



LIFE

ISSUE 5
March 2026

FROM THE ABBOT...

Lenten Reading for 2026

St Benedict's Rule recommends that we each are given 'a book from the library' during Lent, and that we read it right though during the Holy Season. Abbot Mark points us towards the choice of an author whose approach to faith is deeply Benedictine.

The popular author, **Frank J. Sheed** (1897–1981), was one of the most lucid Catholic writers of the twentieth century, best known for his gift for explaining the faith with exactness, intelligence, and uncommon clarity. An Australian by birth who made his life in England, Sheed combined a deep grasp of doctrine with a passionate concern that ordinary Christians should be able to think their faith as well as believe it.

In best-selling books like *Theology for Beginners* and *Theology and Sanity*, Sheed resisted both sentimental piety and academic obscurity, insisting that theology is about *reality* (God, creation, grace) and therefore must be *intelligible* if it is to nourish prayer, worship, and moral life. In an age often marked by either over-technical theology or doctrinal vagueness, Sheed remains a bracing reminder that clarity is not the enemy of mystery, but its proper servant.

The alignment between Frank Sheed and a Benedictine understanding of *Wisdom* is striking, although Sheed comes as an apologist and teacher of doctrine while Benedictine tradition comes from monastic life and prayer. Yet both resist the reduction of theology to *method* and insist that it is finally a way of seeing reality rightly.

Sapientia before system

In the Benedictine world, theology is not first a technical discipline but a form of wisdom (*sapientia*), shaped by love, patience, and lived fidelity. This is implicit already in the Rule of St Benedict, which never outlines a theological system but presupposes one everywhere. Doctrine is assumed, prayed, enacted, and slowly absorbed.

Sheed's instinct is the same. He distrusts theology that becomes clever, self-referential, or primarily methodological. Truth is not something we construct but something we receive and learn to *inhabit*. Like Benedictine wisdom, Sheed's theology begins with the conviction that reality precedes technique.

Theology as formation of perception

Benedictine *sapientia* aims at forming the monk's way of *seeing*: God, self, community, time. Reading (*lectio*) is not for mastery but for conversion. As Dom Jean Leclercq famously argued, monastic theology is marked by desire, rumination, and assimilation rather than analysis.

Sheed echoes this uncannily. For him, theology trains the mind to think *straight* about God so that prayer does not drift into fantasy and morality into sentiment. Like monastic

wisdom, theology is judged not by novelty or productivity but by whether it produces clarity, humility, and stability of vision.

Clarity as a moral virtue

Both traditions see clarity not as academic tidiness but as a moral responsibility. In Benedictine life, confused thinking eventually distorts obedience, liturgy, and fraternal charity. Likewise, Sheed repeatedly insists that muddled theology harms souls.

This is *sapiential* rather than methodological clarity: not reducing mystery but refusing confusion. Mystery remains inexhaustible; confusion is simply a failure of attention. Benedictines learn this through obedience and repetition, Sheed through disciplined explanation. Same aim, different tools.

Theology ordered to worship

In Benedictine tradition, theology ultimately serves the *Work of God*. Doctrine is true insofar as it sustains *right praise*. Sheed would agree without hesitation. He sees theology as the groundwork of authentic worship: if we do not know *who* God is, we cannot adore him truthfully.

This places both firmly against a technocratic theology that treats doctrine as detachable propositions or intellectual currency. Theology belongs to the rhythm of life, hours, seasons, vows, sacraments, not to a self-contained academic arena.

Wisdom that resists efficiency

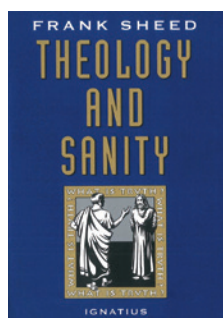
Finally, both Sheed and Benedictine *sapientia* resist the modern temptation toward efficiency, productivity, and constant innovation. Wisdom is slow. It requires stability, patience, and fidelity to what has been received.

Where method asks, *What can I do with this?* *sapientia* asks, *What kind of person does this truth require me to become?* Sheed's theology, like Benedictine theology, is answerable to that deeper question.

In short, Sheed articulates in prose and argument what Benedictine tradition lives in rhythm and practice: theology not as system-building, but as truth learned slowly enough to be prayed, lived, and loved.



