



**GLENSTAL ABBEY
CHRONICLE**


Glenstal Abbey

Celebrating 90 years of
monastic life.
1927-2017

GLENSTAL ABBEY

Murroe, Co Limerick

www.glenstal.org

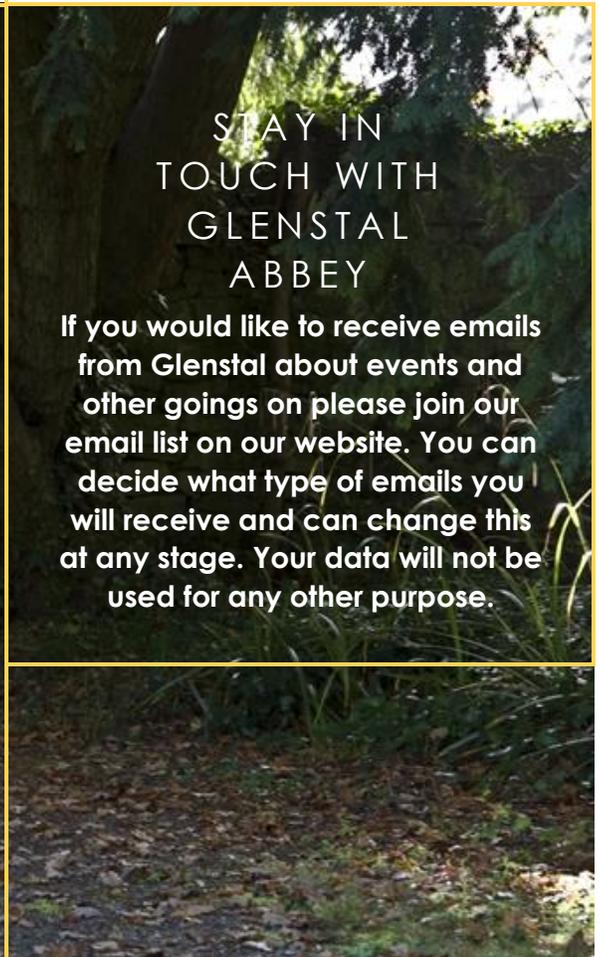
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Welcome

On the 90th anniversary of our foundation it is our pleasure to share with you, friends, benefactors, parents, students, colleagues and visitors, something of the variety and richness of life here in Glenstal Abbey. In the pages of this Chronicle we hope to bring alive the place which we are privileged to call home.

We have come a very long way from those early days when the first Belgian monks arrived here back in 1927. What has been achieved is thanks in no small measure to the kindness and generosity of so many. The monastic community are profoundly grateful for all the blessings we have received and for this we give thanks to God.

Brendan Coffey OSB
Abbot of Glenstal

Contents

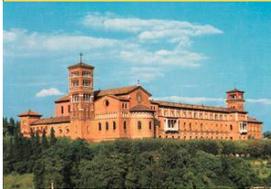
Where in the World.....	page 3
Oblates at Glenstal.....	page 6
School Choir.....	page 8
Out of Africa.....	page 10
My Year in Glenstal and UL.....	page 13
Glenstal Abbey Farm...	page 14
Thinking of Monastic Life.....	page 15
Life as a Novice.....	page 15
Malartú Daltaí le Scoilanna thar Lear....	page 18
Guest House.....	page 19
Retreat Days.....	page 19
Oak Jubilee.....	page 21
Glenstal Forest.....	page 22
Fr David RIP.....	page 22
Abbey Church.....	page 23
Ordination.....	page 24
Cardinal Schönborn.....	page 25
School News.....	page 25
Looking Towards Our Centenary.....	page 26



Where in the World



Fr Denis



Sant'Anselmo, Rome

I spent the past Academic Year in Sant' Anselmo which is located on the Aventine Hill in Rome and where legend has it that Remus was banished following a row with his brother Romulus. Amongst other things the Aventine claims the oldest usable street in Rome. Sant' Anselmo is the seat of the Abbot Primate of the Federation of the Black Monks which includes all monks and nuns under the Rule of St Benedict, except the Cistercians and the Trappists. The Abbot Primate, Gregory Polan is the only monk whose stability is in Sant' Anselmo. Monks from all over the world stay here while studying for their various degrees, licentiates and doctorates. There were 85 monks and clerics resident

