

# SCP Society of Catholic Priests

# NEWS

Issue number 6 December 2011

## From the Rector General

By the time this newsletter is published the final votes from the dioceses will be in and we will know what the response has been to the draft legislation and scheme for the ordination of women to the episcopate. At the moment it looks as though it is an overwhelming 'yes', which is just what we have been working and praying for. There are notable exceptions to this of course but that was always expected. Our thanks must go to members of the Society and others who have spoken out and worked for this result. We are not there yet and we must not cease working and praying until what we have committed ourselves to - ordained ministry which embraces people of both genders, at all levels and without distinction - is a reality in our province.

One of those who has been working hard for this has been Bishop Nigel McCulloch, the Bishop of Manchester. He chaired the Legislative Group which began the work that is now coming to its conclusion. We thank him and all those who have worked alongside him for their commitment to the task.

There is another reason why we have particular reason to be thankful to Bishop Nigel. For the last eight years he has been Visitor of our Society in the European Province. The role of Visitor is an important

one, though we hope not onerous but enjoyable. Our statutes say that

*It shall be the duty of the visitor to oversee the chapter(s) in their care, to ensure good order and to arbitrate in any dispute relating to the Society.*

So if all is going well then the Visitor has little to do but be supportive.

I am delighted to say that we have all been so well behaved that Bishop Nigel has not had to intervene in our life. But that is not to say that he has not been involved. Whilst not a member of the Society himself (although his wife Celia is), he has always maintained a lively interest in what we have been doing and the way in which we have been expanding. He has been a support to me as Rector General and I am sure that I can speak for my predecessors in saying how grateful we are to him for all that he has done.

Bishop Nigel has written to me asking that he be allowed to step down from this role as he prepares for his retirement. Though that is still some time off it is right that he begins to hand on those tasks which others can do so that he can concentrate on his diocese.

I am in the process of consultation with the Archbishop of Canterbury, who appoints our Visitor, to secure the help of the right

Supporting men and women in their priestly service of God within the Anglican Communion

person for the future. We hope to be able to announce very soon who will succeed Bishop Nigel. But for the moment we thank the Bishop of Manchester for his concern, love and prayers for us.

Preparations for the Rome Conference now move up a gear. We have a good number booked for next June but there are still places available, especially if you are prepared to share a room. It should be an excellent conference and so please consider joining those who have already booked. Details can be found on the website. Those who have booked will soon be hearing about final payments. Now though is the time to book your flights. You should aim to arrive around lunchtime. The Residenza will be happy to receive us after 1.00pm and that is when Registration will take place.

Finally, thank you for all the messages of congratulations that I have received from members of the Society following

the announcement that the Bishop of Southwark has appointed me Dean. It is such an exciting prospect and daunting at the same time. Colin Slee is a hard act to follow but I will do my best. His courageous stand for an inclusive response to the gospel in the Anglican Communion was inspirational and encouraging to so many of us; his support of lesbian and gay people well known; his commitment to the church in Africa, to the ministry of women and to the challenging of injustice inside and outside of the church, courageous. I look forward to the challenge of taking all that work forward.

I will be installed as Dean on Saturday 21 January at 3.00pm. If you are in London on that day you are most welcome. But whether you can be here or not, please pray for me.

*Fr Andrew Nunn  
Rector General*

## Dearmer news

The Dearmer Society of Ireland, is based at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dublin and is the seminary for all the ordinands on the island of Ireland.