Abbot Mark





ENGLISH BENEDICTINE CONGREGATION (EBC)

Every 18 months or so The Novice Mistresses and Novice Masters of the monasteries of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) come together to discuss matters on congregational and mutual interest, to share perspectives and experience, and offer support and understanding in the challenges that we face. This January Worth had the privilege of hosting the conference in St Bruno’s, which proved an excellent venue. 10 EBC communities were represented, spanning England, Sweden, Ireland and the United States.

Our visitors joined the home community in choir and were struck by the silence and peace of the Abbey Church. They were keen to visit the monks in Brighton and came away with a very positive impression and heartened at witnessing a new and vibrant community within the Congregation. We are aware that all our monasteries have their fragilities at this moment, so the encouragement that the conference gave was greatly appreciated by all who attended.

EASTER TRIDUUM TIMETABLE AT WORTH ABBEY 2026

MAUNDY THURSDAY – 2 APRIL 2026

- 06:15–06:50 Matins
- 07:30–08:00 Lauds
- 13:00–13:10 Midday Prayer (no Vespers)
- 20:00–20:20 Confessions
- 20:30–21:30 Community Concelebrated Mass of the Lord’s Supper – followed by Watching at the Altar of Repose (Unity Room) until midnight

HOLY SATURDAY – 4 APRIL 2026

- 06:15–06:50 Matins
- 07:30–08:00 Lauds
- 13:00–13:10 Midday Prayer
- 18:45–19:15 Vespers
- 20:30–20:50 Confessions
- 21:00–22:30+ Easter Vigil Mass of the Lord’s Resurrection – followed by refreshments in the Narthex

GOOD FRIDAY – 3 APRIL 2026

- 06:15–06:50 Matins
- 07:30–08:00 Lauds
- 13:00–13:10 Midday Prayer
- 14:30–14:50 Confessions
- 15:00–16:40 Good Friday Service of the Lord’s Passion
- Immediately After Service Confessions for 30 minutes
- 20:15–20:30 Compline (no Vespers)

EASTER SUNDAY – 5 APRIL 2026

- 08:30–09:00 Lauds
- 09:15–09:45 Confessions
- 10:00–11:00 Parish Easter Morning Mass
- 13:00–13:10 Midday Prayer
- 18:00–18:30 Pontifical Vespers



WORTH ABBEY PARISH



The beginning of this year saw an important change in the life of the parish as Fr Rod Jones took over the responsibilities of parish priest from Fr Paul, who had served most generously in that role for a number of years. The good news is that Fr Paul will continue as part of the parish team but without having to manage the demands and challenges that the position of parish priest normally entails!

Fr Rod has been a monk of Worth Abbey since 1980. Ordained to the priesthood in 1985, he has held several pastoral responsibilities over the years. He spent time in the small monastery the Worth community had set up in Dulwich back in the 1980's. Between 1996 to 2003 he served as parish priest of Worth Abbey; he has ministered in St Bruno's retreat centre and in the school. For the past six years he was living and working in Brighton, until being recalled to the monastery this past autumn.

Fr Rod had this to say about his experience of ministering as a priest in Brighton.

'Having been invited to take up the position of catholic chaplain at Sussex University, I relocated there in 2019. This was a significant appointment for me. It was while I was studying architecture in Brighton that I first visited Worth Abbey. It was that visit to Worth that started me on a journey that eventually led me to join the monastery. As a student, the catholic chaplaincy in Brighton had a significant impact on my faith, so to return there as the chaplain was a privilege – the opportunity to give something back in return for what I had received myself all those years ago. I understood it as God's loving providence at work! The fact that the catholic student centre, Howard House, was located adjacent the Amex football stadium, I also saw as a great blessing! For the last couple of years I was living in Brighton, I also had the joy of being responsible for the community at St Mary Magdalen, located right in the heart of the city.'

Being back at Worth is quite a change from life and ministry in such a city as Brighton!

As I settle back into the monastic life, I look forward to engaging again with the parish, in particular the challenges and opportunities that the diocesan pastoral plan will bring as we look with hope to the future!'

EASTER RETREATS

HOLY WEEK WALKING PILGRIMAGE FROM BRIGHTON TO WORTH ABBEY

Palm Sunday 29th March - Maundy Thursday 2nd April

We will walk from Brighton to Worth Abbey over Holy Week. By carrying a cross we are helped each day to reflect on Christ's journey in Holy Week, and our own Christian journey as his disciples. The pilgrimage is a great opportunity for faith sharing and building community. Monks from Worth Abbey will serve as chaplains.

