



LIFE

ISSUE 6
June 2026

FROM THE ABBOT...

Seeking God Together

For most of this year, the monastic community has been working to put into words a simple statement of who we are, what we do, and where we believe God is calling us to be in the future. We call it *Seeking God Together*, and that phrase, drawn from the Rule of St Benedict, is not accidental. It names something essential about monastic life: that the search for God is never solitary. It is undertaken in company, sustained by the community, and open, by its very nature, to those who wish to join us in it.

I want to share something of this thinking here, because I believe our monastic mission at Worth Abbey belongs not only to the monks but to all who feel themselves drawn into the life of this place.

At the heart of *Seeking God Together* is a simple but serious conviction: that the monastic community of Worth Abbey exists to seek God and to invite others into that seeking. Everything that we do, our prayer, our hospitality, our formation programmes, our presence in Brighton, our care for those who come here weary or searching, flows from that single purpose. The Rule of St Benedict gives it shape as monastic *welcome*, prayer and *worship*, sharing the *wisdom* of our Benedictine tradition, and *witness* to Christ alive in our world today. This is a fourfold vocation which, in different ways, encompasses every aspect of life here.

We are a smaller community than we once were, and we try to carry that reality honestly. A smaller community does not mean a diminished mission, but it does mean a more thoughtful one. It asks us to be clearer about what we are for, more deliberate in how we give ourselves, and more willing to invite others to share in



what we cannot do alone. I'd suggest that this is not a concession but a grace. A shared mission is a more powerful and sustainable mission.

So, what are we working towards? In the months and years ahead, you will see this vision take concrete form. The Abbey Church refurbishment is an act of faith that the liturgy we celebrate here is worth doing beautifully and sustainably, not as performance but as genuine encounter with the living God. The formation of newcomers, our work with the Abbey Pilgrims, and the development of our Oblate programme, now formally launched, reflects our conviction that the Benedictine way of life has something to offer far beyond our walls: a rhythm of prayer and work, a school of patience, a practised attentiveness to God in the ordinary.

We are also working to develop our Welcome Centre, establish an Abbey Park in our grounds, as well as carrying forward our retreat provision and our engagement with the wider community of Abbey Pilgrims and friends. We hope to establish in time a Benedictine Study Centre where the wisdom of the monastic tradition can be shared more widely. We are working to be more ecologically responsible. None of these are ends in themselves. Each is an expression

of the same underlying call: to make Worth Abbey an ever more credible and generous witness to Christ in our time.

I am sometimes asked whether there is hope for monastic life in an age like ours. My answer, without hesitation, is yes. Not because communities like ours are necessarily flourishing by institutional measures, but because the hunger that brings people to Worth is real and deep. People come here looking for silence, for prayer, for community, for a life that holds together rather than fragments. The Rule of St Benedict was written for a world that felt equally precarious and restless. Its wisdom has not aged.

What gives me hope, above all, is you: the generous and supportive community of people who gather around this place, who pray with us, who work with us, who find here something they cannot easily name but know they need. We do not seek God alone. We seek God together. And for that gift, I give thanks every day.



Abbot Mark



ABBEY READING ROOM

In this review, Fr Martin McGee OSB reflects on *Finding Your Hidden Treasure* by the late Fr Benignus O'Rourke, an Augustine friar and a member of the Clare Priory in Suffolk. It is a book that gently invites readers into the practice of silent prayer and deeper listening to God.

FINDING YOUR HIDDEN TREASURE

How can we learn to listen “with the ear of our heart”¹ in our noisy and distracted world? A wonderful book, *Finding Your Hidden Treasure*², by the late Benignus O'Rourke, an Augustinian friar, provides us with an answer, namely, the practice of silent prayer. In sixty-four short reflections, each two or three pages long, Fr Benignus shares his rich experience of silent prayer with us. Drawing on the teaching of St Augustine, his own deep humanity and many years of practising silent prayer, Benignus encourages us to become more aware of God's loving presence in the silent regions of our heart. The Welsh priest poet, R.S. Thomas (1913-2000), describes this kind of prayer as an attempt to tune in to the silence of God: “But the silence in the mind/is when we live best, within/listening distance of the silence/we call God.”³

