

# Des' Diary

## A progress report from Des, our Deacon in training

I began my formal training to become a Deacon last September at St John's Seminary, in Womersley which is in Guildford.

The training lasts three years and involves undertaking a foundation degree in Pastoral Ministry affiliated to St Mary's University in Twickenham. There is generally one attendance a month, with some additional residential weekends and retreats throughout the year.

My studies so far this year have included, Theology, Scripture and currently Sacraments and Liturgy. Most of the assignments involve essays on a given subject with a word limit of generally 2,000 words. This has meant having to learn a whole new world of such things as Bibliographies, referencing and how to structure an essay according to university rules.

It has been a very steep learning curve but also a very enjoyable one. I have also had to produce PowerPoint presentations on Theology and in particular Divine Revelation.

The normal format of the day at the Seminary is tea and coffee first thing in the morning, followed by Lauds (Morning Prayer), in the Chapel. There then follows general notices for the students (1st, 2nd and 3rd year students), before going straight into lectures.

After lunch, there is time for each Diocese to have Diocesan time with the formation team from our own Diocese to talk things through, see how we are getting on and a discussion around all things Brentwood and the Diaconate.

Then it's back into lectures before finishing the day off with Vespers (Evening Prayer) in the Chapel. The course involves a lot of study at home and strict deadlines around completion of assignments and essays. The tutors are all really helpful but are also incredibly strict around the coursework which for most of us who haven't set foot in a classroom for over 30 years was a culture shock I can tell you.

I have been quite pleased with my assessment results so far and have learnt so much in such a short space of time already.

The 1st year ends for me this June and I can't believe how quickly the time has gone. I will keep you updated with how things are progressing and hope you will remember me in your prayers.

God Bless,

*DES*