Walking pilgrimage cost: £60 (£30 available, please enquire at retreats@worth.org.uk for more details)

To book your place visit: worthabbey.org/our-retreats and click on the 'Young Adults' tab.

YOUNG ADULTS' EASTER RETREAT AT WORTH ABBEY

Maundy Thursday 2nd April - Easter Sunday 5th April

You are warmly invited to join us on our young adults' Easter retreat at Worth Abbey! Come and celebrate together the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the greatest Feast of the year and climax of our faith.

Talks will be offered over the weekend from members of the Monastic Community, exploring central aspects of the Easter Mystery. There will also be plenty of space for personal reflection, group discussion, social time and friendship, finishing with a festive Easter Sunday lunch with the monks.

Retreat cost: £200

To book your place visit: worthabbey.org/our-retreats and click on the 'Young Adults' tab.

(£100 places available - please enquire at retreats@worth.org.uk for more details)



BENEDICTINE OBLATES OF WORTH ABBEY

I am pleased to announce the introduction of Benedictine Oblates at Worth Abbey, a new way of expressing an association with the monastic life in this Community and seeking God alongside the monks.

Although oblates are a long established and valued component of most Benedictine abbeys across the world, here at Worth oblation will be a new way for lay men and women to share more intentionally in our monastic mission, and to shape their everyday life by the wisdom of the Rule of St Benedict.

The word oblate comes from *oblatus*: one who is *offered*. Benedictine Oblates are not monks, and they do not take monastic vows; they make personal promises to God which they renew annually. They remain fully in their own state of life, at home, at work, in parish and community, yet they choose to be formed by Benedictine spirituality in a steady, practical way. In many Benedictine communities, oblates describe their calling as learning ‘to seek God in ordinary life’ through the formation and support of the monastic tradition: through prayer that is faithful rather than flashy; through listening, patience, and hospitality; through a rhythm of life that holds together *ora et labora*, prayer and work, so that neither becomes a rival to the other.

Across the Benedictine world, oblate programmes emphasise a few simple anchors. The Rule invites a life rooted in the Scriptures and sustained by *lectio divina* (holy reading), nourished by the liturgy and the sacraments, deepened by silence and an attentiveness to the presence of God, and bearing fruit in practical work regularly undertaken to support the mission of the monastery. Many oblates also find, with time, that Benedict’s gentle realism is a gift: it teaches balance and moderation, forms habits of stability, and encourages conversion of life not as a dramatic reinvention, but as daily fidelity, returning again and again to what matters most.

At Worth, we want this new oblate community to be local and genuinely connected with the monks and the life of the Abbey. For that reason, we are inviting enquiries from those who live geographically close to Worth Abbey and will be able to be regularly present in person. Oblates will be invited to

attend an Oblate Day here at Worth, usually once a month: a day of prayer with the community, teaching and reflection on Scripture and the Rule, time for shared conversation, and the practical details of formation and mutual support.

We also hope that our oblates will share not only in the monastery’s prayer, but in its work. As part of the life of this community, oblates will be invited to offer regular volunteer time alongside the monks in areas where patient, faithful service is itself a school of Benedictine life: for example, in our library and archives, in the grounds and gardens, or in our ministry of hospitality. This is not simply *helping out* (though it certainly is that!). It is primarily a way of learning the Benedictine virtues in practice: reverence, steadiness, humility, and the quiet joy of doing ordinary things well, for love of God and neighbour.

You can discover more about Benedictine Oblates and the opportunities presented by this form of dedicated life at www.benedictine-Oblates.net

If you feel drawn to explore this path, seeking God alongside the monks of Worth, and allowing the Rule to shape your daily life, we would be glad to hear from you. Further information about the oblate life at Worth Abbey, the pattern of monthly Oblate Days, and the formation process can be obtained by writing to abbot@worth.org.uk.

Abbot Mark



JUST IN:

ST BRUNO’S RETREAT CENTRE - GIFT VOUCHERS NOW AVAILABLE

We’re delighted to introduce St Bruno’s, Retreat Centre Gift Vouchers — an invitation to rest, renew, and step away from the everyday. Whether it’s for a birthday, a thank you, or “just because,” these vouchers offer something truly meaningful.

Vouchers can be purchased for the full value of a retreat or as a contribution toward one.

To purchase a gift voucher, please contact retreats@worth.org.uk.