Br Emmaus



St Michael's, Toronto

One of the aspects that impressed me most about studying at the University of St Michael's College in Toronto is the emphasis it places on the inter-relational dynamic of theology. It's a fitting approach for a college located in a city known for its cultural diversity, friendliness, optimism and wide range of religious traditions. Exploring Catholic theology in such an ecumenical setting has had a significant impact on my interest in the theological



Br Jarek



St Benet's, Oxford

The process of application, which took place last year was very long and required a lot of detail. However, all went well and last September I embarked upon my first journey from Glenstal to Oxford. The community here generously decided to send me to the university in this picturesque town so that I might pursue further studies in the thought of Early Christianity. My course is one of postgraduate studies in the theology of the Fathers of the Church. The beginnings of my time in England were rather exciting. The architecture in Oxford is stunning. Moreover, everywhere you go here you can meet accomplished professors. Yet the main reason why I



Where in the World



Fr Denis

for the past year and all lived the daily monastic routine. Sant' Anselmo hosts the Pontificio Ateneo, including the Pontifical Liturgical Institute as well as Philosophy and Theology faculties. Because I am not proficient in Italian I attended classes taught in English in the Angelicum, a renowned Dominican University which has St John Paul II as one of its alumni. Fr Paul Murray OP, an old friend of Glenstal, was one of my Professors and probably had the most popular lectures in the University. Never an empty seat. Each day on my way to the Angelicum I walked past the Circus Maximus, the Palatine, the Colosseum, the Forum and Trajan's Column. As one with a keen interest in Classical Roman history I never tired of these amazing places. Rome can be the best and the worst of cities. I cycled quite a lot and neither the crazy drivers, the scooters nor the potholes deterred me.

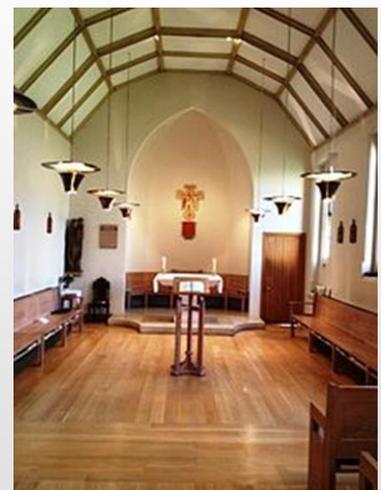
Br Emmaus

significance of art, particularly in regards to learning how sacred art relates to ecclesial and moral imaginaries as part of a broader present day social imaginary by and through which Roman Catholics live. By working on a series of paintings when not attending courses, especially during this last year as artist in residence with the Dominican Institute of Toronto (with whom I board during semester), I have been able to add a practical dimension to my coursework. In identifying the significance art plays as a means of mediating meaning, my studies have more recently focused on the disconnect between sacred art in churches today and a post-conciliar liturgy that reflects Vatican II's emphasis



Br Jarek

began to feel at home here was because of the place I live: St Benet's Hall. This is a small college owned by the Abbey of Ampleforth, Yorkshire. Two senior monks live here on a permanent basis. Thanks to their presence the daily Benedictine office is prayed in the chapel. At the end of the day there are just three of us, but as the Lord himself said: 'When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them'





Where in the World



Fr Denis

After a while you learn a sort of code in traffic which once you adhere to makes sense. Rome is a fascinating place and despite all its frustrations is one that is hard not to get very fond of.

Ciao ciao



Br Emmaus

on the contextual and historical. Overall, my experience in Toronto has been a formative one.



Br Jarek

In terms of my studies the system is based on research. I attended some lectures on Greek and Syriac and a tutorial every week. You have got to prepare an essay every week of the eight week term, then you meet your tutor in his office and read out what you have written. Then comes the icing on the cake, you have to defend the arguments you put into your piece of writing. This kind of work is quite demanding, and at the same time it can be very fruitful. The breaks between the terms are far from vacation times as far as Oxford is concerned. To be ready for the next stage of your time here you have to work hard already...in advance. As I was about to leave for Ireland at Easter I was asked by one the dons: 'I presume you have got a list of reading for the break?'

