of declining health. He was visited at home by Bishop Stock shortly before he died.
Fr Ratlidge was a devoted priest and a deeply spiritual man, with a great devotion to Our Lady, who always retained something of the Benedictine monk about him. He was kind and compassionate and known to possess a lively sense of fun and as a warm and generous host.

**Revd Fr John Pearson, Diocese of Arundel & Brighton**

*Date of Birth: 9 February 1944  Date of Ordination: 5 July 1987  Death of Death: 5 March 2018*

Fr John’s body was received into the church of St Erconwald, Walton-on-Thames on Thursday 15 March: his requiem Mass being celebrated by Bishop Richard Moth on Friday 16 March. Fr John’s final wish was for a parish funeral followed by cremation with his ashes being taken to Uganda for burial.

**Mgr Albert Norrell, Archdiocese of Philadelphia**

*Date of Birth: 22 June 1923  Ordained: 29 May 1988  Died: 25 March 2009*


Mgr Norrell was born on 22 June 1923, in Richmond, Virginia. He was the son of the late Moses Alphonso Norrell and the late Adelaide L. Philips. Mgr Norrell attended both elementary and secondary school in Richmond, Virginia. Monsignor Norrell received a BA in history at Virginia Union University and a MA in elementary education at Temple University. He spent over 25 years working with the School District of Philadelphia, retiring as a principal in 1983. He entered the Permanent Diaconate Formation Program for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1979 and was ordained a Permanent Deacon by His Eminence John Cardinal Krol on 7 November 1982, at the Cathedral Basilica of SS Peter and Paul. In 1984, he began studies for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia at the Pontificio Collegio Beda in Rome.

Mgr Norrell was ordained in Rome on 29 May 1988 by His Holiness Pope John Paul II and named an Honorary Prelate to His Holiness on 29 May 1991. He served as Parochial Vicar at St Ignatius of Loyola Parish, Philadelphia. In August 1989, Mgr Norrell was appointed Pastor, St Carthage Parish, Philadelphia, and named Pastor Emeritus there in 1998. He also served as a spiritual director for the Legion of Mary.
Eulogy

Mgr Norrell was among Philadelphia’s first class of African-American permanent deacons ordained in 1982, and he was Philadelphia’s first African-American priest to rise to the rank of monsignor. He had the distinct honour of being Philadelphia’s only priest ordained by the late Pope John Paul II.

Born Protestant in Richmond Va., the son of the late Moses and Adelaide (Philips) Norrell, he first encountered Catholicism at age 14 while passing the open door of a Catholic church where a novena to St Anthony of Padua was in progress. Intrigued, he entered and returned the following week for the liturgy. With his parents’ consent, he studied to become Catholic.

After service under General George Patton in World War II he pursued further education in Virginia and at Temple University, then began a career in the Philadelphia public schools, rising to the position of elementary school principal. As a layman and member of St Carthage Parish, he was also involved in archdiocesan affairs through the board of the Cardinal’s Commission on Human Relations and the International Eucharistic Congress of 1976.

His great devotion to the Blessed Virgin was exemplified through his long association and leadership of the Legion of Mary in Philadelphia as president and spiritual director. His personal friendship with Legion founder, Frank Duff, led to his first meeting with Pope John Paul II in 1979. Through Duff, an Irishman, he received an audience with the Pope at Castel Gandolfo. “Are you Irish?” asked the Pope, knowing the Duff connection.

“No. I’m African-American,” the surprised Norrell replied.

In a 2005 interview with The Catholic Standard & Times, he said of John Paul II, “He lets you know when he holds your hand you are the centre of his attention, he genuinely cares for you. I never met anyone in my life who impressed me as much as the Holy Father.” The same year he met the Holy Father he entered the permanent diaconate program and was ordained by Cardinal John Krol in 1982.

In 1984, after his retirement from the Philadelphia school system, he began studies for the priesthood at the Pontifical Beda College, and was among a group of men ordained by the Pope on 29 May 1988. After an initial assignment as parochial vicar at St Ignatius of Loyola Parish, Philadelphia, in 1989 he was named pastor of his home parish, St Carthage. He was named monsignor in 1991. After his 1998 retirement he lived at Villa St Joseph, Darby.

“He was a wonderful, wise man,” said Fr Stephen Thorne, who spent his deacon year at St Carthage under Mgr Norwell’s tutelage. “He was a great priest, a great leader and...
a great homilist who never used notes. He was a priest long before he was ordained. He enjoyed his retirement and found community at Villa St Joseph.”