RESIDENTIAL RETREATS 2026

FINDING STILLNESS

May, 8–11 Jun, 7–10 Sept, 16–19 Nov | £345 (3 nights)

Explore silence and stillness as a form of prayer. This retreat invites you into deep spiritual reflection, drawing on Benedictine wisdom and 30 years of meditation experience.

TIME OUT – INDIVIDUAL PRIVATE RETREAT

5–8 Oct, 7–10 Dec | From £95pp per night (min 2 nights)

A flexible, personal retreat with no fixed programme. Enjoy the rhythm of monastic life, quiet reflection, and optional Lectio Divina or 1:1 spiritual accompaniment.

LENT

3–5 Mar | £230 (2 nights)

Take time out this Lent to pause, reflect, and prepare your heart for Easter. Through scripture and guided reflection, we will explore how God may be inviting you to open more deeply to His presence. Join us for a retreat that offers space for renewal, clarity, and spiritual growth.

JULIAN OF NORWICH

23–26 Mar | £345 (3 nights)

Guided by Fr David, discover the timeless wisdom of Julian of Norwich, a 14th-century anchoress whose visions of Christ's love continue to speak powerfully to our modern world. In a time of great turmoil. This retreat invites you to explore her revelations and their relevance for today's questions of faith, suffering, and love.

EASTER TRIDUUM

2–5 Apr | £345 (3 nights)

Celebrate the Easter Triduum at Worth Abbey. Be in fellowship with others as we follow the powerful liturgy of the Triduum and allow ourselves to be formed by it. Explore the mysteries at the core of our faith: The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

LISTENING TO THE FUTURE: MONASTIC WISDOM FOR TODAY'S WORLD

10–12 Apr | £250 (2 nights)

In a rapidly changing and uncertain world, many are seeking a deeper, steadier rhythm to live by. This series explores what the monastic tradition can offer today through the insight and lived experience of three Worth Abbots—Abbot Mark Barrett, Fr Luke Jolly, and Abbot Christopher Jamison. To join the waiting list, please contact us.

CONTEMPLATIVE PHOTOGRAPHY: SEEING WITH THE EYES OF THE HEART

13–16 Apr | £345 (3 nights)

A retreat combining photography and Benedictine spirituality, set in the beautiful grounds of Worth Abbey, led by Audrey Hamilton. All abilities welcome. Discover how the lens can become a tool for stillness, attentiveness, and encountering the sacred in everyday moments.

BENEDICTINE INDIVIDUALLY GUIDED RETREAT (IGR)

1–6 May, 29 Jun–3 Jul, 12–18 Oct | £110 pp per night (min 2 nights)

Follow the monastic day with daily 1:1 spiritual guidance in a contemplative setting. Ideal for those discerning God's call or seeking deeper spiritual insight.

WATERCOLOUR PAINTING RETREAT

25–28 May | £345 (3 nights)

Join us for a peaceful retreat that blends prayer, contemplation and creativity amid the beauty of the South Downs led by Sarah Warren. Whether a beginner or experienced artist, this retreat offers the chance to deepen both your artistic expression and spiritual life.

TAI CHI & CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

1–4 Jun | £345 (3 nights)

Discover the balance of body and spirit through Tai Chi and meditation. Fr Peter shares how the body, as a temple of the Holy Spirit, supports a vibrant prayer life. No prior experience required.

ICON PAINTING RETREAT

5–12 July | £999

Learn traditional Icon painting over six full days using egg tempera and gold leaf, with icons blessed in the Abbey Church on the final day. This year the Icon will be Christ. Led by Hanna Ward — professional iconographer with global teaching experience and who trained at the Prince's School of Traditional Arts.

LIVING WITH LOSS

9–12 Nov | £345 (3 nights)

For those navigating grief, this retreat offers healing through group sharing, personal reflection, and spiritual support. Led by Fr Peter and bereavement counsellor Simon Holland-Brown.

PARISH MUSIC MINISTRY WEEKEND

6–8 Nov | £230 (2 nights)

Worth Abbey is delighted to partner with One Hope Project to offer a special weekend for all those involved in Parish Music Ministry. This retreat is designed to form and equip musicians and worship leaders through inspiring input, practical workshops, and shared learning. Alongside this, participants will be given generous space for reflection, worship, and prayer within the beautiful monastic setting of Worth Abbey — a chance to be renewed, restored, and re-anchored in the heart of their ministry.

YOUNG ADULTS ADVENT RETREAT

27–29 Nov | £TBC (half price places available)

The weekend will offer space to go deeper in the spiritual life and in faith — to explore, pray, rest, learn, share, and enjoy friendship. Guided by talks, join the monastic community in their rhythm of prayer, Lectio Divina, Personal Prayer, walks in the beautiful Sussex countryside and time to build a community.