The Institute is located in beautiful grounds, along the River Dodder, in the southern suburbs of the capital. When Edna Wakely and I, both ordinands from the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough, began training in September 2010, the Dearmer Society had been in abeyance for some time. After a little foraging, we discovered a dormant bank account with a modest balance and were very glad to receive some funding from the Institute itself. We held a number of events last year, including a visit from the Canadian priest, Rev. Dr. John Gibaut, Director of the Faith and Order Commission at the World Council of Churches, Geneva and we also



enjoyed an evening on the role of discernment in the spiritual life with Rev. Garth Bunting from Christchurch Cathedral, Dublin. This year, with renewed confidence, we began with Dr. Margaret

Daly-Denton's address on 'Ecology and the Fourth Gospel' and more recently with an evening with Dr. Andrew Pierce discussing 'John Henry Newman and the Religious Imagination.' The Institute has two other student-led societies: the Institute Fellow-

ship whose membership is Evangelical and their evenings are very rousing; the Marsh Society is concerned with issues of the day and promotes a liberal outlook. We are very happy to say, that all the events of the societies, are attended by students from right across the diverse outlooks and churchpersonships – this has not always been the case in the past! Though our numbers are small, we are confident that we will continue, to witness to our conviction, that the Church must continue to develop along sound Catholic lines.

*David White*

# EVANGELISM NEWS

**C**atholic Evangelism Day Conference, Wednesday 3 October 2012, Southwark Cathedral

Due to next year's conference happening in Rome in 2012 we will not have a residential conference on these islands, but opted for something different instead:

On Wednesday, 3 October 2012 we are going to organise a day conference at Southwark Cathedral, looking in particular at catholic evangelism (which will conveniently include the SCP AGM).

Many people from our tradition are not comfortable with a number of Fresh Expressions of Church, the reception of the book 'For the Parish' by Alison Milbank and Andrew Davison (SCM



*Fr Johannes Arens  
Evangelism Officer*

Press 2010) speaks for itself. However, criticising what others do or do not do raises the rather urgent question what we should do about catholic evangelism, what is good and successful practice and how we can support each other in this.

I am delighted that Bishop Stephen Cottrell SCP is going to join us on Wednesday 3 October in Southwark, going to give some input in this area, together with others who have to share stories of hope or success.

More details are going to come early in 2012, but please mark this day in your diary – it is going to be worth your while.

*Report  
from  
the*

## *Provincial Council*

**T**he Provincial council met as usual four times between the 2010 and 2011 annual general meetings. Developments during the year were reported to the AGM as follows:

**Finance:** The bank balance at July was £5537 this was exclusive of £2,600 loaned to chapters to cover start-up costs for Conferences. The balance is of course inflated by payments in respect of the International Conference in 2012. In general the income from the capitation fee covered expenses and there will be no increase in this in 2012, The fee should be paid in respect of all chapter members regardless of whether they have paid their individual subscriptions.

**Membership:** According to membership records there are now 640 members, in the European Province, in 36 chapters, the latest being Lichfield and Leicester. It is estimated that with the North American and Australian chapters worldwide membership now exceeds 1,000. Enquiries to open Chapters in Hong Kong and South Africa are in progress.

**Vocations and Ordinands:** A successful conference was held in Manchester 11-13 May, and a further conference was held in Durham 2-4 September. The 2012 Manchester conference will be held 20-22 April. A few Dearmer groups continue but questions have been raised as to

whether this is the most effective way of maintaining contact with ordinands. A proposal to invite ordinands to regular Chapter meetings has been well received, and is being put into operation in several chapters.

**Catholic Evangelism:** This would be the focus of a day conference in October 2012 at the AGM.

**Communications:** In addition to the newsletter, the website had been maintained and updated; four new Gospel Imprint leaflets were issued.

**Company of Servers:** There are now 15 Chapters in operation, the 2012 festival will be held in Salisbury on 21 April. Chapters are reminded that it is their responsibility see that a Chapter is set up in their Dioceses.

**Walsingham:** The Council has continued its efforts to make the Shrine more accessible to our integrity. A proposal to make the Barn Chapel an ecumenical place of worship was rejected by the Administrator, but were indications nevertheless of a slight improvement in the position of women clergy.

**Women in the Episcopate:** The Council jointly with Affirming Catholicism funded a booklet to guide Deanery and Diocesan Synod debates on this issue. The new General Synod now has a higher proportion of liberal catholic members.

