

## Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

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Thursday, 16th April 2020.

### Easter Thursday

Happy Easter Thursday to you. I hope you are well.

The second reading from the Office of Readings for today provides us a chance to reflect and think about our own baptism.

#### A reading from the instructions to the newly baptised at Jerusalem.

*Baptism is a symbol of Christ's passion*

You were led down to the font of holy baptism just as Christ was taken down from the cross and placed in the tomb which is before your eyes. Each of you was asked, "Do you believe in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?" You made the profession of faith that brings salvation, you were plunged into the water, and three times you rose again. This symbolised the three days Christ spent in the tomb.

As our Saviour spent three days and three nights in the depths of the earth, so your first rising from the water represented the first day and your first immersion represented the first night. At night a man cannot see, but in the day he walks in the light. So when you were immersed in the water it was like night for you and you could not see, but when you rose again it was like coming into broad daylight. In the same instant you died and were born again; the saving water was both your tomb and your mother.

Solomon's phrase in another context is very apposite here. He spoke of a time to give birth, and a time to die. For you, however, it was the reverse: a time to die, and a time to be born, although in fact both events took place at the same time and your birth was simultaneous with your death.

This is something amazing and unheard of! It was not we who actually died, were buried and rose again. We only did these things symbolically, but we have been saved in actual fact. It is Christ who was crucified, who was buried and who rose again, and all this has been attributed to us. We share in his sufferings symbolically and gain salvation in reality. **What boundless love!** Christ's undefiled hands were pierced by the nails; he suffered the pain. I experience no pain, no anguish, yet by the share that I have in his sufferings he freely grants me salvation.

Let no one imagine that baptism consists only in the forgiveness of sins and in the grace of adoption. Our baptism is not like the baptism of John, which conferred only the forgiveness of sins. We know perfectly well that baptism, besides washing away our sins and bringing us the gift of the Holy Spirit, is a symbol of the sufferings of Christ. This is why Paul exclaims: Do you not know that when we were baptized into Christ Jesus we were, by that very action, sharing in his death? By baptism we went with him into the tomb.

As some of you know Thursday is usually my study day at Allen Hall Seminary in London. Many of you have been asking me about my studies so an update for you. Currently the Seminary is closed to studies because of the pandemic. We are not getting away from lectures and studies though! Many of the lectures and study notes are being sent by e mail for online learning.

For this semester I am currently studying Canon Law of Marriage, Sacramental Law and Philosophical Anthropology. There is much reading!

The Rector -Canon Roger Taylor, wrote the following article to form part of the introduction on the Allen Hall website:

The seminary of the Diocese of Westminster, where about 45 men are currently in formation for ministry as Catholic priests. Situated in central London, the seminary stands in the tradition of the Douai Martyrs who gave their life for the Catholic faith in this country.

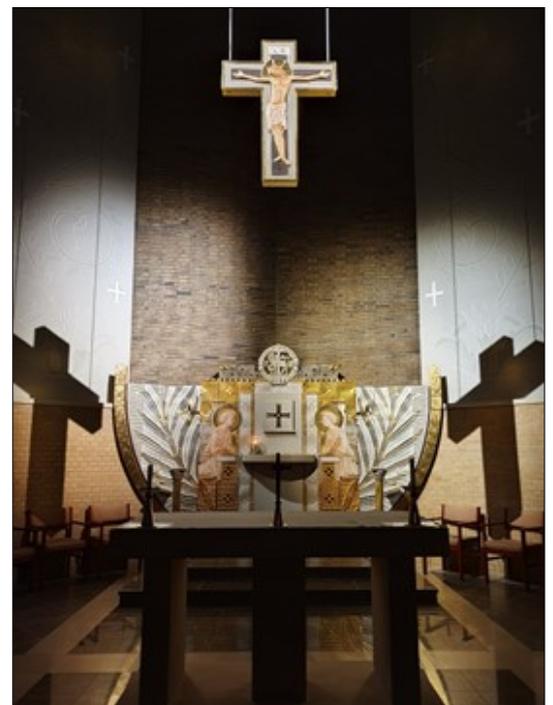
Here we try to make real the words spoken by Pope Benedict XVI when he addressed seminarians at the World Youth Day in Sydney: Do not be afraid to say 'yes' to Jesus, to find your joy in doing his will, giving yourself completely to the pursuit of holiness, and using all your talents in the service of others.

Ours is a rich history, beginning in 1568 during the English Reformation, when to minister as a Catholic priest in this country was punishable by death. So it was that Cardinal Allen founded the seminary not in this country, but rather at Douai in northern France. Over 150 of those early priests then came to England 'on mission' and were subsequently cruelly martyred.

After the French Revolution, it became equally dangerous to be a priest in France. Consequently, we returned to an England by then more accepting of the Catholic faith, and settled in Ware in Hertfordshire, until our move to central London in 1975. Our House is now situated on the site of the estate once owned by St Thomas More. Indeed, we still have in our garden [one of the original mulberry trees](#) from the orchard he planted, 500 or so years ago. St Thomas, of course, was himself martyred, like so many others, for loyalty to the Holy Father and love of the Eucharist.

This move into London has enabled us to provide the widest possible pastoral experience for our men. Throughout their time here they work in parishes, schools, hospitals and hospices, as well as prisons, with refugees and anywhere where a Catholic Christian presence can make a contribution.

In all that they do, our seminarians seek to deepen their appreciation and love of their faith, and to be formed in the image of Him who came not to be served, but to serve. They come from a wide range of countries, dioceses, religious congregations and backgrounds, reflecting the rich variety of Catholic life in Europe today. Our motto is Vivamus in spe - **May we live in hope.**



*'The chapel at night at Allen Hall'*

There are currently a handful of students at Allen Hall, and in their spare time they have been busy gardening and they recently sent the following photograph's so we could see their hard work.



The original mulberry tree as mentioned in the history.

God bless,

Shaun

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