Geraldine Fuller, a long-time member of St Carthage and its successor parish, St Cyprian, remembers when Mgr Norrell was a lector and usher. It was he who introduced her to the Legion of Mary, of which she is now president of the Mater Dolorosa Curia. “His love of the Blessed Mother made you want to be part of it,” she said. “He was the kindest person I ever knew, always freehanded. He was everything I thought a priest should be.”

In his 2005 interview, Mgr Norrell gave what could be his own valediction -“When you are as old as I am and you see yourself on the way, you can start rejoicing that you are going to the Lord. That’s what you strove for, worked for. You’ll be there forever.”

Rt Rev. Dom Timothy Wright, OSB
Spiritual Director: 2006-2013  Died: 13 May 2018

The sad news reached us of the death of Abbot Timothy Wright OSB, aged 76. Abbot Timothy was full time Spiritual Director at the Beda for seven years up to 2013. Although his health had not been good recently, his death was not expected. Abbot Timothy is remembered with great affection by the staff who worked with him here and by the many students whom he guided and supported during their time in the College. May he rest in peace.

Personal Mémoire of Abbot Timothy Wright OSB - Fr John Breen

Timothy came to the Beda in the summer of 2006. He had finished his term as Abbot of Ampleforth in 2005 - if he was upset at not being re-elected, he did not let the disappointment disable him for too long - and had already been in Rome for a year working, on an experimental basis, for the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue. During this year he lived as part of the monastic community at San Paolo. He connected immediately with the Beda as an external confessor. He knew Fr Jim Brand and won the ready appreciation of Mgr Roderick Strange, the then Rector. He was esteemed by the staff and students, and enthusiastically accepted the Rector’s invitation to join the formation team as a Spiritual Director in September 2006, alongside Fr Jim.

I had heard of Timothy but had not met him until then. I warmed to him and helped him move his possessions from the San Paolo to the College. He fitted in straight away and managed to combine the life of a monk with the demands of a seminary. The gentle click of the gate at 04.50, as Timothy went out to join the monks for matins at San Paolo, was never loud enough to wake anyone, but loud enough to hear, if you were already partially awake and lived near the cancello.
During his time at the Beda, he was a robust presence in the House, with a cheery, “good-to-see-you” greeting, and a determined lunchtime check-up on his directees, ensuring that he met with those under his guidance in spiritual direction. He espoused causes and was a refugium for anyone who was struggling, occasionally becoming their champion. He was a staunch supporter of the Sant’ Egidio Community and their work. He was also a vociferous champion of the Beda and a keen proponent of Benedictine students living in College.

I recall him speaking once of his misery at going, as a boy of nine, to boarding school, and how he tried - unsuccessfully - to run away, ducking back onto the same train that had brought him to York station. I found this a wonderful insight into his inner world and a compassionate lens through which to view any of his more urgent and unrelenting enthusiasms.

A good friend of his, Julie Wild, introduced him to the concept of juicing fruit and vegetables, and she gave him a juicing machine to practise the art at the Beda. This enthusiasm lasted for the years up until he left; and it brought him almost every evening, after supper, to the small staff kitchen where the rest of us enjoyed his relaxing company, and the juice of his garnered apples and carrots. Maybe this was Timothy the “monk”, being drawn into a new manifestation of monasticism by friends and companions. The only other time you would find him in our upstairs common room was to watch international rugby on television, pulling an armchair closer to the monitor and churning up the carpet under his feet as he mimed every movement, his youthful sporting accomplishments, both as student and housemaster, coming to the fore.

He occasionally spoke slightly disparagingly of his academic acumen, but while he was here he started and finished a doctorate. He accomplished this at a canter, focused as it was on the old love of his life, Benedictine monasticism, and the newer love, Islam.

He was sometimes ingenuous, acquiring an impressive array of smart technology (a “gift” he would say), and then asking some “techie” in the College to help him to use it. Holes the size of Australia would pepper his pullovers, but he would accept no replacements. The story of him seriously under-estimating his size, when buying mutande at the local Chinese shop, humorously catches the quality of his naivety.

