



The Black Friars

The Newsletter of the English Dominican Province

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Lambeth Palace launches friar's book for Lent



The Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book for 2009 was penned by Fr Timothy Radcliffe (back row, far right), the former Master of the Dominican Order. The Most Revd Rowan Williams welcomed the author, his brethren, family, and friends and other distinguished guests to a launch for *Why Go to Church?* at his London residence, Lambeth Palace. The Archbishop expressed his appreciation for Fr Timothy as one of today's 'most lively and creative preachers'. The evening concluded with Compline, led by a Dominican choir. *Why Go to Church?*, an exploration of the meaning of the Mass, is available from Continuum Books, and a French translation has now also been published by Le Cerf.

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Pope's theologian unlocks Aquinas on freedom



The 2009 Aquinas Lecture was delivered at Blackfriars, Oxford, by the Theologian to the Papal Household, Fr Wojciech Giertych OP. His theme was human freedom in the thought of the famous Dominican theologian, St Thomas Aquinas. Fr Wojciech was born in London in 1951, and is a member of the Order's Polish Province. The position of Theologian to the Papal Household, formerly known as the Master of the Sacred Palace, has always been held by a Dominican friar, and his role is to advise the Pope on theological matters.

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Commissions flooding in for young friar composer



Fr Bruno and the New Edinburgh Orchestra

The cultural and artistic links of St Albert's, Edinburgh, are proving a boon to Dominican composer, Fr Bruno Clifton. The University departed from tradition by asking for a new work for their 2008 Carol Service. Fr Bruno's setting for solo singers and woodwind of G.K. Chesterton's *A Little Litany* was performed in the McEwan Hall. More recently Bruno's *In the jars, dark liquid* received its first performance from the New Edinburgh Orchestra on 14 March. This work for chamber orchestra was inspired by a text from the American novelist, Cormac McCarthy, and explores his use of language. Following the premiere, Fr Bruno was interviewed for radio by DJ Matt Werner. The interview can be found online at mattswriting.com/tag/bruno-clifton/.

Aberdeen's Catholic chaplaincy receives royal visitor

HRH The Prince of Wales—or the Duke of Rothesay, as he is known in Scotland—made an informal visit to Old Aberdeen on 25 April, two days before his visit to Pope Benedict in Rome. After touring the University of Aberdeen's Catholic cemetery, Prince Charles was shown around King's College Chapel, which boasts the best preserved interior of any medieval church in Scotland. As he arrived, the Dominican superior of Glasgow, Fr Robert Pollock, was just concluding the baptism of his great-nephew.

The Prince afterwards crossed the High Street where he met the University's Catholic chaplain, Fr James Claffey OP, at the chaplaincy. Fr James is not only the first Dominican friar to minister in Aberdeen since the Reformation; he also has the distinction of being the first priest to celebrate Mass regularly in King's College Chapel since the sixteenth century, with his student congregation increasing year by year.

'Celebrating Mass in King's has dramatically altered the life of the chaplaincy,' says Fr James. 'We are in the heart of the University, making a unique Dominican contribution. It is awesome to preach in an ancient pulpit where friars of the medieval Scottish Province also stood.'



News in brief ...

- Fr Bede Bailey has taken up residence at the Dominican Sisters' St Mary's Nursing Home at Stone in Staffordshire.
- Fr Thomas Crean has been appointed Catholic chaplain to the Leicester Royal Infirmary. His predecessor, Fr Euan Marley, is moving from Holy Cross, Leicester, to join the Dominican community at St Columba's, in his native Glasgow.
- A Forum for Young Priests of the Province met for the first time at Holy Cross, Leicester, on 6 May. The eleven most recently ordained Dominican priests in England and Scotland were guided in their deliberations by Fr Tom Jordan OP, a former Irish provincial and current editor of the journal *Spirituality*. The Forum was organised by the Province's Promoter of Continuing Formation, Fr John O'Connor.