ADVENT RETREAT

1–3 Dec | £230 (2 nights)

Take time out to reflect on the season of Advent and the message it has about preparing us for Christmas. Marking the beginning of the liturgical year it's a good time to take stock as we prepare for the journey of the Christian story and meaning of the incarnation.

TO BOOK VISIT: worthabbey.net/our-retreats/

CONTACT: retreats@worth.org.uk or 01342 710 318





HEART & SOUL CAMPAIGN

As we enter 2025, Worth Abbey continues to offer a place of stillness, prayer, and reflection amid a world that feels increasingly fast-moving, distracted, and fragmented. The enduring wisdom of Benedictine spirituality speaks with renewed relevance: the Rule of St Benedict provides a rhythm of life centred on prayer, work, community, and hospitality – values deeply needed in today's culture of noise and individualism.

To support this mission, we are committed to ensuring that Worth Abbey Church remains a place where all can feel truly welcome. In partnership with Worth School, the Abbey is undertaking a major development through the Heart & Soul Campaign, enhancing facilities and accessibility for the next generation.

Central to this plan is our ambition to build a new Welcome Centre at the east end of the Narthex. Thoughtfully designed to embody Benedictine hospitality, it will create an inviting first encounter for all who come to Worth whether for liturgy, retreat, study, or quiet reflection. It will include a new entrance, a comfortable arrival area, a café, a bookshop, and accessible facilities.

Support from across our community will be required to bring this vision to life. Over the coming months, we will be sharing more information about our campaign and plans for the Welcome Centre through small gatherings and one-to-one meetings. We look forward to keeping you informed and invite you to consider how you might support the future of Worth Abbey.



YOUR VOICE, YOUR ABBEY LIFE

We want Abbey Life to reflect what matters most to you. Whether it's more local stories, behind-the-scenes glimpses, upcoming events, or something entirely new – we promise that we're listening.

Tell us: What would you like to see more of?

Drop us a line, share your thoughts. Every idea helps shape the next issue. Email Kelly at kohara@worth.org.uk





PLANTING A LEGACY: THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY ORCHARD BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE

As Worth Abbey celebrates fifty years of faith and community, we're sowing the seeds of a living legacy—quite literally. Plans are underway for a commemorative orchard that will grace our estate for generations to come.

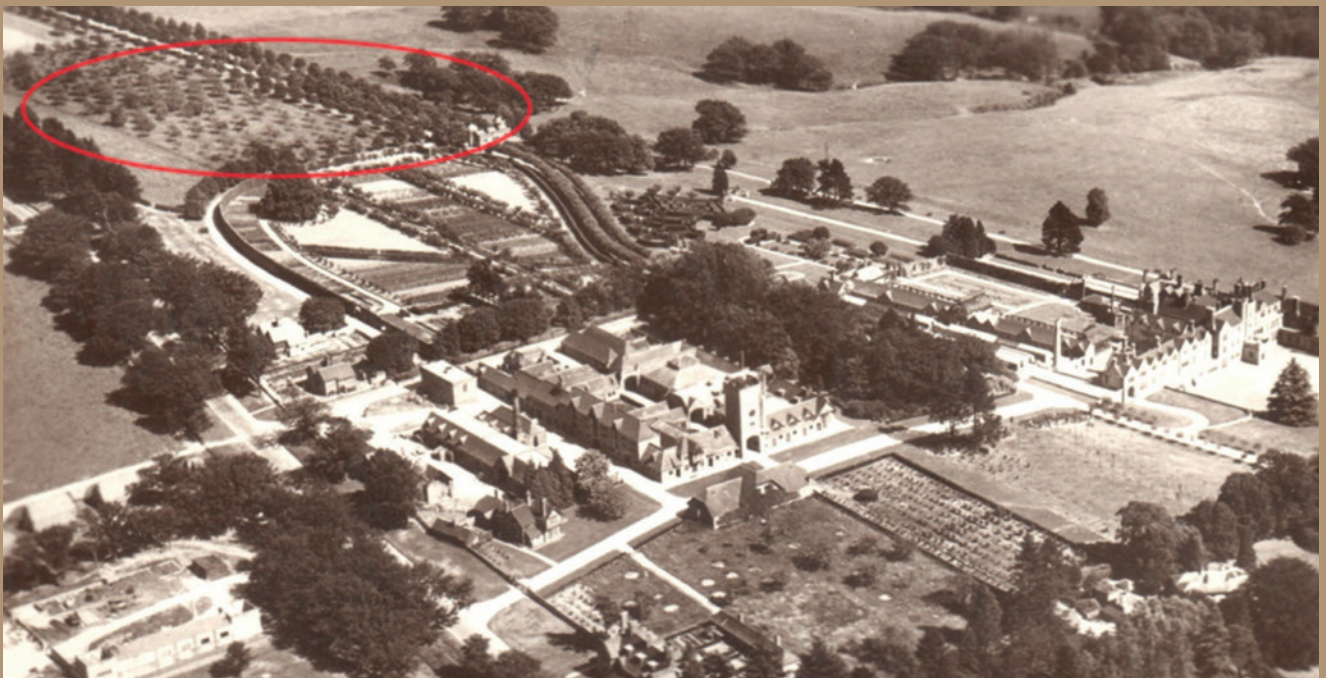
Right now, we're in the exciting planning stage: walking the grounds, imagining the perfect location, sketching layouts, and debating which apple varieties will best tell our story. Should we choose traditional Sussex apples to honour our roots? Or a mix of heritage and modern varieties to reflect growth and renewal? These conversations are shaping what will become a beautiful and meaningful space.

