



# ARCHDIOCESE of SOUTHWARK

*Priest Training Fund 2024*

***“No vocation is born of itself or lives for itself. A vocation flows from the heart of God and blossoms in the good soil of faithful people” Pope Francis***

Dear Friends in Christ,

12<sup>th</sup> April 2024

## **Good Shepherd Sunday 2024**

Thank you for your kind support of the Priest Training Fund. Your prayers and donations to this fund supports the vocational calling of men who have chosen to say ‘Yes’ to the Priesthood here in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Good Shepherd Sunday, the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, takes place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> of April and is also the day we take up the annual second collection in our parishes in support of the Priest Training Fund. We are blessed to have 5 men in formation to the Priesthood for the Archdiocese of Southwark at present. It now costs £30,000 a year, for eight years to sponsor each seminarian. After their ordination to priesthood, our priests dedicate their lives to serving Christ and His people in our parishes, hospitals, schools, various different chaplaincies and prisons throughout South London, Kent and Surrey.

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February this year, Fr Andrew Bishop was ordained to the Sacred Priesthood in Dover by Most Rev. John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark. Please keep him in your prayers as he begins his priestly ministry.

I hope you enjoy reading about the experiences of Deacon Frazer Bellfield and our fifth-year seminarian Stephen Trafford both at Allen Hall Seminary overleaf as well as our third-year seminarian Oliver Abasolo at The Pontifical Beda College in Rome.

This autumn we are anticipating three new men will commence formation towards priesthood with a propaedeutic year at the English College in Valladolid, Spain, and there are more following them who are currently being considered to commence formation in autumn 2025. These small but very significant increases in the number of our seminarians is very encouraging for the future life of the Church in the Archdiocese of Southwark.

We rely on the prayers and generosity of people like you to support our work promoting vocations in Southwark and to fund the formation of our future priests. I hope you will consider giving a gift again this year. You can do so using the enclosed pledge form and pre-paid return envelope.

Please continue to pray for vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life and I thank you for all you do in and for the Church.

Yours sincerely in Christ

*Fr Paul Kyne*

**Fr Paul Kyne**

Vocations Director, Archdiocese of Southwark



**Southwark Seminarians at Allen Hall**



## Southwark Seminarians: Their Stories

### Deacon Frazer Bellfield

Final Year Seminarian



It is incredible to think that after six years of formation, I am finally approaching ordination to the Sacred Priesthood on 20th July. You have kindly supported me and prayed for me during these years, please continue to pray for me in these important last few months. Since becoming a Deacon last year, I have enjoyed serving St. George's Cathedral parish, a busy and vibrant parish at the very heart of the Archdiocese. I have experienced great happiness in my final year as a Deacon, and look forward to serving you in the Priesthood. Words cannot describe the immense joy I've felt celebrating baptisms and preaching the word of God.

I continue to benefit from all the support and prayers that you have offered for me during this time. Your help supports not only me personally, but all those in formation to serve you and the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is your prayers and support that give all seminarians the strength to say yes to the Lord. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

### Stephen Trafford

Fifth Year Seminarian



I am in my fifth year of priestly formation and approaching my diaconal ordination in June. I had a highly formative past year serving as a pastoral assistant in the parish of St Aidan's, Coulsdon. We are studying practical areas such as Homiletics (preaching), Canon Law and Pastoral Counselling, alongside Christology and various topics on Scripture. I am currently completing pastoral work as a voluntary chaplain in Croydon University Hospital, which is a blessed and privileged ministry to be engaged in.

We also receive human and spiritual formation. Spiritually, there are particular devotions that I value, like the Sacred Heart of Jesus. My formation has shown me the simple truth that we must always be willing to encounter the Lord Jesus in prayer, spending time to speak to Him from our hearts. Saint Damien of Molokai, once said: "Be not afraid then in your solitary conversations, to tell Him of your miseries, your fears, your worries, of those who are dear to you, of your projects, and of your hopes. Do so with an open heart". Please pray that I and all seminarians may have a heart open to the Lord Jesus as we are formed to be His priests to serve you. Thank you for your prayers and support of the priestly training fund.

### Oliver de los Reyes Abasolo

Third Year Seminarian



Before I pursued my priestly formation, I worked for the NHS for 20 years as a nurse in different intensive care units in Southwest London. I am currently doing my priestly formation at The Pontifical Beda College in Rome. This September, I will do my extended pastoral placement where I will serve and support daily parish life with its various ministries.

I have a great love of Our Lady and the daily Rosary has always been a special devotion of mine and to her Immaculate Heart. She has been instrumental in my 'YES' to God's invitation, imitating her unwavering and total fiat. There is a structure of prayer time in the seminary life where we gather as a community to pray the liturgy of the hours and in the celebration of the Eucharist. It is essential to nourish one's spiritual life and ask for the grace daily to remain steadfast in my love for Him. The academic formation is done in-house, and I am currently doing courses on the sacraments, scriptures, pastoral theology, and Christology to name a few.

I am grateful for all your loving support to the Priest Training Fund, allowing us seminarians to continue our priestly formation. May the good Lord, who has called us first, sustain us with His grace.

You are welcome to join us for the following events, it would be great to share these experiences with you.

**Archdiocese of Southwark Ordinations 2024** – Stephen Trafford will be ordained to the Diaconate on Saturday 15th June at 10.30am at Westminster Cathedral and Dcn Frazer Bellfield will be ordained to the Priesthood on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July at 12:30pm at St George's Cathedral. This ordination is open to all to join, and we suggest arriving early for a seat.

**Is God Calling You?** If you have a calling to the Catholic Priesthood or the Diaconate please contact the Vocations Director, Fr Paul Kyne on [vocations@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:vocations@rcaos.org.uk) or visit: <https://www.rcaos.org.uk/vocations>

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