Fundraising passes half-million mark

Fundraising for Blackfriars, Oxford's Priory Renewal Fund has now passed £540,000, with around £220,000 still to be raised. Among the most recent fundraising events were a 'Carnevale Supper' before Lent, a 'Blackfriars's Got Talent' competition, and participation in Oxfordshire's 'Artweeks', with an exhibition in the priory church and sale of works by the Catholic artists, Jane Dowling, Helen Elwes, Louise Sturgis and David Greenham. The replacement of the priory's heating, lighting and electrics will be completed in a third phase of works this summer, with the Dominican students moving out of the priory into accommodation nearby. If you would like to contribute to the Priory Renewal Fund, please send a cheque payable to 'Blackfriars Priory' to the Prior, Blackfriars, 64 St Giles', Oxford OX1 3LY, or donate online at english.op.org/oxford/About_Blackfriars.html.

Interview with Morne Jaloux's parish priest, Fr Irenaeus Vincent

What's the island of Grenada like?

It's an island of great beauty, of mountainous rainforest, dry lowlands, springs, waterfalls and crater lakes. Of course there are also our beaches and bays with white sand and some beaches with black organic sand too. And Grenada is known as the Isle of Spice. There are more spices per square mile than any other place on the planet: cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, cocoa, nutmeg and mace grow in abundance. The hurricane affected this industry, but things are picking up smoothly again.

How is Grenada recovering from Hurricane Ivan?

Grenada has really come back wonderfully, and I am not being biased. When I returned to Grenada in October 2007, just over a month after Hurricane Ivan struck, I commented how terrible the place was looking and people kept telling me it was much better than a month before. Visitors to the island are impressed at the reconstruction. To tell the truth, because there was so much devastation and had to be so much reconstruction, the whole place looks just brand new. Yet there are some places that still need to be rebuilt, like our cathedral. The reconstruction of our own priory church, Our Lady of the Rosary, where Fr Clifton Harris is parish priest, is beginning soon.

Now the Dominicans have more than one parish on the island, don't they?

There are four, including Morne Jaloux, where I am parish priest. Fr Leroy Hopkin lives at St Andrew's, Grenville, with a church and four out-stations. Our prior, Fr Peter Clarke, goes to help with Masses on the weekends. The Vicar Provincial, Fr Charles Dominique, lives at Blessed Sacrament parish at Grand Anse, twenty seconds walk from the

famous Grand Anse beach. Two friars, Fr Louis Fergus and Fr Patrick Alexander, are often away ministering to people on other islands that are in need of priests. Fr Louis has just returned from St Lucia and Fr Patrick is still in Trinidad. With Br Michael McLawrence, we are six living in the priory. As well my parish, I go out to teach in an A-level college.

Is Morne Jaloux far from the priory?

St Joseph's is about ten minutes drive away. It's a very interesting parish. The church is the former chapel of the bishop. The bishop emeritus, who is 83, lives on the compound, and I sometimes call him the assistant parish priest!

Is a bishop's chapel big enough to be a parish church?

A month after arriving, numbers were growing and I had to obtain a tent and about fifty chairs for those who could not get a seat inside. I was aware rain would sometimes affect those outside, and so I started a Mass on Saturday evenings. During Lent and Holy Week all our services were broadcast by the Catholic Radio Station, which is below our church. We have a three-storey building with the church on the ground level, and you have to go down a couple of stairs to get to the radio station. The station came here because the old one had been destroyed in the hurricane.

Is there a school in the parish?

The school is about five minutes from the church, going back towards the priory. There are 167 pupils and ten teachers. I visit the school every week and often have to step in to calm down a quarrel or fight among the students. Once I arrive on the compound, I am sure to hear one or two complaints. They all look forward to me aiding them in dispensing some justice, so it's off to the Principal's office we go! The parish gives a lot of assistance to the school. Last year we started the Powell Children's



Fund with a committee to oversee assistance to needy children in the school. It is named after some American children who gave up their Christmas money to help children here. The money came to some of our parishioners, and from this kind gesture we started up the Fund.

Were you brought up Catholic?

My parents are both Catholic and when we were growing up we went to Mass every Sunday—literally. The only time I remember not going was for a couple of weeks when I jumped down some stairs at school and dislocated my ankle. But it was nice to be visited by many people in hospital, including the bishop!

