

Letter from James Johnson – 18th May 2024

Saturday Week 7 of Easter – The Eve of Pentecost, 2024

Dearest Fr Tony, Fr Paul & Parish of Our Lady, Star of the Sea,

I trust the wonderful joy of our risen and ascended Lord has remained with you and I will be praying that the Holy Spirit blesses you all tomorrow. Whatever is happening in your lives or community, allow the Spirit to direct your heart.

We have not long finished our community retreat given by Fr Stephen from Strahov Abbey, Prague. The week was themed on psalm 118(119). We batten down the hatches for retreats and we strive not to leave the priory for any reason. For the most part the community instinctively quietens down, even though it is not requested of us, which makes for a very prayerful holy hour every day.

The following week Fr Stephen was taken on a week's worth of holiday by Fr Thomas, our superior, sampling whiskey in Glasgow and Edinburgh, a pitstop in Durham too. On their return it was my turn to take him for a day of local things including Scarborough, Robin Hood's Bay and Whitby, we surely got our steps in on that day! But blast it all, we were 30 mins too late to get some Whitby smoked kippers and they stopped delivering some time ago..... I was cheered by the sighting of a well maintained traditional wooden trawler.

During our retreat I learned through Fr Thomas some unforeseen updates from Strahov Abbey in Prague and the Abbot General in Rome. There were a few extra hurdles to jump through and because of my commitment to caring for Bert, it has meant that I have had to withdraw from being an aspirant. As you would expect, it has caused both the community and myself some sadness but there is no blame or bitterness within the community or with our motherhouse. The Holy Spirit moves each of us to action and Holy Mother Church calls forth those holy souls she needs in particular ministries. I would be grateful for any prayers of thanksgiving for the community here in Muston because they are very dear to me and have done all they can to support me and ask you might also spare one for me, as I discern what/where is next for me. I am blessed that they offered me several options going forward and the grace to remain here whilst I organise myself.

And so, I will be remaining here for the Summer and returning to the South somewhere at the beginning of Autumn. No plans have yet been made because this is hot off the press today but I will be sure to attend Mass at St. T's as soon as I am back.

On much more cheerful news, August will see all the third order/associates return to the priory for a mini retreat/jolly. Fortunately, we will all fit in the house for this occasion. It promises to be a most joyful event and I am very much looking forward to it. A road trip to Romania over the Summer to deliver one of our associates belongings to his family home also promises to lift spirits. I must prepare some playlists!

I look forward to seeing you all sooner than expected but until then, allow the Holy Spirit to move you, talk in tongues of love, peace, mercy & forgiveness to one another and celebrate well too!

Yours in Christ, Our Immaculate Mother, St. Norbert & St. Augustine,
James