In his first reflection Fr Benignus shows us a way of leaving behind a prayer life which may be bearing little fruit. “We are perhaps tired of words ... Tired of asking God in words that have no life in them. Tired of thinking about God. Tired of being talked to about God. Tired of saying prayers that may be beautiful in themselves but are not bringing God closer to us. Then, perhaps it is best to simplify our prayers and follow the age-old advice, to go from many words to few words, from few words to one word, and from one word into silence. Sometimes when we pray, our words, any words, can be barriers. They come between us and God. The deepest communion with God comes through silence.”⁴

The practice of silent prayer allows us to unlock the inner chamber of our hearts where God dwells. This silent listening to God, expounded so beautifully by Fr Benignus, simply involves sitting upright in a chair which supports our back, placing our feet

firmly on the ground, closing our eyes and repeating a prayer word(s), in unison with our breathing. The mantra might be the shorter form of the Jesus prayer: “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me” or some other brief phrase taken perhaps from the psalms. As we repeat the prayer word(s) slowly, without focusing on the meaning, the chattering mind slows down and begins to rest in God's loving embrace; gradually we stop repeating the mantra and lapse into silence. However, when the distractions return, and return they surely will, we return to repeating the prayer word(s) until silence descends once more. In this way we can hope to discover the deeper silence of the heart.

In silent prayer we give up trying to control the world; we let go of our cares and worries and try to be present in wordless silence to a God who loves us. We desire above all to have a relationship with God, to know Him, to love Him. In silent prayer we gain access to the deepest part of ourselves, what the Bible calls our heart.

As Fr Benignus reminds us: “Silence purifies, silence empties. By taking refuge in the silence and allowing our minds and hearts to become quiet, the stagnant pools will be freed and the stream of living water will flow again from the depths of our being.”⁵ Fr Benignus' book, *Finding Your Hidden Treasure*, gives us the confidence we need to enter the silence of our heart, the place of encounter with a God who loves us.⁶

Martin McGee OSB

¹ Rule of St Benedict, Prologue, verse 1.

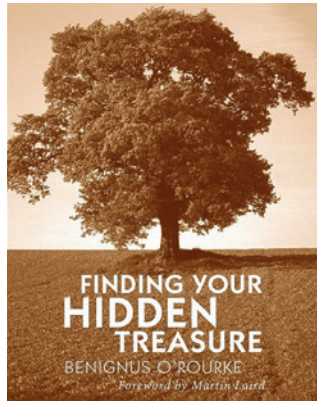
² Benignus O'Rourke OSA: *Finding Your Hidden Treasure* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, 2021).

³ R. S. Thomas, ‘But the silence in the mind’, cited in Barry Morgan, *Strangely Orthodox*, R.S. Thomas and his Poetry of Faith (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 2006), p. 20.

⁴ O'Rourke, *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

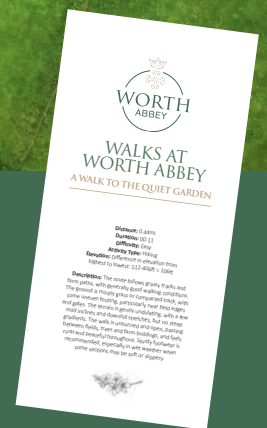
⁶ Ideally, anyone starting to practise this form of prayer should try to have the support of a prayer group and/or a spiritual companion as disturbing unconscious material from the past can surface.



JUST IN: CRAFTED FOR PRAYER: ROSARY BEADS BY BR THEODORE

Br Theodore's beautiful handmade rosary beads, crafted at Worth, are now available to purchase in the Abbey Bookshop. Carefully made with great attention to detail, they come in a range of sizes and make a meaningful gift or companion for personal prayer. Br Theodore is also happy to take commissions from those who would like to request particular stones or colours.





A WALK TO THE QUIET GARDEN

We are pleased to introduce a new **walking guide** inviting visitors to explore the Abbey grounds through a gentle and reflective route from the Abbey Church to the Quiet Garden.

This short walk—just under half a mile and taking around thirty minutes—follows grassy paths and tracks through open countryside, offering a simple and accessible way to experience the natural setting of the Abbey. Along the way, the route passes a number of features that reflect both the history and daily life of the estate, including the flower gardens, Archway Lodge, and the Abbey apiary, where beekeeping continues as part of the community's care for the land.

The walk leads to the Quiet Garden, a much-valued space set around a pond and dedicated to prayer and reflection. As part of the Quiet Garden Movement, it provides a place apart—

calm, contemplative, and open to all—where visitors can pause and take in the peaceful surroundings.