OBLATES AT GLENSTAL ABBEY

St Benedict wrote his little rule as a beginners' guide to holiness for those who wish to live under the authority of an abbot within a monastery. If you look at the shelves of many a monastery bookshop you will however find an increasing number of books written for those who take inspiration from St Benedict without taking the habit or the veil. Authors have shown that the wisdom of St Benedict can be applied anywhere from business management to sport to family life. Oblates are people who go one stage further and actually formalise their regard for St Benedict by forging a permanent spiritual bond with a particular monastery. This approach is not for everyone; there are those who benefit more from a freer approach, taking a dose of Benedictine spirituality now and then as needed, and freely looking elsewhere for spiritual nourishment as well.

If one were to describe an Oblate it might be best to say what an oblate is not. Oblates do not take vows or make solemn profession like monks or nuns. For married Oblates the vows made at their wedding take precedence over any Benedictine undertakings; indeed one could say that for every Oblate the obligations of family and of justice and charity in daily life outrank any Benedictine considerations of a spiritual nature. Oblates live out their baptismal vocation like everyone else, but look to the Benedictine tradition for wisdom and support in this undertaking. Oblates don't remove themselves from parish life but bring a Benedictine dimension to their commitments within the local Church. How does this work in practice? It varies from monastery to monastery, but the paragraphs which follow outline something of what happens at Glenstal Abbey.

An Oblate is typically someone who has visited a monastery on a number of occasions, feels inspired by what they see and hear there, and wants to bring something of this into their daily living on a permanent basis. They may find that reading some of the typical literature found in a monastery bookshop brings further spiritual nourishment and encourages them to seek more. If they make contact with the Oblate director then a process of discernment begins in order to see if becoming an Oblate is desirable or not.

Discerning an Oblate calling involves some conversations with the Oblate director. At Glenstal we also ask the person to attend some of the Oblate retreat days over the period of a year (Advent, Lent and Summer) in order to get a further taste of what may lie ahead. After a year the person may apply to begin a more formal stage of preparation which normally lasts for at least another year. During this period they also attend oblate meetings (normally three) as well as some further meetings arranged at their convenience in order to examine aspects of Benedictine spirituality.

The commitment which Oblates of Glenstal Abbey make is simple and flexible: they undertake, insofar as the duties of their state of life permit, to engage

in daily prayer in the form of a daily Office or of biblical meditation (lectio divina), and to look to Benedictine spirituality as a guide for their Christian living. In practice some Oblates may even use both forms of prayer just mentioned, and will have received some help to understand what is involved. When you combine the retreat days and the meetings for Oblates there is normally an annual total of six gatherings. Attendance at these is not obligatory, but Oblates find mutual support in coming together every now and then for liturgy, prayer, learning, discussion and a meal. These gatherings are on Saturdays, beginning mid-morning and ending mid-afternoon, with Mass and lunch in the middle of the day.

At the moment we have fifty-six oblates in total. They form an important part of the wider network of Benedictine spirituality beyond the walls of Glenstal. Like monks they aspire to living in such a way as to give glory to God in all things (Rule of St Benedict 57:8). They have heard the call to 'prefer absolutely nothing to Christ, and may he lead us all together to everlasting life.' (RB 72:12)



Fr Columba McCann OSB
<http://www.glenstal.org/our-life/oblates/>



Glenstal Abbey School Choir

Fr Columba McCann OSB



A few years ago a new first-year boy in the school was advised by an experienced second-year as to the advantages of getting into the school choir: 'It makes Sunday Mass more interesting, it means you don't have to wear your formal clothes because they are covered by a robe, and you also get to skip study in order to attend choir practice.' Singing at Sunday Mass is the main task of the choir and it is indeed an enriching experience both for the singers and for those who listen. While their choir robes do cover up at least some sartorial deficiencies, the timetabling of choir practices now means that, unfortunately, very little study is ever missed! While the musical benefits are obvious, experts now say that the benefits of choral singing for mental health are quite considerable developing, as it does, a whole range of musical, expressive, disciplinary and social skills.