How did you come to join the Order?

I decided to become a priest because I wanted to preach, but I didn't know about the Order, even though I was named after a Dominican, Fr Irenaeus Alexander, a friend of my mother, and was baptised by Fr Denis Fitzgerald OP. It was when I was organising a retreat for the other altar boys at the cathedral that Fr Gilbert Coxhead OP came to my assistance. Afterwards he asked if I wanted to be a priest. I said yes and he invited me to the priory. What struck me was the community living, the brothers at table together eating and laughing. They seemed so happy. Later I found out that 'preaching and the salvation of souls' is the Dominican vocation. I never looked back or elsewhere since then.

This Newsletter is produced for the English Province of the Dominican Order by its Student Brothers at Blackfriars, Oxford, under the editorship of the prior, Fr Simon Francis Gainé. Please send your comments, suggestions and views to him at Blackfriars, 64 St Giles', Oxford OX1 3LY, or email the editorial team on newsletter@english.op.org.

LAS CASAS INSTITUTE



The Director of the Las Casas Institute, Lay Dominican Francis Davis



Fr Simon Gaine proclaims the Gospel in St Mary Undercroft



The Plenary Session of the Colloquium on Suffering and Dignity

Blackfriars Hall's Las Casas Institute has gone from strength to strength since its inauguration at the end of last year. The first speaker of 2009 was Lord Guthrie of Craigiebank, who lectured at Blackfriars, Oxford, on 'The Just War: Ethics in Modern Warfare', drawing on his military experience in Bosnia and Iraq. Lord Guthrie was Chief of the Defence Staff—the professional head of Britain's Armed Forces—from 1997 to 2001.

The Las Casas Institute is a centre of scholarship, dialogue with other Christian and religious communities, and encounter with decision makers. Its focus is on ethics, governance, social responsibility, and their interplay with policy, faith and religion. The most recent speakers have included the Secretary General of the Muslim Council of Great Britain, Dr Muhammad Abdul Bari, and the British Ambassador to the Vatican, H. E. Ambassador Francis Campbell, who addressed the relationship between faith and foreign policy.

In addition to its academic work, the Institute runs a major programme of outreach to schools and also to young and emerging leaders internationally. The schools programme, Leaders to Come, organises leadership and ethics training events for sixth form students across the country. When the Charles Plater Trust announced a grant of £40,000 towards this work, a delegation from Blackfriars accepted the award from Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor at Archbishop's House.

More than two-thousand young people will benefit from Leaders to Come activities over the next year. Among recent events was a visit of sixth formers from St Thomas More School, Bedford, to Oxford to take part in a study of immigration, migration and ethics. The day ended with a debate at the Oxford Union, where so many Prime Ministers and other leaders have honed their debating skills.

Meanwhile, the International Young Leaders Network is developing new international cohorts of young Christian leaders aged between 18 and 33. Over a hundred people are linked to IYLN's work from China to Australia, Glasgow to Budapest, and from Washington DC to Johannesburg. Its 'Global Scholar', Nathan

SPRINGS INTO LIFE

Koblintz, has also been a central figure in assisting Las Casas Director, Francis Davis.

On 22 April a Mass for MPs and Catholic student leaders was celebrated in St Mary Undercroft, the chapel below the Palace of Westminster. After Mass, the Prior of Oxford, Fr Simon Gain, and the President of the Catholic Union of Great Britain, Lord Brennan of Bibury, hosted a joint reception for the IYLN, to give an opportunity to affirm the potential of the Christian contribution to public life. Some forty students from across the UK attended and had the opportunity to meet MPs and Peers of various parties. Among the guests were one of IYLN's patrons, Lord Alton of Liverpool, and Rt Hon. John Battle MP, who is a Fellow of Blackfriars Hall.

The Las Casas Institute has also supported the launch of a new Vietnamese Academic Network. The Network, which has been set up by an IYLN scholar, brings together all those in the UK who are engaged in the study of Vietnam. Vietnam is of special interest to the Order of Preachers because of the very large number of Lay Dominicans active there. VAN's launch was attended by the Vietnamese Ambassador and the British Ambassador to Vietnam, and by seventy-five students and academics.