**Conferences:** Plans for the International Conference in Rome in June 2012 are well advanced, around 70 bookings have been received, including small contingents from North America and Australia. The 2012 AGM will be held on 3 October at Southwark cathedral and will be combined with a Day Conference on Catholic Evangelism. The 2013 conference

will be organised by Worcester and Lichfield Chapters and in 2014 by St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Chapter.

**Officers:** At the 2011 AGM Andrew Nunn was re-elected for a further term as Rector General and Johannes Arens as Vice Rector General (Evangelism). Geoffrey Thompson came to the end of his term as Communications Officer and at the October 2011 meeting of the Council Angela Gbebikan was co-opted to replace him.

*Fr. Michael Skinner Secretary General*

## SCP MANCHESTER VOCATIONS WEEKEND 2012

The third SCP vocations weekend will be from 27th to 29th April 2012. The first two weekends proved very popular, and those attending especially enjoyed visiting parishes in which SCP priests were serving. We were pleased that at the last weekend some of those attending had been encouraged to attend by DDOs who wished them to experience a different tradition.

Do encourage those considering vocation to attend. More information at: [www.scpvocations.wordpress.com/](http://www.scpvocations.wordpress.com/)

A report on the 2011 weekend from someone who attended: 'One of the great things about this weekend is its range. A great range of people from all walks of life, parts of the country and ages- from university students to those nearing retirement. People brought with them a huge range of traditions

from across the catholic spectrum of the c of e - each with different experiences of God and His call, whatever that may be, in their lives. A couple were probably seeking final reassurance, most of us had inklings or ideas as yet unformed.

We were able to share for a brief while our sense of exploration, to understand that in many things we were not alone, and in others learn from each others' different experiences. In a way, the best

bit about the weekend is that it doesn't answer any questions - and we all had plenty of those. If anything, going on the scp weekend gave us more questions, but they were the right questions. Each of us went through the same programme and yet came away with completely different things, gained from the activities and talks **but, perhaps most of all, from each other.'**

*Fr Ian Gomersall*  
*Vocations*



## NEWS FROM AROUND THE CHAPTERS



### RIPON & LEEDS CHAPTER

A group SCP members were seen walking the streets of Ripon as part of their annual summer Pilgrimage. The **Ripon and Leeds Chapter** acted as hosts for the **Durham and Newcastle, Wakefield and York Chapter** whose members, spouses and friends joined together on a

rare sunny day in late August. The Pilgrimage began with a celebrated Eucharist in the beautiful, intimate and well-hidden Leper Chapel of S. Mary Magdalene sited in a quiet and peaceful corner of Ripon. The Chapel is on the old road into the city, which St Wilfrid would have used in years gone past and SCP was to follow in his footsteps in 2011.





**T**he Rector of Ripon and Leeds Chapter presided and the Chapter's newest member, Gillian (who was ordained this Peter-tide), acted as deacon. Canon Peter Garner from Ripon Cathedral then addressed the group, with a brief history of Pilgrimage followed by reflections on current practice (he is a chaplain at Fountains Abbey) as he meets tourists/pilgrims and giving thoughts on how we might embrace the concept of Pilgrimage both on the day and in our ministry.

From the Leper Chapel we, as a happy band of pilgrims walked into Ripon and around the cathedral finally heading for the Cathedral Hall and that most important SCP tradition, lunch! After being well wined and dined there was free time to enjoy the city or join a guided tour of the Cathedral.

The Pilgrimage drew to a close as we joined together to share in Evensong and Benediction in the Resurrection Chapel (to be found tucked away in the Cathedral's Undercroft), with a member of Durham and Newcastle Chapter presiding.

Although this was the formal end of the day, many of the pilgrims were then enticed into Cream Teas at the Old Deanery, proving

that Pilgrimage need not be an abstemious business!