More than simply directions, the guide is an invitation to slow down and engage more deeply with the landscape. The gently undulating fields, trees, and wide views create a sense of space and stillness that is central to the Abbey's atmosphere.

We hope this new guide will encourage visitors to explore beyond the Abbey Church, and to discover the richness of the grounds—where history, nature, and the rhythm of monastic life come together.

Pick up a walking guide from the Narthex of the Abbey Church.

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR INTERNS



We are delighted to welcome our current group of interns, whose presence enriches our community. We are grateful to them for joining us. Speaking about their time here, one intern beautifully described the experience as 'a peace the world cannot offer.'

Worth Abbey will run one programme in 2027; this will be from Monday 5th July to Friday 27th August. If you, or someone you know, is interested in joining the monastic internship, please visit worthabbey.net/interns/ for more information.



FORAGING AT WORTH CONTINUES TO GROW: AN UPDATE FROM LUCY COWARD-WHITTAKER



Foraging at Worth continues to flourish, with a growing range of courses and seasonal food sources. We caught up with Lucy Coward-Whittaker, who leads the foraging programme, to hear more about what has been happening recently and what is planned for the months ahead.

Foraging events this season have been thriving, with gatherings held across two contrasting and beautiful locations: our woodland “Forest Feast” site, rooted in a forest school setting, and a more open, expansive field space within a private campsite. Each setting offers its own atmosphere and connection to the land, which participants have really responded to. As the seasons shift, so too have the menus—evolving to reflect what is abundant and at its best, from fresh spring greens to early summer blooms, to autumn mushroom walks where we discovered fungi in abundance, some larger than our heads. This natural rhythm has inspired dishes such as wild leaves and flower summer rolls with hawthorn sweet chilli dip, wild garlic pesto pasta, and deconstructed elderflower cheesecake, through to raw porcini mushroom salad with Parmesan and wild sorrel, wild mushroom risotto, and wild fruit crumble.



It has been especially rewarding to see people deepen their awareness of the landscape, gaining confidence in identifying and preparing wild ingredients, and sharing memorable meals together outdoors.

This year we have also been exploring new events, including the recent launch of a foraging and craft course using wild, foraged natural dyes. Participants experimented with bundle dyeing using seasonal plants and flowers, dip dyeing with foraged fruits, and painting with natural tannins—making for a creative and immersive day in nature. Looking ahead, plans are underway for a forage and fermentation course, helping people learn how to preserve their wild harvests. In October, we are introducing an overnight foraging experience at Worth, offering a slower, more immersive connection with the landscape—gathering, cooking, and sharing food under the open sky, and settling into the rhythms of nature from dusk through to the following morning.

To book a place or find out more please contact Lucy Coward Whittaker at lucycowardwhittaker@gmail.com

SIGNS OF SPRING AT THE APIARY

There is encouraging news from the apiary as our four beehives begin to stir after a particularly wet autumn and winter. Excess moisture can pose just as great a threat to bees as freezing temperatures, and the long months of damp weather have meant a slow start to the season.

While we are not entirely “out of the woods” — with colder spells often returning in late March or early April — the signs so far are positive. On milder days, worker bees have been seen venturing out of the hives in search of pollen, an early and heartening indication that the colonies are regaining strength.

It is still too early to carry out full inspections inside the hives. Opening them at this stage would allow vital warmth to escape,

so we do not yet know whether the queens are actively laying or whether the workers are preparing queen cells with a view to swarming later in the season.



Early spring also brings limited natural forage, so the bees are currently being supported with fondant and pollen patties to help them build resilience as the weather gradually improves. As temperatures rise and blossoms appear, the colonies should become increasingly self sufficient.

If conditions continue to develop favourably, we hope to be able to harvest some honey towards the end of May — a welcome reward for both the bees’ hard work and the careful attention given to them through the winter months.



GROWING THE ORCHARD

Plans are underway to establish a new orchard on the estate, following a careful, seasonal approach designed to support long term growth, biodiversity and stewardship of the land.

Preparatory work began this spring with soil testing to understand site conditions and inform tree selection. Over the early summer, existing grass will be managed to reduce competition, before the land is left to rest through July and August. This period allows conditions to stabilise naturally ahead of planting.

Specialist advice is being used to shape the orchard's design, including decisions around apple varieties, rootstocks and spacing. These choices will help ensure the orchard is resilient and productive for years to come.

Groundworks are planned for early September, when the soil will be prepared and grass and wildflower seed sown between tree rows to support pollinators. Deer fencing will also be installed to protect the young trees.

