

*My neighbour from my first year at the Beda was ordained last year and I went to visit him in his parish in Taunton. It was exciting for me to see such a good friend actually working as a priest and the fulfilment he has found in his vocation. I also spent two weeks in Sheringham (I did my placement there last year), a sort of 'working holiday' where I helped out as much as I could but took the odd afternoon off as well.*

*So, what does this academic year hold for me? I start back in Rome next Monday (02 October - RyanAir willing), and then we begin our academic year the following Monday after a period of recollection as a community. It is an exciting year for me in that, God willing, I should be admitted to Candidacy (a ceremony where the College, the Bishop and I all agree that I can continue my studies and hopefully be admitted to the clerical state at a later date). Then, in June, I pray that I will be ordained as Deacon - ready for my return for the summer break again. Between Fr Mark and I, we will keep you updated as the dates draw nearer.*

*This is a particularly vital year for me and for all the third year students at the Beda (two of them are for our own diocese); we all have to make our decisions this year as well as those who are guiding us in our formation. I know that many of you do pray for us regularly and I ask that you continue to do so even more regularly and with greater gusto. Thank you for all of your love and support.*

*I will pray for you in Rome as well.*

**Alan**

## **PARISH ADVENT YOUTH RETREAT**

**for 14+ at Clare Priory on 15th - 17th December 2017.**

**A time to be away from home and be with Jesus and others. A time to discover the power of silence and also prepare spiritually for Christmas.**

*Pick up your forms from the Presbytery, complete and return asap  
For more information, contact Fr Alvan*

Following the successful formation of our 14+ Youth Ministry we would like to start a group for younger children.

To do this we require adult volunteers who are willing to organise and attend meetings once a month.

Please contact Fr Alvan if you are interested.

# St Edmund's Extra

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**Sunday 1st October 2017 - 26th Sunday of the Year**

## **REJOICE IN THE GIFT OF VOCATIONS!**

On Monday, Alan Hodgson will return to the Beda College in Rome to continue his studies for the Priesthood. It is an important year for Alan and his confreres, Michael and Paul as in June next year we hope that they will be ordained Deacon. They are joined this year by Michael Smith in Year 1.

At the Venerable English College, also in Rome Piotr Wygnanski is in Year 4 of his six year course. In other seminaries, Jude Belnas (Yr 5) and Biencarlo Manuntag (Yr 1) are at Oscott, Anthony Asomugha (Yr 4) and Mark Ashwood (Yr 1) are at Allen Hall, Simon Davies is at Wonersh, James Hernandez is at Valladolid in Spain, and Deacon Jaylord Magpuyo is on pastoral placement at St. Laurence's in Cambridge.

Closer to home, Brett Gladden from this parish is well into his studies for the Permanent Diaconate and will be instituted as Lector at the Cathedral in Norwich on October 14th.

And within our community, a small number of young men are discerning with family, friends and the vocations team whether God may be calling them to priesthood too.

Please continue to keep all these men in your prayers and give thanks to God for his continuing gift of 'ardent but gentle servants of the Gospel' to serve His people.

I would personally like to take this opportunity once again, to thank those of you who have supported the training of our future priests and deacons through both the recent Alive in Faith campaign and the annual collection for the Training Fund in the early Summer.

***With every blessing,  
Fr. Mark***

## THE WORD OF GOD

Matthew 21:28 - 32

28 Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." 29 He answered, "I will not go", but afterwards thought better of it and went. 30 The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir", but did not go. 31 Which of the two did the father's will?' 'The first', they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

### REFLECTION

The parable of the Prodigal Son, found only in the Gospel of Luke, also features his elder brother. It is of course a very well-known parable. Matthew's parable about two sons, which is our gospel reading today, is less well-known.

There is an obvious contrast between the son who initially refuses to respond and then thinks better of it and does his father's bidding, and the second son who promises to respond but in fact does nothing. Jesus himself explains the parable.

The parable is apparently addressed to the chief priests and the elders. Jesus points out that many religious people pledge their loyalty in words but do not follow this up with actions. Jesus had spoken in the Sermon on the Mount about those who say 'Lord! Lord!', but do not do the will of the Father (7:21). Such people are contrasted with the tax collectors and prostitutes in the parable, who, after initially refusing to respond, change their lives for the better.

The first reading from the prophet Ezekiel makes clear that we are asked to do God's will and persevere in it. It may take a long time for us to accept the truth and challenge of the gospel, but God is patient and seems to prefer to await our free response rather than endure pious words which are not backed up by acts.

Jesus also reprimands the religious leaders for their blindness. Even when they saw the taxcollectors and sinners responding to the preaching of John the Baptist, they still refused to change themselves. Jesus will later accuse the religious leaders of blindness and hypocrisy: 'Alas for you, blind guides!' (23:16)

Am I blind to the example of those I consider to be not as good as I am?

Am I willing to turn over a new leaf despite past failings?

We pray that we may respect the efforts of others even if they fail.

We pray for insight and understanding of ourselves and of our neighbour

**Reflections on the Sunday Gospels, written by Fr. Adrian Graffy**



## SEMINARIAN ALAN WRITES:

*This time of the year, the end of the summer break for me, seems to have two themes that regularly crop up. The first is the busy side; making sure that everything is packed, I have ordered the correct books for the new semester and enough bottles of marmite to take back to Rome and getting out to visit all the people who have asked me to visit. The other theme is a more contemplative and inward one; is this still the right thing for me? What have I done this Summer that stands out for me? Am I still following God's call? Are the studies going to be as difficult as I fear?*

*Of course these are important questions and should really be part of all of our lives. Are we doing God's will and are we happy in what we are doing? I find I am drawn more and more to sit in front of the Blessed Sacrament so I can find time to mull these things over in peace and solitude. I am blessed in that I have the beautiful chapel to pray in in Bury St Edmunds and I also have a very prayerful chapel at the Beda College. I also have the gift of time and space to pray as frequently and as often as I like.*

*I look back over the last three years in which I have been involved in the life of this parish and my studies in Rome, all the people I have met and the incredible places I have visited and admired. I am indeed blessed to, not only have the support of this community, but to be able to spend four years in Rome to be able to not only study, but also to be open to the formation and process that is offered to us as students.*

*This summer was a busy time for me while I visited a variety of parishes that all welcomed me and encouraged me in my goal. Every summer we are obliged to do a placement in a parish (generally in our own diocese) so that we can get some real hands-on experience with different priests and communities. This year the bishop asked me to work at Cherry Hinton parish in Cambridge for five weeks. I had an incredible time there with a very welcoming priest and a warm and happy community. I was treated so kindly by all the people and with the added benefit of some delicious curries and traditional Filipino food as well. Addenbrookes hospital falls into this parish so I spent quite a few days visiting the sick and taking communion to the patients. I was also invited into people's homes and taken out to explore Cambridge as well. There are also a couple of hospices in the parish as well as care homes that needed to be visited.*

*I was then invited to the parish of Sawston and Cambourne, I spent a week there, simply to be given another experience and to see parish life from yet another perspective. This is an area of Cambridge that is really growing and one to watch out for in the future. I was asked to talk at all of the Masses there and I encouraged the communities to look at themselves and to send us local vocations for the priesthood and religious life.*