Because Glenstal Abbey School has seven-day boarding, the school choir is really a Church choir within a school. Over thirty boys sing, each week, a repertoire ranging from Gregorian Chant

to the music of composers like Bach, Mozart, Lassus and Palestrina. Working with the voices of teenage boys brings its own challenges, and the music is carefully chosen to suit their various vocal ranges and their musical abilities. Depending on the resources available in any particular year or time of year, the music will include unison singing, as well as pieces in two, three or four parts. Glenstal Abbey School is blessed with a wealth of extra-curricular activities, of which choir is only one, so practice time (usually after supper) is quite limited: each vocal line practices for one half-hour per week, with a further half-hour practice for the whole choir. It also involves a warm-up practice on Sunday mornings with final adjustments to the singing, while other boys are still tucking into their cooked breakfast or wiping the sleep out of their eyes...

While singing on Sunday forms the backbone of our performances, there are other highlights in the year. An annual Advent Carol service at the beginning of December is always a special occasion, and we work hard during

October and November to get new music ready. Recent years have also seen trips abroad for senior choir members every second year: last December in Rome and two years previously in Paris. Other highlights have included singing with the Three Celtic Tenors, performing in St Mary's Cathedral, Limerick, a concert in aid of the Simon Community, and a workshop with the choir of Jesus College,

expand our repertoire beyond Bach to the Beach Boys and other entertainers.

We hold auditions every September, and even old members have to re-audition since, with the phenomenal growth that takes place in teenage years, voices change and people get to

A special highlight of this year was our first performance (at 3.50 am!) at the launch of the local Darkness into Light sponsored walk which took place in Murroe village, in aid of Pieta House.

Cambridge. We were also very fortunate to have the expert help of house-master Ben Atkins, former chorister of Jesus College, whose involvement with us marked a turning point in our recent history. The choir has regularly competed in the Limerick Choral Festival and has, on a number of occasions, carried off the silverware to prove it. A special highlight of this year was our first performance (at 3.50 am!) at the launch of the local Darkness into Light sponsored walk which took place in Murroe village, in aid of Pieta House. Singing in the street instead of the church also meant that we were able to

sing different voice parts. Other prospective members sometimes audition at other times as well. What do we look for in a possible chorister? He doesn't have to be a brilliant singer, but he does have to be able to sing in tune and be able to learn a new melody quickly enough. Being able to read music is not vital but is a big help.

The benefits of the choir are many: musical, social, psychological, intellectual, but also spiritual. If the ancient proverb 'He who sings well prays twice' is anything to go by, then our choir have prayed many hundreds of times.



Out of Africa

Fr John O'Callaghan OSB

Young men wanted to give rather than receive. Hot, remote, impoverished conditions; endless energy and adaptability needed; close proximity to wild animals. Tent accommodation supplied.

This advertisement, modelled on Shackleton's famous call (Men Wanted, for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful, honor and recognition in case of success. Ernest Shackleton.4 Burlington St.) for brave men to join his expedition to the South Pole in 1914, is annually posted on the Fifth Year noticeboard of Glenstal Abbey School. It usually evokes a positive response from some and has thereby led to a number of projects in East Africa. By reading ahead you may wish to judge for yourself if it is simply that '*le hasard fait bien des choses*' (one can get lucky), or perhaps, it's that the Spirit has been with us.

It all began at a Benet (Benedictine Educators) conference in Chile in 2007. Embarrassment at the lack of any project in the developing world by our school, in contrast to several other Irish schools, impelled me to attend in the hope of remedying the situation. There a certain Br. Cassian Kussulu was displaying photos of young Americans at work on their laptops while sipping coca-cola at his monastery of Hanga Abbey in the far south of Tanzania. It was clear that Irish young people could at least do that! They could in fact teach elementary computer skills and give their peers the opportunity to speak English. On returning to Glenstal four boys responded favourably to the

advertisement to visit Hanga in the summer of 2008. Then came a stroke of luck: *Camara*, the Irish NGO which has supplied over two million computers to developing countries, was found to be in need of a base in Tanzania. A deal was done and for access to the Benedictine compound in Dar es Salaam they agreed to supply one hundred computers (second-hand) to schools run by Hanga Abbey. The Glenstal boys could then really be useful during their visits there over the next three years. A second stroke of luck soon followed. We had noticed that the computers often 'crashed' for lack of electricity. Hanga is not on the national power grid and electricity is diesel generated, expensive and nearly all used to run the monastery mill. The Glenstal 'Tanzania teams' refused to fundraise for another diesel generator but agreed to do so for green energy though this would cost twice as much! Fundraising began in earnest and, here is the amazing good fortune, *Solar Without Frontiers*, a newly hatched NGO, was inspired by the project and offered to design and install state-of-the-art solar panels at Hanga free of charge if we paid for their cost. St Ottilien Archabbey and St John's Collegeville helped us with this and the former also undertook the challenge of transporting solar panels from Germany and across seas and rough roads to Hanga. As a result the school is now running on solar power and will for many years to come!



