

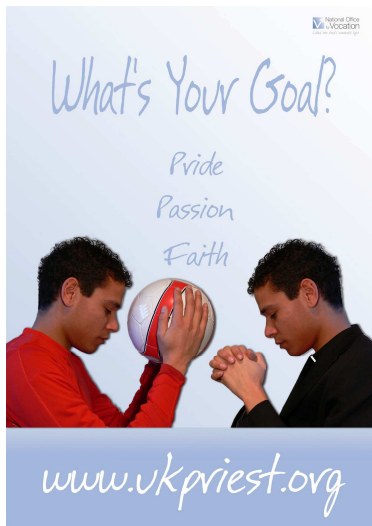
Newsletter

Issue 10
July 2006



National Office
for Vocation

Called into God's wonderful light



Poster produced by the NOV for the 43rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations.

Read more about the work of the NOV for Vocations **Sunday**

Members of the Elm Grove Community talked to the group about ways in which they've reached out to other young people in the Brighton area.

Fr Abbot also presented 'The Compass Project' a nine month programme sponsored by a group of Religious Orders and Congregations. The residential venue is at Worth Abbey and the programme gives participants the space to explore the religious vocational life, spiritual support and an experience of community living. One of the participants spoke of how the project had helped her in her journey.

There was also time for discussions, feedback and sharing. Fr Paul and Judith also gave a short presentation on the recent work of the National Office.

National Office for Vocation Annual Forum 2006 - Saturday 17th June 2006

Dom Christopher Jamison, Abbot of Worth Abbey was our speaker for the day. The forum was attended by almost forty people including diocesan Vocation Directors, members of the NOV committee, religious and laypersons all of whom had an interest in vocations work.



After the opening group discussions, Abbot Christopher talked about current generational trends in the 18-25 age group and the unique difficulties these present for vocations work and evangelisation generally.

In the afternoon session, specific ways in which we can 'bridge the gap' between Church and young people were discussed.

Judith Eydmann joined the office as **Development Coordinator** towards the end of November 2005. Judith who has a background in the publishing industry, fills a post that had been vacant for several months. The development plan for this year includes improvements to both websites. Current projects also include the production of leaflets and banners to promote specific vocations and the creation of a gap year website providing information on Catholic, Church-based gap year opportunities in England and Wales. Such placements often play a crucial part in the faith journey of young (and not so young!) people and their vocational discernment.

The National Office for Vocation exists to promote a culture of vocation and specific calls to vocational states and is an office of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

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World Day of Prayer for Vocations - 7th May 2006

In his letter for Vocations Sunday, Pope Benedict invites the entire People of God to meditate on the theme of vocation in the mystery of the Church. Reflecting on the parable of the prodigal son, the Pope writes: **"In order to answer the call of God and start on our journey, it is not necessary to be already perfect."**

The NOV sent over 5,000 resource packs to parishes and schools. The school pack included assemblies, and workshops such as the challenge to build a 'Virtual Religious Community' to encourage students to think about the vocation of all the baptised and the specific vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The pack also included a poster of a young man considering his future dressed as a footballer and as a priest. As well as being part of a long-term campaign to attract more men to the Catholic priesthood in England and Wales, the poster is designed to encourage everybody to think about the role of a priest.

The 'glamorous' world of football, is not necessarily the first thing that springs to mind when considering the priestly vocation, but there are some surprising parallels. Both soccer star and priest are passionate about their life choices and take great pride in what they do, putting in years of hard work and sacrifice. The qualities a young man needs to develop to be able to make a positive contribution to a football team or a parish are similar in some ways too. Commitment, teamwork and dedication are important aspects of every professional footballer's and Catholic priest's lives, and reach beyond the very public arenas of pitch and pulpit.

Another discussion point is how the two life choices are different. A top footballer will enjoy a big house, sports cars and all the other luxury consumer goods we associate with a high income, whereas a priest can only expect a modest wage to live on. A footballer is usually unable to compete at Premier League or international level beyond his thirties and the world of football is fickle.

On the other hand, the Catholic priesthood is a lifelong commitment. The rewards of the priesthood are not material possessions or fleeting fame but something far deeper, the joy of serving God and His people.

Our posters encouraged thought and discussion around these similarities and of course the differences. We hope they will endure beyond the England team in the World Cup Tournament!

The resources for Vocations Sunday are available for download from the NOV website at

www.ukvocation.org/vocationsunday2006.htm

Faith and Football - An Interview With Chris Riggott

To tie in with the football theme of this year's poster, the NOV interviewed Chris Riggott, a Central defender for Premiership club Middlesbrough.

Chris who was raised a Catholic in Derby attended Catholic schools in the city, St Mary's Primary and St Benedict's Secondary. He played for Derby County until his transfer to Middlesbrough in 2003. He also had international status in the England under-21 squad.



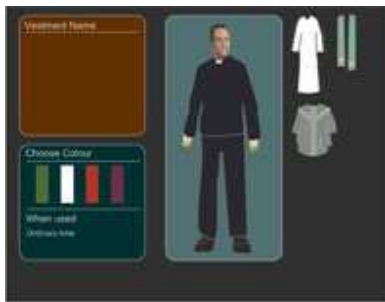
"I know one hundred percent that my faith has helped me in my career. I'm very thankful that I have the gifts to play football" .

Read the interview on www.ukpriest.org

"Time to dress up, guys!"

