

PRIEST'S PROFILE



Father David Sillince

Only child, with an artist for a father, born in Sussex 'but with a few tender years spent in Yorkshire' before becoming a boarder at Henry VI GS in Slough, Fr David Sillince went on to study Modern Languages at London 'having reverted from History at Cambridge' and then to teach Spanish 'because I liked it' and French 'because I had to' at secondary school.

Having converted to Catholicism in his mid/late twenties, David joined the Diocese in '86 ('My friends said it was a drastic way of avoiding the National Curriculum'). After 4 years of study in Rome, Fr David was ordained at Sacred Heart (Bournemouth) and promptly dispatched to St John's Cathedral to hold the fort till a certain Fr Declan Lang [What did happen to him?] moved to Portsmouth. For 10 years David was then PP at Sacred Heart at Waterlooville ('Where I failed to build them a new church') before going to Southampton in 2004.

Keen on travel ('ideally in places where I can make myself understood'), classical music, the cinema, history, 'church crawling', holidaying in warm climes, playing the ivories (organ and piano), Fr David, no longer astride the 800cc Honda bike which he gave up three years ago, remains readily recognisable for his sense of humour, his canny smile and that playful glint in his eye: 'As for sport, I'm no sportsman. One of my school reports said: "Simply not geared for it".

'My vision? To deepen appreciation through scripture of where we come from, where we are and where we're going. Is progress synonymous with upheaval? ... Well, I suppose now you want to take a picture of me. Will you make me look friendly, or as if I might bite? I've been told both are possible.'



Prayer, fasting and almsdeeds are of course the traditional activities for Lent. The need for fervent sustained prayer about pro-life matters in Britain at the moment is obvious. There is a strong push towards legalising some form of euthanasia, and proponents are open about this being only the start of what they want.

On abortion things look a little brighter. Many younger doctors are unwilling to do them or even be involved. There is a real chance that Parliament might vote for women to be fully informed of the risks, and for late abortions to be outlawed. But the public is ill-informed about human embryo abuse and does not understand that, although obviously a ten-day old embryo cannot suffer pain, he or she is, to quote the makers of the first test-tube baby, 'a microscopic human being - one in its very earliest stages of development'.

Fasting need not only concern food. Anyone who can give up a little time to write letters to newspapers or MPs, or to ring phone-ins, can do immense good. Many new candidates for Parliament will not be knowledgeable, or have thought much, on pro-life issues and will be persuaded by polite intelligent letters. SPUC's weekly digest of news is a good resource for this.

As for almsdeeds, every pro-life group makes good use of whatever money they receive, whether it is for practical help to women, like LIFE and the Good Counsel Network, or the equally important work of education and politics, like SPUC, the Pro Life Alliance, Right to Life and the Linacre Centre.

Live Issues

Dominica Roberts calls for prayer and action

Dominica Roberts is a parishioner of St Joseph and St Margaret Clitherow in Bracknell, and active in several pro-life groups.



CHURCH IN FOCUS

With this issue we look at the
Church of St Boniface



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