Planting is planned for October, once trees enter dormancy — the ideal time for roots to establish. Each tree will be staked and protected, with careful early after care.

There is also scope to involve the wider community, with ideas being explored for a simple tree or bench sponsorship initiative, offering a lasting connection to the orchard.

Over time, the orchard will become part of the living landscape of the estate — a place that supports wildlife, bears fruit, and reflects a continuing commitment to caring for the land.



SHARING THE LAND; SHAPING THE FUTURE

Worth Abbey is delighted to share an exciting new chapter in the stewardship of the Abbey estate with the launch of a major Biodiversity Net Gain initiative in partnership with Biofarm.

Biodiversity Net Gain is an approach that ensures nature is left in a better state than before, by creating and restoring habitats for wildlife over the long term. At Worth, around 25 hectares of land within the High Weald will gradually be transformed into species-rich meadow, grassland, scrub and native tree habitats, helping wildlife to flourish and strengthening local ecosystems.

What makes this project especially meaningful is its setting: the shared Worth community, where Worth Abbey and Worth School serve side by side. Each day, more than 550 young people learn and grow here through the School's ethos of "education with heart and soul", surrounded by a landscape that reflects those same values of care, stewardship and renewal.

Rooted in a shared commitment to community and creation, the project demonstrates how people, education, development and wild spaces can thrive together – ensuring that progress means growth, not loss, for generations to come.



AN INVITATION TO A PRAYERFUL OASIS IN THE CITY OF BRIGHTON

The Monks in the City Summer 2026 season is now available. We warmly invite you to join them for a selection of retreats, prayers, celebrations, and talks by the monks.

Summer 2026
(see over for the events)

MONKS
IN THE CITY



An invitation to a prayerful
oasis in the city of Brighton

St John the Baptist Church
and the Fitzherbert Community Centre
2 Bristol Rd, Kempdown, BN2 1AP.

07444 802368 Monksinthecity@worth.org.uk

SUMMER 2026 DATES AND TIMES
Unless stated ("Please book"), just turn up.

Saturday Sanctuary: Take time out to reflect and pray with the monks
2nd May, 6th June, 4th July 11:00am - 12:45pm

Saturday Retreat Day at **St Martha's Convent, Rottingdean, BN2 7HA**
20th June 10am to 4pm Theme: St Benedict for Today. max 30 people. **Please book.**

Special Events
Wed 24th June Ecumenical Celebration of the Birth of St John the Baptist
5:30pm: 'Stations' of St John the Baptist using the artworks in the church.
6:45pm: Monastic Evening Prayer, followed by light refreshments.

Monk Talks: Series on Contemplative Prayer led by Fr Peter
6pm Evening Prayer, **6:30pm** simple supper, **7pm** Talk, followed by Night (Prayer).
19th May - The Way of Humility
16th Jun - The Way of Wholeness
21st July - The Way of the Spirit

Midday Stillness - every Friday from 1st May to 24th July
Drop in between 12noon - 1pm for a time of music, prayer and reflection with a monk. Stay as long as you like.

Pray with us - Join the monks for their Daily monastic prayer
9am Mon - Sat: **Monastic Morning Prayer**
6pm Mon - Thurs; **4:45pm** Sat, Sun: **Monastic Evening Prayer**

For more details, please use the QR code to visit our website
Donations to support the Community and its mission are welcome.



www.monksinthecity.uk



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ALL SOULS MASS
Monday 2 November

Join us at Worth Abbey as we commemorate the faithful departed. This is a special opportunity to remember and pray for loved ones who have gone before us.

ADVENT TALK
Saturday 28 November
Led by Abbot Mark Barrett

Join us for a morning reflection as we prepare for the season of Advent. The talk will be followed by a light lunch and Midday Prayer.

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE
Sunday 20 December

Celebrate the Advent season with the Worth Abbey Pilgrims' Carol Service. Experience this beautiful tradition, led by the Worth Abbey Choir, with reflections on the meaning of Advent.

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



Scan the QR code to join our mailing list



RECORDING OF AN *UNLIKELY CORNERSTONE* AUDIOBOOK

We are delighted to share news of a very special recent project: the recording of the audiobook version of *An Unlikely Cornerstone*. *An Unlikely Cornerstone*, the biography by Fr Stephen Ortiger of Dom Victor Farwell, the first abbot of Worth and a pivotal figure in the history of Worth Abbey was published last year by Mike Woodward.