Academic colloquia are a key feature of the Institute's mission. A Colloquium on Migration was held at Blackfriars on 7 March. The keynote speakers were the Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, Professor Nicholas Sagovsky, and Dr Esther Reed, a leading academic working in the field of faith and public policy. Then on 14 March, a Colloquium on Suffering and Dignity brought together an international line-up of speakers from the hospice movement, the legal profession, and the disciplines of philosophy and theology, to reflect on end of life issues. They included Professors David Solomon and John O'Callaghan from the University of Notre Dame, and Dr Callum McKellar, who is Director of Research at the Scottish Council on Human Bioethics.

The Las Casas Institute is already an established part of the English Dominican mission, and plans are in hand for a host of future publications, scholarships at Blackfriars, and international conferences.



Lord Guthrie together with sixth formers who attended his lecture



Lord Brennan, John Battle MP and the Prior of Oxford
Photo: Olly Reutter



The Catholic Union and IYLN Reception
Photo: Olly Reutter

Obituary: Fr Gilbert Coxhead OP, 1920-2008



Anthony Coxhead was born on 12 April 1920 and was baptised in the Church of England. He left school at the age of sixteen to work as a clerk in the West India Docks in London. He was then employed as a clerical officer in the civil service in the Probate Division of the High Court at Somerset House until the outbreak of the Second World War.

He spent the war in the Royal Air Force as a fitter mechanic—poor eyesight made it impossible for him to fly. He served with the Desert Air Force in Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, before going via Sicily to Italy in 1944 with the invading Allied armies. It was during the war that he became a Roman Catholic.

After demobilisation he worked with his father, who was a building contractor, as a quantity surveyor. In 1947 he entered the Order at Woodchester, taking the name Gilbert. He made his simple vows on 4 October 1948 and was solemnly professed in 1951. He studied at Hawkesyard and Oxford, where he was ordained on 29 September 1953.

After leaving Oxford, he went to Llanarth to teach in the Dominican preparatory school, where he was also bursar and parish priest. After some time as Novice Master to the Lay Brothers at Hawkesyard and then chaplain to the Dominican nuns on the Isle of Wight, he returned to Llanarth, where he taught for five years. Then, after a spell as bursar at Oxford, he went in 1969 to the English Dominicans' mission in the Caribbean, which was his home for the rest of his life.

In the homily at Gilbert's Funeral Mass, his prior and friend, Fr Peter Clarke said of him, 'I have sought a single phrase that describes the Gilbert so many admired and loved. "People friendly" will serve my purposes. Wherever his superiors planted him, he sank his roots and identified with the people, the place and the work of the moment. He truly loved whomsoever; he was truly loved by whomsoever. I can't say where held pride of place in his heart. He belonged to wherever; wherever belonged to

him. You can attest to this, and so can I.'

Fr Gilbert lived mostly in Grenada, where he became a citizen, but also in Barbados and Jamaica. He touched the lives of a great many people. As well as being parish priest in various places, he was Spiritual Advisor to the Cursillo Movement for the Caribbean region, and wrote a pamphlet for the Catholic Truth Society, *What is the Cursillo?* From 1991 to 1994 he was the Novice Master at St Martin's Priory, Grenville, in Grenada. He had also been at times Prior of St Martin's, where he was instrumental in setting up a retreat centre, and he served as Vicar Provincial for the whole English Dominican mission in the West Indies from 1977 to 1981. His life included periods of political and spiritual unrest in Grenada, and he served for a time as Vice-President on the island's Human Rights Commission.

In 1986 he began a ministry of healing and deliverance—he was appointed the diocesan exorcist—a service for many people which he continued to the end of his life, even after his injury in 2004. Not long after Hurricane Ivan had devastated the island of Grenada, including Rosary Priory and the Dominican church, Fr Gilbert suffered multiple fractures in his hip. During a long period of recovery and nursing, he wrote a booklet *Challenges—They make you or break you*, of which over a thousand copies were published. Though completely confined to his bed, he continued his ministry. Fr Peter preached, 'More than most I knew Gilbert in his prime. But then I ask myself whether he was a greater person in his season of infirmity or in his season of creative activity.'