With the computers powered and the young people (and teachers) now able to use them, there was little reason for another 'Tanzania team' to venture forth. We thought our time was up. But, as luck would have it, an opportunity came our way with Mvimwa Abbey. Adventure was still possible and in 2011 and 2013 teams of six boys were hosted at Mvimwa Abbey to teach, like their predecessors, computer skills and conversational English in the school. It was like being on another planet, hot and desolate, as one of the team said. But we were able one weekend to visit and swim in Lake Tanganyika, near where Stanley found Dr Livingstone in 1871. The 'Tanzania teams' engaged in fundraising in Ireland for solar panels for Mvimwa

and due to the generous response of so many payment was made. Again, *Solar Without Frontiers* carried out its expert work for free! Mvimwa school can now use its own money for other purposes than buying diesel for its generator – such as to erect a fence to keep out hyenas and other animals which are mortally dangerous to children. Funds for scholarships also became available for some of the girls – this helps them avoid early pregnancy and spending their youth collecting firewood and water instead of getting an education. We've learnt that donors are discerning and when a good cause comes their way it is often well supported.

After Mvimwa we thought our luck must surely have run out but no, a former student of Glenstal, involved in a cross border ecology project with Kenya pointed to three impoverished schools near his work place, the Lale'enok Resource Centre. These three schools lie in the heart of Maasai territory and are attended by the young nomadic and pastoralist population. Again the challenge to update their facilities and share with them awoke a positive response amongst some Irish students. It also opened the purse strings of their parents to allow them participate. Due to the generosity of the parents to their sons any funds collected for a school can be entirely donated to the school. Anyone who purchases a cake at a Bake Sale, contributes from a home parish or business account, or throws money into our bucket knows that it all goes to the fabric of a school in Kenya. Thus it is that 'Kenya crews' are each year able to offer something substantial to their host school. What are most needed are always the most basic facilities, latrines, renovations of classrooms or a water tank or fencing. But computer skills are what enthral the young Kenyans. None can compare with them for enthusiasm, intelligence and retentive power. But the real magic of the Kenyan experience is that a lot more people have got involved in the project. A world class safari company has come in on the project by charging far less than the normal price for our food and drink and conservancy taxes are waived. The construction work is value for money, honest and of a high calibre. St Thomas Aquinas wrote somewhere that 'goodness propagates itself' and that seems to be the case around Lale'enok. The Irish are also on the receiving end; it's a win – win situation for everyone. They see a new world, that of nature, the giraffes, zebras, and lions that can also wake them up in the morning or whose tracks they see near the camp. They see human and animal populations, wild and domestic, living on the same patch and adapting to the different seasons and climatic conditions; they see the

overwhelming importance of water and the environment generally. This new found consciousness may make all the difference in the future. They also learn to be happy with less. There is nothing quite like clean water flowing out of a random tap, the comfort of a lavatory seat and ever ready electricity and internet! It dawns on the young Irish that although they think they have a future it does not seem so straightforward to their African peers. They also learn to give; it doesn't come naturally to us all. Youth is a time to tap into idealism and they are so often ready to rise such challenges.



Perhaps the reader can now give an answer to the question that this report started with. My answer is that, yes, the amount of generosity expressed by so many towards these East African projects testifies to it as something more than the ancient adage suggests '*Fortes fortuna iuvat*' ('Fortune favours the brave!'). We can sing 'Alleluia'!