The first time that a listener experiences a 12-point Timothy homily, s/he may look up in disbelief, usually around point 5, hoping to catch the eye of a companion, wondering if this was really happening. At breakfast one feast day, he accepted the banter from his colleagues/friends that there were at least three lengthy homilies in his morning sermon, all of them good! We knew he was enjoying the craic, but that he did not have the slightest intention of adjusting his ways.

I found that as a colleague I had a great affection for him, including his foibles - even when they were testing or slightly self-focused. This was because we were, in fact, friends.
Long before he left the Beda (in 2013) I recognized how much I treasured his energy and positivity, and appreciated him as a man of anvil-will, capable of setting a course and staying with it, most evidently in his life’s project as a monk.

I saw him last on the evening of Saturday 7 April 2018 at Ealing Abbey when two of us called on him unannounced. He was full of chat and promise. He had been at Ealing since the autumn of 2016, when he was diagnosed with cancer of the colon. An operation and chemotherapy had only partially interfered with his prodigious travelling - to Iran to receive his book prize from President Rouhani, and regular trips to the Manquehue community in Chile: he was back with them again for the Holy Week Triduum this year. When we saw him he was awaiting further cancer-related surgery. I little thought that a pulmonary embolism - like a thief in the night, as the Prior later remarked at Timothy’s funeral - would take him within only a few weeks. We need not be sad about this: holding death in mind is part of St Benedict’s Rule, and Timothy always reckoned it was a time for rejoicing.

Timothy could occasionally become quite emotional, especially if someone was being unjustly treated, but normally he shied away from expressing his feelings. On his last “zero” birthday he vanished from the House, finding the prospect of being the recipient of affection rather overwhelming. It was, I think, part of his vulnerability. He may, even now, be feeling shy about the great outpouring of love for him that accompanied his dying.

At his funeral on Wednesday 30 May 2018 his family and friends, in the fine liturgy of the Benedictine community at Ampleforth, bade him farewell with solemnity and warmth, singing the Suscipe, as is their custom. If he was ever confounded by life, his hope was not at all unfounded.
Building A Bridge: How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community can enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity

This little book, for which the author obtained an imprimi potest from his superiors, caused a stir when it was first published, a stir in some quarters favourable and in some quarters less so. However, it deserves, in my view, to be widely read, both by the LGBT community and by Catholics…and perhaps particularly by LGBT Catholics. It sets out to present a too little appreciated aspect of the Catholic Church’s teaching with regard to same-sex issues, namely that respect, compassion and sensitivity are the values which must characterise mutual engagement between Catholics and LGBT people.

To some extent this aspect of the Church’s magisterium on these sensitive issues remains sadly under-emphasised. While the clarity and balance of the Church’s teaching – for example, in documents from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in 1975 and 1986, to name just two of the better known¹ – can hardly be doubted, the presentation of that teaching in its integrity is sometimes a different matter. Martin seeks to draw both the Church and LGBT people together – to build a bridge between them – and so begin to discover just what addressing each other with respect, compassion and sensitivity might actually mean. On every page, Martin offers prayerful, thoughtful insights into this question. His book is long overdue. It has been described as “brave”, “prophetic” and “inspiring” by Cardinal Joseph Tobin, a view which is surely entirely merited. Perhaps it will also help LGBT Catholics to feel less unwelcome in the Church – and the Church to feel less challenged by their presence. If so, it will have achieved no small feat.

Rev. Patrick Harrigan

¹ The two documents in question from the CDF are its 1975 Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics (Persona Humana) and its 1976 Letter to Bishops on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons (Homosexualitatis problema). In themselves they are a clear and balanced statement of the Church’s teaching; whether they have always been appreciated and presented as such is perhaps another question. Martin’s book undertakes to address that question.
Confession: The Healing of the Soul
Peter Tyler, London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2017

In addition to being Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spirituality at St Mary’s University, Twickenham, Peter Tyler is a practising psychotherapist. The “confession” of the book’s title designates the deep human desire to give voice to what is inside us as part of a healing process: “We realize that things have to change in our lives, and often the first step in that change is the art of confession” (p. 3). Tyler contrasts the decline in the use of the sacrament of penance with the ever-increasing popularity of various secular “talking cures”. His thesis is that the process of confession (sacred or secular) can both provide insight about our wounded selves and open us to the transcendent.