Fr Gilbert died peacefully at Rosary Priory on 30 November. He had been professed for just over sixty years. His Funeral Mass was celebrated by the Dominican Bishop of Grenada, Rt Revd Vincent Darius. There were several tributes at his funeral to this friar who was held in such deep respect and admiration by all. May he rest in peace. Amen.



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Spotlight on a Dominican bishop



Our brother, Malcolm McMahon OP, is Bishop of Nottingham, and has recently been elected Chair of the Bishops' Department of Education

'When St Albert the Great was proposed as a bishop, the Master of the Order, Bl. Humbert of Romans, said he would sooner see him dead. St Albert went back to his priory after two years. But since then Dominicans have learned to stick it out.

'The range of responsibilities is quite daunting. So it's fair to say that nothing can prepare you to be a bishop. You just have to get on with it and learn on the job. However, being a Dominican has helped me - I feel that I've been well prepared as a preacher and as someone who is used to working collaboratively. Fraternity is the Dominican gift I bring to the episcopacy, which shows itself in a special concern for the brethren and in an openness of spirit which the priests and people of diocese value very much.

'A bishop has the threefold function of teaching, governing and sanctifying his diocese. The trick is to keep the three in balance. The reason I say this is that the governing aspect of the work can take over and weigh heavy. My day to day work is largely to do with committees, correspondence, and meetings for managing the assets and work of the diocese. The bishop's council takes responsibility for the priests, parishes and pastoral work. The trustees of the diocese, whom I also chair, have legal responsibility for finances and property, working together with the council.

'I spent the first couple of years establishing a diocesan Education Service, bringing together the schools and the religious education commissions to meet today's challenges better. The next stage was to make a pastoral plan for the diocese and put it into effect. Altogether that took about five years. The last couple of years have been spent working on the diocese's finance and admin-

istration. This was timely as we are weathering the economic downturn fairly well. None of these aspects of governing would be possible without the diocese's wonderful staff. But the buck really does stop with the bishop, so I have to be involved in all this work.

'I carry out my teaching function by preaching in schools and parishes and writing occasional pastoral letters. I can deliver up to six or seven sermons a week. There is much joy in being a bishop, especially in celebrating the sacrament of confirmation. It never fails to lift my spirits. The sanctifying role is undoubtedly the most fulfilling. I probably visit two or three parishes every week, getting around the whole diocese every two or three years.

'I'm now Chair of the Bishops' Department of Education and Formation, and am getting up to speed on all the education issues affecting the Church. It looks as though it could be quite challenging in the future.'

Historic Dominican Parish celebrates 250th anniversary

An anniversary of immense significance for English Dominican history is marked this year on 29 June. It was on that day, 250 years ago, that a young priest slipped quietly and in secret into the town of Hinckley in Leicestershire. Fr Matthew Thomas Norton's intention was to establish a Dominican mission to serve that part of the world, and it was his house at Hinckley that would later become the first Dominican priory in England after the Reformation.

The village provided Fr Norton with the ideal base to serve the Catholic communities in Leicester and Coventry. For much of his life he had to pursue his calling in secret and on one occasion had to flee Hinckley after coming to the attention of the local magistrates. He would walk to Leicester and Coventry and back in the disguise of a vegetable seller, his wicker basket having a false bottom to conceal his priestly accoutrements. As penal laws were relaxed, he listed his house with the courts as a place of Catholic worship.

Fr Norton was interested in the natural sciences and wrote pamphlets on agriculture. In his will he bequeathed telescopes and musical instruments to a fellow Dominican. Hinckley continued to be served by Dominicans until 1989, when the parish was handed over to the Nottingham diocese.

