

**An ordinand's first year** – we asked our ordinand in training to introduce himself and write about his experiences ...

For those of you that don't know me, my name is Richard Sutcliffe. I am 42, have lived in St Mary Bourne off and on since I was 12, and live with my wife, Swee, and our 9-year old son Mac. After going through the Church selection process for ordained ministry, I started training in September 2009 with the local ministry course in the Oxford diocese, with the aim of being ordained in 2012. I thought some of you might be interested in my experiences of my first year.

My first year in training for the priesthood draws to a close – one year down, two to go! My biggest worry with training was whether I would be able to balance the competing pressures of training with a normal, busy family life, and a full time job in London. On the whole, the first year seems to have worked. This year has seen me study various subjects such as pastoral care, church history, leadership and spirituality and vocation. One of the great things about this course is that many of them are part of a “rolling programme” of courses that Oxford diocese runs, which means that a really wide variety of people come along as interested learners. (In fact many of the courses are open to people in the benefice – if you're interested you can always let me know and come along!)

But one of the most surprising things that I have experienced is the way that people start to treat you differently. There is something about the label “ordinand” that some people think sets you apart – and this, combined with the black cassock, starts to make people treat you quite differently. There is something interesting about labels, isn't there? We all carry a number of them – father, mother, priest, doctor, teacher – and with these labels comes a certain amount of baggage, some of it justified, and some of it unfair. We all do it – we like to put people into boxes, we all like to make the assumptions. But now that I have found myself on the end of it, it feels really strange – and I'm going to try to see through some of those labels.

So, I find myself getting ready for the next year. The first course of the Autumn term will be on mission and evangelism, and will be held in the Whitchurch deanery at Woolton Hill. There is a real opportunity for anyone who is interested to come along and I would be very glad to see any of you there. And if any of you want to ask me how things are going, then please just come up to me and ask, and I would be very happy to let you know.

Richard Sutcliffe, [richard.sutcliffe67@btinternet.com](mailto:richard.sutcliffe67@btinternet.com)



Somebody asked me what I thought about the future of **Marriage** – is it going to die out, perhaps? I said it was far from finished yet. Society has its pendulum swings, and perhaps with less money and feeling of affluence we shall start needing each other more. The display of wedding dresses and flowers in St Peter's over the first weekend of July might get us thinking about the beauty of commitment. It will also remind us how much marriage is part of the local social fabric, running from the first recorded marriage in St Peter's on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1662, Thomas Locke and Dorothea Withers, until now.

### Welcome to **Ages & Stages – Benefice Summer Study Course**

Come and help explore the *Ages and Stages of Life* in The Barn, The Bourne Valley Inn, starting at 8.00pm, to 9.30. Our task is to understand people at various ages better that we may serve them through our churches. So you will be very welcome on **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> July** 'Passed (or heading for) your Sell-by-Date' Will there be anything for me to offer in RETIREMENT? Will

I be worth anything – will I be valued....? Is there any sense in which the 'best is yet to come', when body parts are showing signs of wear, and energy is far from what it was?

The **Festival of St James** (the Great) falls on a Sunday this year (25<sup>th</sup>) when there is indeed a service in our smallest church at Woodcott. The church you see is a gem of Victorian flint work, built with such patience and skill. What is possibly more intriguing is the church you don't see, the original 12<sup>th</sup> century chapel of



the Knights of St John (Hospitaller), with the adjoining monastic buildings incorporated into Upper Woodcott Farm. The present church, it is thought, shows the footprint of the old. It must have been a stopping place

for the pilgrims journeying from Reading, via Weymouth, to the great shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostela in north-west Spain. The present St James is still a spiritually nourishing place for pilgrims on their way across the hills.

*A prayer 'on the way':*

Bless to us, O God,  
the earth beneath our feet.  
Bless to us, O God,  
the path whereon we go.  
Bless to us, O God,  
the people whom we meet.

---

**The clergy are always pleased to hear of any who would appreciate a visit at home or in hospital. It doesn't matter if we hear the same request from more than one person – so don't hold back, please.**  
(Contact details on Services page.)

---

### Reading Group

*The Great Gatsby* is the main subject of our conversation when we next meet on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> July, 8.00pm at Ashcombe, Egbury Road St Mary Bourne. Scott Fitzgerald's book is an acclaimed modern classic, with the great advantage for the hard-pressed that it's only 144 pages. You'll be very welcome.