It may not have been Jerusalem or Compostela, but in the best traditions of Chaucer we walked, talked, ate and worshipped God together, no better way to spend a sunny August day!

## **SOUTHWARK CHAPTER**

*Reflection by  
Mother Elaine Cranmer*

**W**alsingham for many in the Society is a very painful subject and I must admit that my own experiences have been less than blessed. Perhaps that was until I rashly volunteered to accompany almost sixty year seven pupils from Trinity School, Lee.

I arrived at 6.30am to a dark and deserted school one Monday morning to join the headmaster concelebrating Mass in the school chapel. When we emerged thirty minutes later the school lobby and atrium were buzzing with excited eleven year olds and anxious parents. Within half an hour we were on our way: Head, chaplain, school staff, pupils and three volunteer clergy not quite sure what they had let themselves in for. By 10am it was time for a stop at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford for a look around the exhibits and workshops on Forces and Motion (the curriculum had not been entirely left in SE12.)

By mid-afternoon we'd arrived at the shrine and boys and girls were dispatched to their hostels before gathering again in the Refectory before moving on to the Pilgrims' Hall for a briefing from bishop John and the chance to see an 'interesting' DVD on the history of Walsingham before going to visit the Holy House. South-east London it certainly wasn't but guided by four 'Year4God' volunteers the Annunciation was recalled, prayers offered and candles lit before it was time for the clergy present to attend Evening Prayer where we all sat together in the Guardians' Stalls for the office.

Perhaps the refectory was a little noisier

than I remember at mealtimes - we had lots of questions from other pilgrims rather shell shocked by our presence. Tuesday morning began with a wake-up call at 7am and a rush of pupils (well, certainly the girls) to the bathrooms half an hour later. A hearty breakfast was eaten and then we all gathered in the shrine church for our morning Eucharist. The transformation from the bustle of the hostel, the noise of breakfast to the silent expectancy in the church was profound. Pupils participated fully in the liturgy – responses that would put the typical congregation to shame and attentiveness to the homily. Participation did not only apply to the pupils – the school chaplain presided and the other four clergy were all robed in cotta and cassock: Fr Lindsay gave the address, Fr Richard offered the intercessions and Mtr Anne and myself administered the chalices. Immediately after the Eucharist the pupils moved on to a series of workshops – especially powerful were the prayer stations arranged by the Year4God students in the Barn Chapel (lots of ideas for the prayer corners back in the tutor rooms at school) – as well as further visits to the church and Holy House. Finally it was time to gather together in the church for the sprinkling, which Fr Lindsay and myself administered – for almost sixty 11 year olds, not a snigger or giggle but quiet reflection and prayer as they came to the well – and then the question; couldn't they stay longer? Unfortunately not - back to the coach and half an hour on the beach a Wells before returning safely to London.

What an experience, so much to take away – the willingness of the children to deepen their spirituality as they engaged with the activities and atmosphere of this holy shrine, the opportunity for the first time to feel personally engaged in ministry and pilgrimage and most of all – a truly blessed couple of days (and of course, thanks to the thoughtfulness of my male colleagues who so sensitively made it all possible.)

*Mother Elaine Cranmer Scp  
Vice Rector (Woolwich) Southwark Chapter  
Vicar: St. Luke, Eltham Park: Eltham North Group  
Ministry and Area Dean: Eltham and Mottingham*

In Australia, Europe and  
North America

# First International Conference in Rome

11-14 June 2012



There is still time to book your space at the SCP International Conference in Rome. Twin and triple rooms are available. 2012 gives us the opportunity to take part in an historic step in our lives as we meet in conference in Rome.

Please email the Rector General [andrew.nunn@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:andrew.nunn@southwark.anglican.org) if you want any clarification on the event before booking.

Mother Angela Gbebikan SCP  
Communications Officer  
Telephone: 0208 647 1201  
Email: [gbebikan@cantab.net](mailto:gbebikan@cantab.net)