The first chapter sketches how confession came to express essential Christian identity, from biblical calls for repentance, through the practices of manifestation of conscience and the discernment of spirits among the desert fathers and mothers, as relayed by Cassian and others, and culminating in Augustine’s classic literary expression of confession as the basic act by which people come to praise God and to attain greater self-understanding in the light that God supplies. Chapter two first offers a very fine history of the sacrament of penance, showing how its two components (forgiveness and spiritual direction) were brought together in 1215 at Lateran Council IV. The remainder of the chapter explores the medieval myth of Tristan, the wounded one in search of healing, as a way of coming to appreciate the need for the transcendent in human development in a society where sacred and secular have become separated from one another.

Tyler’s other chapters consider in turn Ludwig Wittgenstein’s philosophical confessions (revealing an essential aspect of him which his early literary executors kept dark); the spiritual diary of Breton priest and theologian Henri Le Saux, aka Swami Abhishiktananda (1910-73), which was his attempt to articulate his difficult bridging vocation between Christian and Hindu life and understanding; and The Living Flame of Love, the confession of John of the Cross that, in poetry, “offers a reconciliation between the psychological and transcendent dimensions of confession” (p.7). These case studies demonstrate three stages of the multiple processes by which confession can bring about increasing openness to the transcendent and the healing of the soul.

The title could be a turn-off for those who no longer appreciate the Cinderella sacrament (p.1), but they and those whose primary interest is in sacramental penance would find their appreciation of it enriched by the case that Tyler makes here with the aid of a rich array of theological, literary and psychological insights. Reasons of space precluded his consideration of any women exemplars of the confession genre, but he hopes to remedy this in a subsequent volume. Meanwhile, priests, spiritual directors, counsellors and seminarians would benefit from reading this one.

Sr Patricia M. McDonald, SHCJ
Formation Staff

- Canon Philip Gillespie (Liverpool), Rector
- Fr John Breen (Hexham and Newcastle) Human Formation and Pastoral Director
- Sr Patricia McDonald SHJC, Academic Programme Director
- Mgr Peter Verity (Lancaster), Spiritual Director
- Fr John Carlyle (Birmingham), Spiritual Director

First Year

1. Bond, Matthew (Wrexham)
2. Butler, Christopher (Leeds)
3. Chow, Alex (Melbourne)
4. Conmee, Kevin (Portsmouth)
5. Dunne, Colin (Meath)
6. Grant, Anthony (Brentwood)
7. Locke, Damien (Armidale)
8. Ludvigsen, Ludvig (TOR)
9. Moore, Joe (Church of England)
10. Ohlsson, Markus (TOR)
11. Smith, Michael (East Anglia)

Second Year

1. Allred, Norman (Meath)
2. Lowe, Adrian (Brentwood)

Second Year External

1. Torrisi, Lodovico (OSB-San Paolo)
Pontifical Beda College Students

**Third Year**
1. Brookes, Michael (*East Anglia*)
2. Brooks, Benjamin (*Hobart*)
3. Campbell, Ronald (*Argyll & the Isles*)
4. Fullick, Graham (*Maitland & Newcastle*)
5. Harrigan, Patrick (*Edinburgh*)
6. Hodgson, Alan (*East Anglia*)
7. Louden, Damien (*Salford*)
8. McQuillan, William (*Edinburgh*)
9. Munyugu, Anicet (*Kigoma*)
10. Pillai, William (*Melaka-Johor*)
11. Spellman, Paul (*East Anglia*)
12. Varavunkal, Thomas (*ORC*)

**Third Year External**
1. Aloys, Modestus (*IC*)
2. Tully, Ignatius (*OSB Cam.*)

**Fourth Year**
1. Carr, Philip (*Liverpool*)
2. D'Silva, Gerard (*Belgaum*)
3. Gormley, Brendan (*Brisbane*)
4. Kelly, Anthony (*Liverpool*)
5. Lovell, John (*Maitland-Newcastle*)
6. Mariasoosai, Alex (*Melaka-Johor*)
7. Mugan, Carl (*Liverpool*)
8. Muling, Brian (*Melbourne*)
9. Sia, Paul (*Melaka-Johor*)
10. Sibisi, Simon (*Durban*)
11. Smith, Paul (*Nottingham*)
12. Tabor, John (*Westminster*)

**Fourth Year External**
1. Masanja, Richard (*IC*)
Based in Rome, the Pontifical Beda College was established in 1852 as a seminary for the formation of diocesan priests. The College welcomes English speaking men over 30 and has students from 12 countries. It is under the guidance of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.