

READER AWAY FROM HOME

11 October, 2105

In September, we bid farewell, for a time, to one of our Readers, Stéphane Javelle, who was heading off to university to study theology and discern his calling towards ordained ministry. While away, Stéphane will still be our Reader and our parish has given him some specific prayer tasks to undertake and has asked him to send reports of his progress and share with us his reflection on his studies and his reintroduction into student life.

The following is his first report back to the congregation:

Chers Amis,

It's been 3 weeks I've been at Ripon College Cuddesdon and I'm very happy to tell you that I'm enjoying it very much!



As you would expect in a dormitory at Oxford, the rooms are traditional yet Spartan and functional. Stéphane sends this photo of his room upon arrival.

Accommodation is very nice: Chapel is gorgeous, classrooms and common rooms are nice, room is comfortable and above all, food is good and generous.

Lectures are really interesting. It's a bit confusing to understand all the different sorts of diplomas that are offered. Apparently, as I'm not a graduate in UK but already had a graduation in theology, I follow the Graduation Diploma of the Durham Common Awards. Which is actually great: it opens the possibility of going further for a BA or MA afterwards and it's easier for me to follow as although fluent in English, I still have a little gap of understanding with the other students. But the lectures are very well shaped and are seconded by an online training that is very useful. I have initiated a study group with the other students from my diploma.

Worship is blossoming: we try and go through every kind of worship from the Anglican spectrum and it's thoughtfully p. We have some interesting lectures about liturgy. This term, we follow MP [Morning Prayer] and EP [Evening Prayer] from Common Worship and next term we will use the more traditional Book of Common Prayer. There is also a very nicely sung optional compline that I have been attending on a regular basis.

Duties are very formational, I've already been duty assistant and duty sacristan for two weeks in the local church where we have EP. I have helped for the catering and the bar. I'm fire-marshal for my floor and have other duties coming like security, running common room elections, leading services, etc...

My Sunday placement is in a very typical English parish from the Oxfordshire in Wallingford. My community placement is still in discussion: if everything goes well it should be a block placement of one week in a centre for people who have been refused asylum (the fact that I'm a French speaker might be useful).

My morale is good, even if I miss my friends very much. I can use the community car to go to the gym. On Sunday afternoon we are invited to play football with the kids of the village. I just do the cheerleading!

Thanks again for all your support!

Regards and prayers.

Stéphane,

Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford



Stéphane shortly after arriving at Cuddesdon, pictured behind.



Apparently ringing the bell to summon other students to the twice daily college worship is one of the tasks of the Duty Sacristan