

CR Newsletter – January 2014

Community

Fr Nicolas writes:



Our Christmas followed its usual course - I wonder how many of you keep the feast days after Christmas – St Stephen, St John, Holy Innocents. It's a wonderful set of saints and the plainsong music is beautiful. It does, however, mean a lot of work for the sacristans (Jacob and me): in the 12 days of Christmas we had 9 Solemn masses and 11 Solemn evensongs! We also had a 3-day retreat after Christmas before we plunged into our Chapter (Community) meetings.

We talk about lots of different things in Chapter. Two of particular interest to our friends would be:

Buildings. We spent a lot of time looking at plans for our new monastery, trying to make sure we get everything right. This is much helped by computer generated images of what the inside will look like. When we move out of this building we are planning to bring the College library and the Mirfield Centre up here to give them more space and free up space at the College for all the teaching activities down there.

Grounds We have lovely grounds and they are much appreciated by our visitors. Indeed many of our retreatants seem to get more spiritual help from the grounds than from anything we tell them! However, the grounds need a lot of maintenance and have got a bit overgrown recently. We are trying to put that right. With only a small number of Brethren and many of us not very fit that is not easy so we'd like to invite you to help. If you remember enjoying the grounds when you stayed here, or if you just like working in gardens, would you like to come and stay for a few days and work with us? Just ask, please and you will be welcomed.

Artist in Residence



The second in our series of five resident artists, Anna Sikorska, stayed with us in December, presiding over a magnificently dilapidated studio in the cellar. We found art popping up all over the place, a string of plainsong alleluias on the corridor wall, coloured bars of soap in church, and big splashes of colour on the pillars, a revolving grass circle ("ordinary time") in the squash court, and a bouncy castle on the end of the church. As Anna caught her train home on Christmas Eve, she left behind for us an intriguing and evocative crib. What strikes you first as a washing-

basket is carefully made with oak and gilded within. We are grateful to the Varga foundation for funding this series of resident artists. It is a transforming experience to have art



simply appearing all around you - you begin to see the ordinary everyday things as if they were all works of art as well. Anna is very gifted, and will go far. What was particularly good was that she took part in all our worship, including our daily 6.45 Mattins, so it felt like a real dialogue between art and life.

The Yorkshire Ministry Course - briefly



It may seem strange to refer to CR's site as a campus, but it is – and a very distinctive one, offering a 'home' to an exciting diversity of theological learning, training and spiritual formation, providing the Church, regionally and nationally, with a wealth of clergy and lay ministers. One of the colours in this vivid spectrum is the Yorkshire Ministry Course, whose relationship with the site and the College goes back many years and which, since 2007 has been permanently based here. Drawing on nearly 40 years of experience as the Northern Ordination Course, the main work of the YMC is to provide non-residential ordination training for men and women, helping them to establish lifelong disciplines of prayer, biblical study and critical theological reflection.

In addition, as a member of the Yorkshire Regional Training Partnership, YMC works collaboratively with partner bodies to help provide post-ordination training and post-graduate courses for curates across the region.

We currently have 64 ordinands in training with us, either for two or three years. YMC is able to offer a variety of academic pathways, enabling people to study at Foundation Degree, BA or MA levels. Weeknight teaching takes place at Mirfield and York St. John University. (Mirfield is a long way to come if you live in Scarborough!) Those ordinands who are studying through Wakefield, Bradford and Sheffield Schools of Ministry and the St. Barnabas Theological Centre attend their respective teaching centres instead. At any one time we also have a few ordinands on our full-time contextual pathway. However, all YMC ordinands, on whatever pathway, come together at two residential weekends at Mirfield each term, and sometimes additional study days. They also have an annual retreat and a week-long Easter School. As may be imagined, our student body is wonderfully diverse, encompassing all church traditions and theological outlooks. To complete this mix there are seven members of staff, two of whom are seconded part-time by the College.

For all its dispersed nature, the YMC community is strong and coherent. At the beginning of training, every student is assigned to a small prayer/discussion group and will stay in this group throughout their training. They are also assigned a personal tutor who will provide close accompaniment and support throughout their time on YMC. We are blessed to have around 20 honorary personal tutors around the region who offer their invaluable time in this way and make up our pastoral network.

Our provisionality makes us all the more mindful of the bonds that hold us together. In our common worship; in responding to God's call; in mutual respect for our differences and our commitment to learning to grow together into Christ, we become the YMC community. And perhaps our little

'community', with its own particular understanding and experience of dynamic stability, is all the more mindful of, and thankful for, the stability of the Community whose life and prayer sustains all that happens on this site.

Barbara Clarke
YMC tutor

College of the Resurrection

From the College:

Most of the students are away at the moment but a handful are here, getting on with their studies in the quiet of vacation time. One of them, Ben Kerridge, the Senior Student looks forward to the coming term:

As I work my way through my third and final year at the College of the Resurrection, I'm often struck by the bitter-sweet realisation that I'm doing something for the last time. My first encounter with this reality came right at the beginning of the year, as I officiated at Mattins in the first week. It dawned on me that with thirty students and fewer than thirty weeks, I would never lead Mattins again at college. Sometimes there is a certain amount of release involved in this; I'm very glad I'll never have to put together another seating plan for a college formal dinner – the next big do will be the leavers' dinner and by that time I will have handed over the mantle of senior student to my successor, with some relief, I might add. The highly political task of trying to make sure everybody leaves dinner contented by the company of their companions will belong to somebody else, and no doubt they'll do a much better job. Nevertheless, there are many things that I shall miss, especially things that happen this term.



As a child the 'spring term', as it was rather optimistically called, always seemed the worst of the three. The dark nights of the autumn term were lifted by the exciting build up to Christmas and the summer term held the promise of long summer nights and weekends at the beach. The spring term, on the other hand, seemed overly long, dank and miserable. Moving from Cornwall to Yorkshire, the weather, if anything, has got worse, but a childish attachment to Christmas has been superseded by an involvement with the narratives of the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. One of the principal reasons for training at Mirfield is that we go through the journey of Holy Week and Easter together as a community every year. As one ex-student put it to me, the experience of a Mirfield Holy Week is money in the bank for the rest of your ministry. If nothing else, looking proudly on the glistening Easter candle stand I polished on Holy Saturday has managed to cheer me up right through Michaelmas term.

Before we get to Holy Week, there's quite a lot of road to travel, and despite the more chastened atmosphere of college over Lent, some more joy to be had. One of the highlights of the year is the college pilgrimage to Walsingham, this year taking place in the pre-Holy-Week break. For the second year in a row a group of us will be walking to Walsingham from Ely, relying on the hospitality of local parishes along the way. We will be raising money for Tariro, a charity that sponsors children through education in Zimbabwe, but over and above the fundraising, we hope to enter fully into the ancient

Christian practice of pilgrimage and the many blessings that come with it. Last year, there was something important and moving about being able to ask the people we met if they had any prayer requests to take to the shrine, and to arrive at the shrine carrying their prayers with us.

With all this to look forward to, I'm fully aware that when the cellarers open the fizz on Easter morning after the vigil has finished, I'll be full of Easter joy and excitement for my impending ordination. God willing, next year I'll be able to sing the exultet myself! But this will be mixed with sadness that this wonderful period of my life, spent in the company of the Community and my fellow students, will be coming to an end.