My Year in Glenstal and the University of Limerick



Br Justin Osih OSB

I arrived at Dublin Airport on the 13th of August 2016. As I came out of the airport upon my arrival, the first thing that greeted me was a cold breeze that I haven't experienced before in my lifetime. Then I said to myself "welcome to Europe and to Ireland in particular". As the saying goes that "when you come to a strange land you stand on one foot in order to know if it is safe for you". I came into Ireland with that notion of standing on one foot but I was swept off my feet with the magnificence and beauty of the country covered with lovely green. The beauty of Ireland reminds me of Ps. 30:22 "Blessed be the Lord who has shown me the wonders of His love in a fortified city" and Ps.47:2 "Mount Zion true pole of the earth the great King's city". The beauty is associated with the peace and serenity of Ireland. Sometimes when I walk on the streets in some towns and villages of Ireland, I hardly find people outside. Everywhere is always calm and peaceful just as the monastery is. Another striking factor that swept me off my feet and made me feel at home is the hospitality of the monks of Glenstal and Irish people in General. I have never felt at home in a foreign land the way I felt in Glenstal and Ireland.

My year in the university of Limerick has been the best experience I have had in my academic life. The environment was so suitable for learning and the lecturers have been so supportive to me as well as the students. My experience at the University of Limerick is a pure description of "learning with ease" as against the background I came from in Nigeria. I was able to get a better understanding of what chant is, the historical background, the politics behind it, the nuances and how the mode works in Gregorian chant. I thank God for giving the best

classmates I have ever had in school. They are Michelle Levy, Daniel Battle and Rosemary Heredos. They were so supportive, understanding and co-operative. I'm so happy and privileged to have a lovely group of people like them in my set. I also thank God for the wonderful lecturers I encountered in the University, they include: Dr. Eleanor Giraud (Director of MARCS), Prof. Helen Phelan, Dr. Oscar Mascernas, Dr. Catherine Foley, Catherine Sergent and Marie Walsh. I really learnt a lot from them.

My time in Glenstal Abbey was the most memorable and happiest time in my monastic life. Glenstal Abbey is a pure description of what the psalmist says in Ps. 132:1 "How good and wonderful it is when brothers dwell in unity". Despite the fact that there is no perfect community on earth, the monks of Glenstal strive in their own way to live these values in love, concern and understanding for one another. I really felt this love and concern from each one of the monks. They all ensure that I'm happy, shielded from cold and feel warmly at home. I have never felt so at home elsewhere as I have felt in Glenstal. My time in Glenstal has afforded me the opportunity to learn more about the historical background of Glenstal Abbey which happens to be the Mother house of my community, St. Benedict monastery Ewu-Esan, in Nigeria. It has also afforded me the opportunity to know how chant developed here in Glenstal Abbey and how it was transmitted to Ewu monks. This was my thesis topic. I really learnt a lot about the Irish people, their culture and language. I was privileged to visit many counties and historical sites in Ireland. As the saying goes that, "travelling is a vital aspect of education", my coming to Ireland has really shaped my understanding of Irish people and the western society at large. I thank God for bringing me here safely and I thank the Abbot and the entire monks of Glenstal Abbey for receiving me warmly and making me feel so happy in Ireland. I often tell my classmates and other people that my one year in Ireland has been the best time in my life experience and I hope to cherish this experience forever.