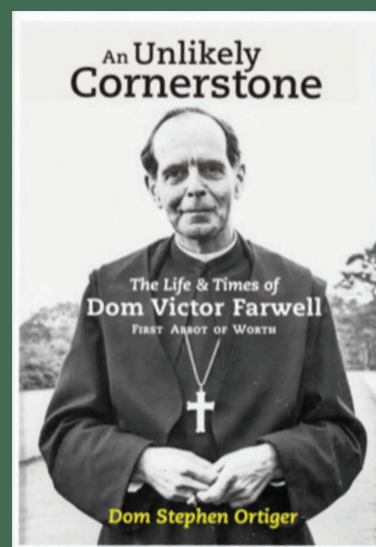
At the kind invitation of Mike Woodward, Worth Alumnus, Nicholas Robinson took on the role of reader for this meaningful work. Although initially somewhat daunted by the prospect, Nick was honoured to contribute to bringing Fr Stephen Ortiger's words to life in this new format.

The recording took place over two days at ID Audio in London, thanks to the generosity of Worth Old Boy Patch McQuaid (St Bede's), who not only produced the audiobook but also hosted the sessions in his impressive studio. Patch, who knew Fr Stephen well (having spent four years with him in St Bede's and later serving as Head of House when Fr Stephen became Headmaster) brought both technical expertise and a deep personal connection to the project.

Together, they worked carefully through the text, with Patch following closely and ensuring a high-quality recording throughout. The process was an immersive and, at times, demanding experience, but also deeply moving and rewarding. Both Patch and Nick found it very special to engage so closely with Stephen's words and legacy.

The completed recording will now be reviewed before being made available, and we look forward to sharing further details on its release in due course.

We hope that this audiobook will offer a new and accessible way for many to experience *An Unlikely Cornerstone*. If you would like to pick up a hard copy of the book, it is available through the Abbey Bookshop.



LOOKING AHEAD AT ST BRUNO'S RETREAT CENTRE



As we look ahead to the early autumn months, St Bruno's Retreat Centre continues to offer a selection of gentle opportunities for retreat and reflection, providing space to pause, pray, and reconnect in the peace of Worth. Rooted in the Benedictine tradition of hospitality, the programme invites guests to step away from the demands of daily life and enter into a quieter, more attentive way of being.

Among the upcoming retreats are two particularly thoughtful offerings each creating space for stillness, reflection, and deeper awareness in different ways. Whether seeking rest in silence or support in moments of personal difficulty, these retreats offer opportunities to be accompanied with care and compassion.

FINDING STILLNESS RETREAT – 7TH-10TH SEPTEMBER

Come and join us for our next Finding Stillness retreat. Amid the noise and demands of daily life, the Benedictine way offers a simple invitation: to pause, to listen, and to remain present. This retreat provides a supportive and unhurried space to find stillness through silence, prayer, and gentle reflection.

Guided by the rhythm of the Abbey's daily prayer, guests are encouraged to rest, walk, reflect, and rediscover the gift of being still before God.

LIVING WITH LOSS RETREAT – 9TH-12TH NOVEMBER

This retreat is for those living with loss and navigating the many ways grief can shape daily life. It offers a supportive and compassionate space to reflect, share, and begin to heal in the presence of others who understand. Through guided group conversations, personal reflection, and time for prayer, participants are invited to explore their experience of loss at their own pace. Spiritual support and gentle structure provide space for both silence and shared listening. The retreat is led by Fr Peter, alongside bereavement counsellor Simon Holland Brown, whose combined experience offers sensitive and thoughtful guidance. This retreat welcomes all who seek understanding, comfort, and hope while living with loss.

CELEBRATING A MONASTIC VOCATION: BR THEODORE'S SIMPLE VOWS

On Bank Holiday Monday, the community here at Worth Abbey gathered in great joy to celebrate the Simple Vows of Br Theodore.

It was a wonderful occasion, marked by a strong sense of prayer, thanksgiving, and community. A large congregation filled the Abbey Church, including many of Br Theodore's family and friends, as well as the wider friends of the Abbey and parishioners, all of whom came to support him at this important moment in his monastic journey.

During the ceremony, Br Theodore made his profession of vows, committing himself more fully to the Benedictine way of life in the community at Worth. It was a moving service, reflecting both the personal significance of the step he has taken and the shared life of the monastic community.