This orchard is more than trees—it's a vision of connection. Picture rows of apple trees in blossom, a

haven for wildlife, and a tranquil spot for visitors to pause and reflect. In time, it will offer fruit for our kitchens, shade for summer walks, and a living classroom for learning about nature and sustainability. Each tree will stand as a symbol of gratitude for the past fifty years and hope for the decades ahead.

We'll keep you updated as plans progress and planting begins. Together, let's grow something that will flourish for generations.

In the meantime, if you'd like to be part of this legacy, you can support the orchard by visiting worthabbey.net/donate and selecting **50th Anniversary Orchard**.



Historic records and imagery (above) indicate that the Paddockhurst estate supported an orchard. Although that original orchard no longer exists, the legacy provides both a precedent and strong sense of continuity for reinstating an orchard in this location.

The proposed orchard at Worth will be planted in a square pattern, which is the simplest and most practical layout





OUR MONASTIC INTERN PROGRAMME CONTINUES TO THRIVE



Fr Luke, the Novice Master, has responsibility for our Postulants and also the Intern Programme.

Our Monastic Intern Programme continues to grow steadily and positively impact the lives of those who take part. Our next internship is now full, and we have already received enquiries for the following internship, which will run from 14th September to 6th November. If you know anyone who might be interested in this opportunity, please do let them know.

In 2027, we hope to offer a two-month internship over the summer, making it an ideal experience for students during their summer holidays or after graduation.

Who the Programme Is For

The internship is open to men aged 18–35 who are seeking time away from the demands of daily life to pray, reflect, and grow spiritually. It welcomes those exploring Christianity more broadly, not only Catholic. It offers a space for young men encounter, quiet, and gentle formation within our Benedictine community.

Find Out More

To learn more or to speak to someone about the internship, get in touch or visit: worthabbey.net/interns or get in touch with Fr Luke





REPAIRING THE PAST, PRESERVING THE FUTURE: THE ABBEY FURNITURE RESTORATION PROJECT

Having grown up visiting Worth Abbey School for rugby matches and cross-country events, I knew the grounds well as a child, yet I had never stepped inside the Abbey itself. That changed in 2017, when a client and former Worth pupil invited me to visit for the first time to look at the furniture installation. What followed has become a near-ten-year journey, one that has been as much an education in timber movement as it has been a lesson in patience and perseverance.

I have come to feel sympathy for those involved in the original fabrication. The design is complex and ambitious; even in its simplest form, it would have presented significant manufacturing challenges. Unfortunately, one fundamental truth of working with wood, that it shrinks and expands with the seasons and must be allowed to move freely, had not been fully accommodated. The result was inevitable cracking and stress within the pieces.

Since 2017, we have carefully developed and prototyped a repair strategy, patiently observing the results through changing seasons to ensure the solutions truly worked. We went on to establish a dedicated workshop and assembled a committed team, removing the furniture in batches, carrying out the necessary repairs, and returning each piece to the Abbey with great care.

A significant milestone came on 29th January 2026, when we reinstalled the final batch of the main congregational pews. Some 26,000 glue lines and 40,000 dovetail keys later, the pews have been re-glued, re-finished, and subtly re-engineered to allow the timber to breathe and move as it should.