Glenstal Abbey Farm

Fr James McMahon OSB

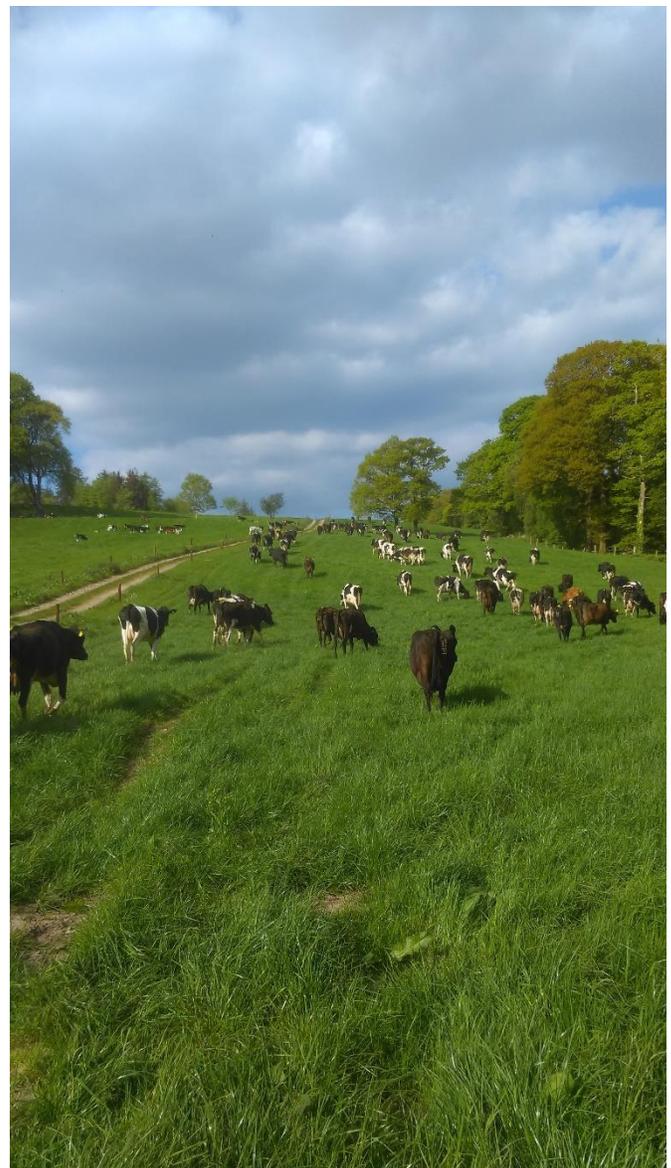


The monks have been farming at Glenstal, in the foothills of County Limerick's Slieve Felim mountains, since they arrived here in 1927. In the past, as was common practice in Ireland, the farm was a mixture of enterprises - dairy, beef, poultry, pigs, some tillage and horticulture, but nowadays we have specialised in a dairy herd of around 130 cows. The milk is sold locally for processing into whole milk powder.

Ireland's maritime climate - its mild wet winters and cool wet summers - is perfect for growing the grass that makes up the bulk of our cows' diet. The mild weather, even the rain, suits the cows too: they prefer to graze outdoors for most of the year, coming inside only for the winter. As is the case with most Irish dairy farms, the pattern of milk production here matches the natural cycles of the year, and the cows are milked from early spring till late autumn, when grass growth slows down. They rest indoors through the winter months, getting ready for the coming season. Our cows' breeding, and their grass-based diet ensure that the milk they give is rich in nutrients, and we receive a premium price for its high quality.

The monastic community is committed to maintaining its tradition of farming, both as a source of income for the monastery and as a sustainable use for the land. In the past decade, we have

invested in improvements to the land and farming infrastructure. With a view to the future, we have recently made the decision to further develop the dairy farm. As well as building up the herd, we will be modernising the milking plant and building additional winter housing for the cows. These improvements will set the monastery farm on a sure footing for the future.



Thinking of Monastic Life?

Br Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB

One of the many things for which the community here in Glenstal is grateful is that in the last two decades we have received a steady trickle of novices and currently have four monks in the various stages of initial training. This is not the case everywhere and the precipitous drop in religious vocations since the 1960s has brought anxiety to religious communities in the developed world, most of which have experienced contraction while some are facing extinction. However, even in adversity the temptation to throw in the towel is not an option for Christians who are called to 'seek the Lord while he is still to be found'. Armed with this insight it doesn't take long to discern the Holy Spirit in action. Although the general narrative is one of decline, this is not the full story. In recent years Ireland has witnessed the emergence of some new, vibrant expressions of religious life while older orders, like the Dominican friars, have experienced an upsurge of vocations.

Candidates for monastic life today tend to be older and have more life experience than in the past. Novices who entered Glenstal in the last twenty years have ranged in age from their mid-twenties to mid-forties. All had worked, many had studied to advanced degree level, a number are from abroad and some have experience of other forms of religious life or priesthood. The common denominator is the mysterious work of the Holy Spirit shown in an attraction to the 'brethren and the place,' to the daily round of prayer, work and service that characterises monastic life here in Glenstal. We ask your prayers for this as well: that those whom the Lord calls to the monastery may have the courage to respond generously.