The presence of the congregation made the occasion especially meaningful, a visible reminder of the wider family that surrounds and upholds the life of the Abbey.

We ask you to give thanks for Br Theodore's vocation and keep him in your prayers as he continues his journey in monastic life.





ABBOT CHRISTOPHER JAMISON DELIVERS HISTORIC LECTURE AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Last week, Abbot Christopher Jamison delivered the prestigious Charles Gore Lecture at Westminster Abbey, marking a significant and historic occasion. His address was the first given in the Abbey by an Abbot President since the Reformation.

The moment was made all the more meaningful by the presence of fellow Benedictine leaders, as the Abbots of Douai and Ealing joined our own Abbot, Abbot Mark Barrett, for the occasion. Their attendance reflected a sense of shared heritage and unity within the monastic community.

Prior to the lecture, the Dean of Westminster extended a special invitation to Abbot Christopher to lay flowers on the tomb of Abbot John Islip, the last Abbot President before the Dissolution of the Monasteries. This symbolic act served as a poignant link between past and present.

As Canon Hawkey observed, the gesture represented “a small step towards healing the wounds of the Body of Christ,” underlining the ecumenical and reconciliatory significance of the event.

The occasion was both memorable and moving, offering a powerful moment of reflection on history, faith and unity within the Church. A video recording of the lecture is available to view [here](#).



Photo credit: The Dean and Chapter of Westminster

IN QUIET COMPANY

Each edition, we invite you into a moment of quiet companionship with a member of our monastic community. Through personal reflection, we glimpse the wisdom and humanity that shape life within the Abbey. These voices offer insight into the spiritual journey, the Benedictine way, and the quiet joys of a life devoted to prayer and service.

IN QUIET COMPANY WITH FR DAVID

Personal journey & Vocation

I grew up in the Anglican Church and at about 7 years old I joined the choir at St Mark's Church, Old Bilton, Rugby. This experience affected me much more deeply than perhaps I realised at the time. My elder brother often corrected me as my eyes were always wandering around the church rather than concentrating on the music. Each Sunday, at the services of Matins & Evensong, I became very familiar with the Canticles and Psalms set for those services, and they gradually became rooted in my memory. The Church was a beautiful mediaeval building, and I gradually began to sense that I was part of something much bigger than myself, something rooted in a long history like the church itself. I remember once on holiday in North Wales, from the beach I saw an island in the distance and asking my father who lived there, and he replied, 'That's Bardsey Island. No one lives there now, but monks used to live there a long time ago'. I was intrigued by the idea that people could spend all their time centred on prayer. I then visited Mount St Bernard Abbey, not far from where we lived. There, for the first time, I heard a monastic community singing Vespers – it was a haunting sound – and at the time drew me in to its beauty.

Don't get me wrong – I was not terribly 'holy' – in fact the reverse – quite a handful I think, but what went on in Church seemed to me more significant than most of the day-to-day things.

A Monastic experience

I had spoken with my parish priest about what I might do after leaving school, and he suggested that I might like to visit the theological college where he had trained, at Kelham, Nottinghamshire. This college was run by an Anglican monastic community and the students shared fully in the life of the monastery. I spent two years there, from 1967 to 1969 and found the experience very powerful, but I felt that I was too young at that stage to consider monastic life. It was also a time when I realised that far more people seemed to be leaving monasteries than joining them. In fact, a few years later Kelham closed and the community was dispersed. I worked for several years in libraries and at the Leicester University Bookshop, which I thoroughly enjoyed, particularly the broadening experience of being in a university setting – with much music making! The vocation, however, did not disappear. Instead, I took the more conventional route and applied for ordination in the Church of England. After three years at Chichester Theological College, I was ordained in that diocese.

Worth emerges

The years moved on, I married and had two children, served in three different parishes, and eventually moving into teaching

where I spent eight years as Chaplain & Head of RS at a school in Northamptonshire. Things never stand still it seems, and a friend who was Rector of Worth Church asked me if I would like a move – to be the Anglican Chaplain at Worth School and priest at Turners Hill. At my interview I felt immediately 'at home' within the school and especially in the prayerful atmosphere of the Abbey Church, which spoke to me of the chapel at Kelham all those years ago!



For the next eight years I worked alongside several members of the Monastic Community in the school chaplaincy. What struck me most powerfully was the inclusiveness of Worth. I remember Fr Bede saying to me that apart from a few things Anglicans and Catholics could not do together, I was to consider myself a chaplain to the whole school, alongside the monastic community."