As a cabinet maker at heart, I feel incredibly fortunate to have worked alongside such a skilled and dedicated team. There is a shared sense of pride in what has been achieved and, understandably, mixed emotions as this chapter draws to a close. Mark Huxley, Kye Allen and Andrew Norton, in particular, have been integral to the project's success.

Our attention has now turned to the monastic seating, which has also suffered from shrinkage and cracking, though with an added layer of complexity. Once again, we are working methodically in batches around the 31 seats, carefully removing, repairing, and reinstating them so that they may endure for generations to come.

Edward Johnson
Director GB Workshop Ltd
Great British Workshop

LCSB FORMATION SERIES: GROWING CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH A RULE OF LIFE - 18 FEBRUARY - 2 APRIL

FORMATION SERIES:



WED 25 FEB
8-9PM
FR MARK KENNY
THEOLOGY OF THE RULE OF LIFE



WED 4 MARCH
8-9PM
FR MATTHEW JARVIS
PRIOR OF ST DOMINIC'S, LONDON



WED 11 MARCH
8-9PM
ABBOT MARK BARRETT
ABBOT OF WORTH ABBEY



WED 18 MARCH
8-9PM
BR MATTHEW
PRIOR OF TAIZÉ



WED 25 MARCH
8-9PM
CATHERINE ASKEW
NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY



On Wednesday evenings throughout Lent, young adults from the LCSB Community will host speakers from different communities, who will share how their Rule of Life has impacted their personal journeys as well as the life of the communities they belong to. The online Zoom sessions will include a time of discussion and reflection. All are welcome to join all or any of the talks - sign up below!

This series features contributions from a range of monastic and ecclesiastical speakers, including our own Abbot Mark Barrett, who will address the gathering on **Wednesday 11 March** and offer his insights into the Benedictine tradition and the formative role of a Rule of Life.

To register visit the LCSB website [here](https://www.lcsb.org.uk).



WORTH ABBEY PILGRIMS CAROL SERVICE: SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



The Worth Abbey Pilgrims' Carol Service has long been a cherished highlight of our Pilgrims calendar, and last year's gathering was no exception. In fact, it was our largest attendance yet. The Abbey Choir offered beautiful and uplifting music, creating a prayerful and joyful atmosphere. Afterwards, the delicious refreshments provided the perfect opportunity for people to gather, to connect with friends and family, and to enjoy each other's company in the Narthex of the Abbey Church.

This year the retiring collection at our Carol Service was held in support of Crawley Open House, and our community were generous in their donations.

In January, Christina Fitzsimons, Worth Abbey Pilgrims, and Kelly O'Hara, Assistant to Abbot Mark, visited Crawley Open House to see first-hand the vital work taking place there. The team warmly welcomed us and took time to show us around, explain their services, and answer our questions. It was a moving and enlightening visit.

We were touched by the message we received afterwards: "Just to say a huge thank you for coming over on Monday and giving of your time – your empathy and interest are so appreciated. At least now you can picture where we are and what we do a bit better."

During the visit, we were also delighted to share with Ian that the retiring collection from the Carol Service had raised a

generous amount that would be donated directly to their work. Ian Wilkins, Head of Fundraising & Relationships at Crawley Open House, wrote:

"We recently received your wonderful bank transfer for £1,163.66 following your Christmas Carol Service. What a fantastic amount to receive – thank you all so much for thinking of us again in this way. As you know, every pound will go towards our vital front-line work offering accommodation and support to those who have fallen through the cracks in the system, for whatever reason. Sadly, if anything, those cracks seem to be getting wider, not narrower."

The seemingly never-ending cold, wet winter saw demand for our services ramp up, and people are still presenting literally every day who have run out of options. Some of their stories are heartbreaking. We will continue to do our best to help them all, and this is only possible because of the ongoing support of so many in our community."

Thanks to you and all at Worth Abbey for being part of that wonderful group of people for so many years. We never take it for granted. Please pass on our huge thanks to everyone involved."

Our thanks go to all who attended the Carol Service, to those who gave so generously, and to the team at Crawley Open House for their tireless commitment to serving the most vulnerable in our community. It is a privilege for Worth Abbey Pilgrims to support such important work.





UPCOMING EVENTS WITH THE MONKS IN THE CITY

The Brighton Monks have developed a programme offering opportunities to join the community in prayer, reflection, contemplation, and learning centred on the Rule of St Benedict.