Parishioners have been marking the anniversary with a programme of events organised by the parish priest, Fr Frank Daly, and Mr Greg Drozd, who is a former student of the Dominican chaplaincy in Edinburgh. They have been walking Fr Norton's routes between Hinckley, Leicester and Coventry, and cycling back from associated Dominican sites in Belgium. Speakers have included Br Gregory Pearson and Br Graham Hunt. Memorial stones will be unveiled during celebrations on 29 June, when Bishop Malcolm McMahon OP will celebrate Mass. The local council has also erected a blue plaque for Fr Norton on the site of his house. For details of these and other events and accommodation in Hinckley in June, contact Greg Drozd on 01455 440103.

The hope of the Holy Cross

The first in a new series of annual lectures entitled *Spes Unica* was delivered at Holy Cross Priory, Leicester, on 8 May. As the title of the series suggests, the lectures will focus on the Cross as our 'only hope', recalling the words of an ancient Christian hymn. This year's lecturer was the human rights activist and author of *The Heart Must Break*, James Mawdsley. In his lecture, 'The Joy of Being Crucified', he made a theological exploration of suffering by drawing on his own experience of being imprisoned and tortured in Burma for distributing pamphlets calling for democratic elections. His time in prison was a classic story of Christian conversion, and he movingly described to his audience of Dominicans, members of the Leicester Theological Association, students and parishioners, how returning to faith transformed his prison environment 'from hell to heaven'. He set his own story within his theoretical exploration of how people might find joy in suffering, asking how we should act in the light of the Cross. Fr Peter Hunter OP said, 'James's theological and moral reflections dovetailed very well with his own personal account, grounding theory in experience and making it all the more impressive.'



'Go up, O Lord, you and the Ark of your Strength'

News in brief

- Br Gregory Murphy graduated a Master of Studies at Oxford on 23 May. He is now working as part of the parish team at St Dominic's, London.
- Br Martin Grandinger, a student at Blackfriars, Oxford, made his solemn vows in Holy Cross Priory, Augsburg, in Germany on 10 January.
- On 2 May Professor Celia Deane-Drummond delivered the Assunta Kirwan Lecture at Blackfriars, Oxford, on the significance of the incarnation for the environment.
- The annual English Dominican Pilgrimage to Walsingham took place on 17 May (see photo above). If you would like to join this year's Pilgrimage to Lourdes, which takes place from 7 to 14 August, contact Fr Alistair Jones at Blackfriars, Buckingham Rd, Cambridge CB3 0DD (email: alistair.jones@english.op.org). Costs are £739 including travel from Newcastle, £665 from London Stansted, £440 accommodation and board only.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ...

three of our brothers who have celebrated their eightieth birthdays. Giles Hibbert, who has since moved to St Dominic's, London, celebrated his birthday on 9 January. Denis Geraghty, also of our London priory, was eighty on 26 April, and John Baptist Watson of St Dominic's, Newcastle, on 2 June. Congratulations also to our brother Louis Fergus in Grenada who was professed fifty years on 7 April.

Wandering friars abroad

'Join the English Dominicans and see the world!' The brethren have been taking their message far and wide in 2009. Fr David Sanders, for example, left off teaching at Oxford for three months to deliver courses on St Paul in Antigua and Jamaica at the request of Archbishop Donald Reece. His audiences included university students, together with others preparing to be permanent deacons. Meanwhile Fr Aidan Nichols had gone from Cambridge to Ethiopia on behalf of the Blackfriars Ethiopia Project, which gives financial support to Eastern Rite Catholics. His mission was to search out new educational projects and to gain a better idea of how funds raised are already being spent on a primary/middle school at Bahir Dar, a primary school at Zalambessa, and a kindergarten at Darwhan. He met with four of the 'Blackfriars abbots' who had lived in Cambridge in 1950s, and also met up with Fr Timothy Radcliffe, who was in Addis Ababa where the Order is founding a new university. Fr Timothy has also been at work in Thailand, where he gave a retreat for ninety missionaries, and Indonesia, where he gave a retreat for seven bishops and 230 priests. While Timothy's international preaching takes him away from Oxford frequently, the prior, Fr Simon Gaine, is rarely absent. However, this did not stop him spending a month as Visiting Scholar at the Dominican Ecclesial Institute in New Mexico, where he gave talks in parishes, taught some classes in a high school, and gave an interview to 'The Archbishop's Hour' on Catholic Radio.

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