Ruth Gledhill ,
Times Religion
Correspondent
on 'Kit-out'
the Priest

Kit-out-the priest is a new interactive learning tool which enables



primary school children to learn about vestments by dragging and dropping them onto the 'virtual priest'. Before putting their fully vested priest by the altar to celebrate Mass, children can change the colours used and learn their significance as well as finding out the names and origins of the vestments.

It seems that not only children have been having fun kitting-out the priest and the Vocations Office has received a great deal of positive feedback from people outside the primary school education sector.

Website Performance

The UK Priest site reached an all time record of nearly 5000 visits in March. Instrumental to this success was the popularity of 'kit out the priest' . Independently of this resource, the site is now receiving over 1000 visits per month. Among the words and phrases used in search engines to find the website include are 'becoming a priest' and 'being a priest'.

UK Vocation website has also seen a steady increase in site traffic which went over 1000 visits for the first time in May. The site features many of the resources produced by the NOV for Vocations Sunday in downloadable format. Both sites are being updated on a regular basis.

Media Watch

Towards the end of last year **Sky News** screened a special report on the faith of young people in the UK today and in particular vocations to the priesthood. Referring to a small but significant increase in the number of entrants into

formation for the priesthood in 2005, the online version reports that *"The idea of swapping clubbing for cloisters isn't coming from older generations, but from the growing number of young men who are training to become Catholic priests here in the UK.*



Can it be that the younger generation have a stronger moral compass than their parents?"

The film crew visited Allen Hall and Oscott seminaries and interviewed young seminarians about their vocation. Fr Paul Embery, Director of NOV was interviewed as part of the report and took part in the live discussion which was televised immediately afterwards.

The football poster for Vocations Sunday also received coverage from Catholic and secular press. **The Catholic Herald** ran the story as front page and **The Universe** included the Chris Riggott interview alongside their feature. **The Tablet** had a small mention of the campaign quoting a response to the posters from a school teacher.

In the wider media, **The Times** ran a short piece including the image of the poster and the **Times Education Supplement** featured a longer piece. **Sky News** also ran a brief report which was screened at regular intervals throughout the day on Vocations Sunday.

The number of entrants into formation for the priesthood and religious life showed a small but significant increase this year. 35 men from the dioceses of England and Wales entered seminary in 2005. This was an increase of 8 from 27 in 2004. Similarly, there were 32 candidates accepted into formation for religious life, an increase of 13 (68%) from 19 entrants in 2004 .

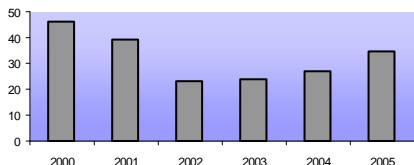


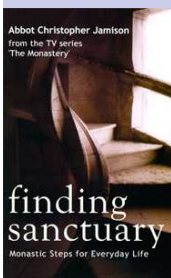
Chart showing entry into seminaries for the first half of this decade.

Whilst there is still a lot of work to be done both in the promotion of the general vocation of all baptised Christians and the particular vocations to priesthood and religious life, the figures this year are encouraging.

For Your Diary!
What On Earth Am I Here For?
Explore your vocation in our workshop at Oct 06 in Birmingham.
 Oct.06 - quite simply the biggest gathering of 18-30's Catholics from England and Wales in a quarter of a century!
www.oct06.org.uk

Book Recommendations

How to Survive the Rest of Your Life, a gift book for young people by Dermott Donnelly, a priest of the Hexham and Newcastle diocese Youth Ministry Team and Gerard Conroy has been recently published by Pauline Books and Media.



In his book, **Finding Sanctuary: Monastic Steps For Everyday Life** Abbot Christopher Jamison, suggests ways in which teachings of St Benedict can be helpful in everyday life - for those who are religious but also those who are searching for guidance.

The Convent

Following the success of last year's *The Monastery* programmes, a four part series focusing on women volunteers was screened in June and July 2006 on BBC2. The programmes followed four ordinary women who lived forty days and nights of convent life. The women freely gave up their everyday lifestyles to embark upon a spiritual journey with the Poor Clares in Arundel. Offering a remarkable glimpse into the inner workings of religious life, the women spent their time in a world without material possessions, where the pressures of modern life were left behind. Cut off from the outside world, they shared the daily routine of prayers and work with the Sisters in an attempt to discover if life has any greater meaning.

This series explored whether the age-old values of the nuns hold any relevance to modern women. The experience clearly showed that these values still have the power to transform lives.



As with 'The Monastery', the programmes provided a unique opportunity for evangelisation and vocation promotion. The Catholic Enquiry Centre (run by CASE) offered a telephone answer service in the evenings after each episode had been televised. Members of the NOV team also helped to run this. A number of materials about the Catholic Faith were specially produced to tie-in with the programmes.

CASE and NOV jointly produced a sheet providing information on vocation . The sheet, which is also available for download from www.life4seekers.co.uk also includes a series of Scripture passages and reflections to help people reflect on their vocation and calling in life.

With over seven million viewers tuning in for the series, Mgr Keith Barltrop, Director of CASE, said, **"We were totally overwhelmed by people's response to the first series filmed at Worth Abbey. It stimulated such widespread interest in our Catholic faith and life. The Convent series has similarly ignited a lot of enquiry. Both are good news for the Church."**