There was a great ecumenical spirit between the Abbey and the Anglican parishes, which was something I enjoyed and encouraged. During this time, I came to know the monastic community very well, especially to Fr Christopher first as Headmaster and eventually as Abbot.

God's providence

It seems that it is often the case that we can only come to understanding things when looking back. The time came when my children were leaving school and university, and my marriage came to an end, though from it emerged relationships that remain important and deeply cherished. At the same time, a new direction was emerging, and I knew that it must take a monastic character. I knew the small number of Anglican religious communities, but one day whilst taking the dog out in the woods, I 'heard' these words: "There's something under your nose that you can't see" and I knew at once that it was Worth! I was hesitant about speaking to Abbot Christopher, but I think he had realised my intention before I had.

The year of 2007 marked a painful period of family uprooting – leaving the parish and moving into what felt very much like a 'desert'. I spoke with a senior priest in the diocese about being received into the Church and he suggested that I should undertake a fast of a couple of months from the eucharist. After all, he said "What you are doing is much deeper than just changing your bank account from Barclays to HSBC!"

The Holy Land beckons

Knowing that some distance needed to be put in place, I applied for a three-month sabbatical course at Tantur, an ecumenical study centre just outside Bethlehem on the road to Jerusalem. At the time, the political situation was relatively stable, and I had a wonderful time, gaining an appreciation of the Eastern Churches within their own context.



There was a very small Benedictine community of nuns situated just inside the separation wall between the Israel and Palestinian territory, and I prayed with them often. It was there that I celebrated the Eucharist for the last time as an Anglican – alone – in the small chapel at the XIV Station of the Cross on the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem.

From Taizé to Worth

On my return, I took up residence for a while with an old friend, staying in the spare room of his large vicarage in Isleworth. During this period, I arranged another pilgrimage to the Ecumenical Community of Taizé in Burgundy, France. I had visited many times before and the founder of the community, Br Roger Schultz had long been a great inspiration to me. His vision was of a monastic community committed to reconciliation, particularly between Christians. Though he had been raised in a Protestant upbringing, he fostered a very close relationship with the Catholic Church and the Taizé Community, and he often spoke of the necessity of the ministry of the Bishop of Rome for the visible unity of the Church.

Taizé is a small village where thousands of young people gather. Music lies at its heart—beautiful, simple chants, sung in the many different languages of those who visit. It was painful not to receive Holy Communion there, but I honoured the request of the priest I spoke with there, knowing that within a few days – after my flight from Lyons to Gatwick – I would be received into full communion with the Catholic Church at Worth on 17th May 2007.

I then moved from Isleworth and spent time at the Catholic parish in Weybridge before returning to Worth to begin a Postulancy. I was clothed as a Novice on 12 Sept 2009.

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



LEAVING A LEGACY AT WORTH ABBEY

Worth Abbey has been shaped by the generosity of many hands and hearts across generations. The Abbey exists today because others chose to support its life and mission. Its future will depend on those who wish to ensure it remains a place of prayer, welcome and stability.

One of the most meaningful ways to do this is through a gift in your Will. A legacy to Worth Abbey is a simple way to remain part of the life of the community and to support its work into the future.

After providing for family and loved ones, some choose to remember Worth Abbey in this way. Legacies help to support:

- The care of the Abbey Church and monastic buildings
- The life and mission of the monastic community
- Hospitality, retreats and welcome
- The long-term preservation of Worth as a place of prayer

Each gift, whatever its size, becomes part of a continuing story and helps ensure Worth remains a place of encounter with God.

If you are considering leaving a legacy, we would be very happy to speak with you. Further information can also be found here: worthabbey.net/leave-a-legacy-remember-us-in-your-will/





CELEBRATE CORPUS CHRISTI WITH US

SUNDAY 7TH JUNE

Join us for Mass, a joyful procession of the Blessed Sacrament,
and a community gathering as we honour this feast.

9:30am	Mass in the Abbey Church
10:30am	Processions of the Blessed Sacrament
11:15am	Benediction
11:30am	Refreshments in the Narthex

Afterwards, enjoy the beauty of the Abbey estate as we walk to the Quiet Garden,
led by a member of the monastic community.

Bring a picnic and take time to enjoy the grounds.
Friends and families are especially welcome.

For updates and future events visit: worthabbey.net/latest-news