You are warmly invited on Monday 17th March for Evening Prayer at 6.00pm in the Church, followed by a soup and bread supper at 6.30pm and a talk at 7.00pm.

This month's talk, "Exploring the Spiritual Inheritance of St Patrick", will be given by Fr Patrick.

A special welcome is extended to all those of Irish heritage and, of course, everyone is welcome.

They are also offering a Lent Retreat Day on Saturday 7th March 2026, 10:45am – 4pm. The day will include short talks, time for reflection, prayer and silence. It begins in the Fitzherbert Community Hub with refreshments at 10.45am. Booking is required by emailing monksinthecity@worth.org.uk



ABBEY READING ROOM

The monks are currently reading in the refectory; *Thomas Moore: A Life and Death in Tudor England*, Michael Joseph, 2025.

More and more people are taking up the practice of silent prayer, also called meditation. Two books are particularly insightful in helping us to understand why and how to pray in this way. One of these books would make an excellent companion during Lent.

Finding your Hidden Treasure by Benignus O'Rourke, Darton Longman & Todd, 2021.
The Missing Peace, Chris Whittington, Canterbury Press, 2025.

Two other books which would also be good Lenten fare are:
Seventy-Four Tools for Good Living: Reflections on the Fourth Chapter of Benedict's Rule, Michael Casey, Liturgical Press, 2014.

A Song for the Way, Ben Harrison, Dominican Publications, Dublin, 2025. This is a collection of short autobiographical reflections by Ben on his spiritual journey and ministry with prisoners, homeless people and addicts. He is a brother in Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

Fr Martin, Monastic Librarian

***Thomas More: A Life and Death in Tudor England* Paperback – 19 Mar. 2026 by Dr Joanne Paul (Author)**

Dr Joanne Paul has written a fascinating and compelling biography of Thomas More (1478 – 1535), a man who is reviled by some and admired by many. Perhaps the most compelling aspect of this biography is Joanne Paul's ability to bring alive the social and political world into which Thomas More was born and grew to maturity. The life of 15th & 16th century London is vividly portrayed and the various minor characters in More's life are also brought to life. Dr Paul achieves this feat by her lively and crisp style and by her in-depth knowledge of the social and political background of this troubled time. Another pleasing aspect of this biography is its impartiality. She judges Saint Thomas by the norms and beliefs of his time, and not by those of post-Vatican II England. In a note to her readers the author writes: "[Thomas More's] willingness to stand firm and speak truth to an overwhelming power is as relevant in today's world as it was to that of Henry VIII. Tyrants, it will not surprise you to learn, still exist." This is a book to savour and enjoy.





FRAMING THE FUTURE: A BENEDICTINE APPROACH

A talk by Abbot Christopher Jamison

Saturday 11th April – Unity Room, Worth Abbey

What frame will we choose to face the future?

Abbot Christopher will look at ways in which the Benedictine life can offer a creative approach to facing the future.

About Abbot Christopher Jamison

Abbot Jamison OSB is the Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation and former abbot of Worth. Known for his thoughtful teaching and his writing on monastic spirituality, he has introduced Benedictine wisdom to a wide audience through his books and public work.

10:30am Coffee in Narthex
11:00am Talk and Q and A
12:00pm Optional light lunch
1:00pm Midday Prayer



To reserve a place, please visit our website at worthabbey.net/latest-news/
For further assistance email kohara@worth.org.uk



COME AND SING AT WORTH ABBEY

Saturday 18th April

Take part in an afternoon of beauty and joy as Worth Abbey Choir prepares and performs Louis Vierne's Messe solennelle, op. 16.

11:00am-12:40pm Rehearsal (singers)
12:40pm-1:30pm Lunch break (singers)
1:30pm-2:30pm Rehearsal (singers)
2:30pm-3:00pm Pre-concert refreshments
3:00pm-3:45pm Concert



£10 per singer (includes complimentary score). Registration required.
Free entrance to guests attending the concluding concert.
For further information and to register, please visit worthabbey.net/latest-news/



CELEBRATE CORPUS CHRISTI WITH US

Sunday 7th June

Join us for a Mass, a procession of the blessed sacrament, and a community gathering as we honour this feast.

Bring a picnic, enjoy the beauty of the Abbey estate, and afterwards explore the grounds with family or friends.



For more information on all our events, and guidance on how to register visit the News section of our website

www.worthabbey.net/latest-news



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