

Seminarian of the Month

– Sean Barnes

I started my second academic year in the eternal city of Rome after a really happy summer parish placement with Canon John Cooke in Fareham.

Canon John and the staff of this parish provided me with much learning and insight, which was also a very happy and positive experience.

As I approach the end of my second year in formation at the Pontifical Beda College, I continue to confirm the good Lord's call and purpose in my life with clarity and confirmation that I am being called to the Sacrament of Priesthood. The formation at the Beda Seminary in Rome consists of a four year programme, designed for men over thirty-five: with previous third level education, experience of life from corporate and professional careers, therefore shortening the normal seven year formation itinerary.

I was born in Winchester, Hampshire, in September 1980, into a devout, practicing Irish Roman Catholic Family, where faith, hope and charity were fundamental in the roots of my upbringing. I was baptised at St Edward the Confessor Roman Catholic Church in Chandlers Ford and received First Holy Communion and Confirmation, while attending St Swithun Wells RC Primary and Thornden Schools in the same Parish.

The sense of vocation has been in my heart since adolescence, and I have remained disciplined and consistent in practicing the faith throughout my life. I attended Barton Peveril Sixth Form College in Eastleigh, before university and then spent periods of my life living in London, Melbourne, Sicily and Dublin; working in various corporate sectors; Public Relations, Property Development and Real Estate. Although I enjoyed a very prosperous career, I still felt the good Lord tugging on my heart strings. I concluded that I would create space in my life for God, to explore and discern with integrity, what I felt was the seed of a vocation to the Sacrament of Priesthood.

After much prayerful discernment, contemplation, Spiritual Direction and regular Adoration, I applied to the Diocese of Portsmouth, to make a formal application. In conclusion, the discernment conference committee recommended to Bishop Philip Egan that I should be accepted. Bishop Egan sent me to the Pontifical Beda College in Rome, to commence my studies in September 2024.



As I reflect upon the conclusion of my second academic year, I am very happy and sincerely feel that I have grown in the academic, pastoral, human and spiritual dimensions of seminary formation and further deepened my relationship with Christ. I have been extremely blessed and fortunate to meet the late Pope Francis and more recently Pope Leo, truly amazing moments on my vocational journey. I have been truly inspired by the new Rector of the Pontifical Beda College, Canon Marcus Holden and the seminary staff, brother seminarians and my formation program at the Pontifical Beda Seminary in Rome.



Canon Marcus Holden has brought an extreme positivity to our community, enhancing what was already a vibrant and happy seminary of formation. Among these qualities, Canon Holden has participated in our weekly seminary football training and matches, along with starting a seminary tennis club. These sporting attributes have projected a great fraternal vibe among my brothers in seminary and across other seminaries in Rome. The Beda Seminary will be hosting the biggest football tournament in Rome on 25th April called the 'Coppa di San Paolo', which will be hosted by the Catholic network of EWTN. I look forward, along with our Rector Canon Marcus Holden in participating in this tournament and hopefully bringing back the silverware to the Pontifical Beda College.

I look forward to the remaining three months of the academic year, with my admission to Acolyte that took place on Wednesday 25th March and a summer parish placement within the diocese in the coming months, before returning to the eternal city to commence my third year.

Please be assured of my prayers for our Bishop Philip Egan, our clergy, diocese and future vocations to the priesthood.

Catholic Diocese of
PORTSMOUTH



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