Seeking God in community is a challenging life choice but a rewarding one. Perhaps it's what you're called to?

vocations@glenstal.org

Life as a Novice

Br Emmanuel O'Hara OSB

The first time I heard Gregorian chant was when I was eight years old at a Benedictine monastery in Normandy. The sight of the gaunt, black-cowled monks with tonsured heads combined with the hauntingly beautiful and sombre plainchant had a strange effect and moved me deeply. Twenty-four years later I returned to this part of northern France as part of a research trip for a book I was working on. I had arranged to stay in the monastery of Saint-Wandrille for some nights and when I saw the big barn of a church I knew that this was the place I had been to long ago – a case of déjà vu! It was like returning to a previous life long, long ago. Since my early 20s I had been increasingly drawn to the Benedictine monastic life, spending three or four nights once or twice a year at a Benedictine community, usually in France or Scotland where I was at University. These were little oases of peace and reflection which I would always look forward to and where I always felt a deep sense of joy and happiness. It was the same sense of peace and beauty, of a transcendent presence, that I had felt when, as a child, my mother used to take me on trips to places like Clonmacnoise, Glendalough, and Skellig Michael - the great monastic centres of ancient Ireland. I later became a historian of this period, but it was the peace and serenity of these places where prayer had been valid that had first wooed me. They stood for something that I could sense was true, beautiful, and meaningful beneath the surface of things. I had always a strong sense of God's presence and love,

perhaps because I experienced death at a young age and was always acutely aware of the transience and fragility of life. Prayer had been a natural part of my life from a young age. I was lucky that the faith was passed on to me by my mother and grandmothers, women of deep faith and icons of Christian love. I left Ireland when I was eighteen and lived for the next sixteen years in Scotland, Norway, England, and Austria pursuing my studies and living a pretty normal life. While I had felt a pull to the monastic life since my early 20s I had done my best to ignore it, hoping that it would pass. But it didn't. An underlying dissatisfaction with my life grew, that became more and more manifest as I reached the end of my 20s. I had been extremely focused and achievement-driven gaining my PhD in History from the University of St Andrews when I was 27 and then moving to Vienna to work in the Austrian Academy of Sciences as a research fellow for the next seven years. By the end of it I was leading my own €200,000 research project funded by the Austrian Science Fund and had established myself as an early career researcher in my field. In 2010, between contracts, I had taken some months off from work to think more deeply about my vocation and had walked the Camino de Santiago, 800 km in 47 days, and afterwards had done a three week "live-in" in Glenstal - I had never been happier or more at peace. Five years later I had completed all my academic projects and commitments in Vienna and had no doubts that the next step was to enter the novitiate in Glenstal. I "retired" from academia at the age of 34 and celebrated by driving the Pacific Coast Highway from Seattle to San Diego in a white convertible Mustang after a sabbatical in the United States. That journey came to an end in October when I drove slowly up the avenue to Glenstal. As I drove through the front gate I put on Bob Marley's "Exodus" "Uh! Open your eyes and look within: Are you satisfied (with the life you're living)? Uh! We know where we're going, uh! We know where we're from. We're leaving Babylon, We're going to our Father land" ... and with this throbbing, jubilant funky beat slowly meandered up the winding avenue until the monastery appeared around a rhododendron-

flanked bend squat on the side of a hill. As I drove through the imposing castellated gate with the Latin word PAX ("Peace") above the arch it felt like coming home.

For the first few days I hardly slept at all as I adjusted to being here. Nerves and adrenaline made sure to keep me awake. The mornings were the hardest. Waking while still dark by the sound of clanking bells I would wake dazed and rattled not knowing where I was. It felt surreal. After a quick cold shower and a slug of water to clear my throat, I would scuffle down to the church just in time for the start of Matins. Tracing the sign of the cross over our lips we began to sing praise and to bless the new day. And so, as we prayed in a bass monotone the Psalms and parlayed the verses across the choir like tennis players exchanging volleys, I would ease into the day, sinking back into that which led me here, being re-grounded after the alienation of the night to that which upholds every day. I would watch as the night faded and the cold greyness of dawn broke.

Despite the challenge of adjusting to a new and strange life, there was an underlying feeling of peace and joy, which have remained ever since. The days began to pass quicker as I settled into the new rhythm of the place. After months of rain and unsettled weather we experienced an Indian summer with bright, sunny autumnal days which lasted into November. The days were full and rich. After Matins and Lauds, I would return to my room to do half an hour of lectio divina, an ancient way of reading and praying with Scripture, before breakfast in silence. I would then don my hiking boots and take my staff to walk the woods in the monastic enclosure behind the abbey for about 40 minutes. The days took on a texture of their own as I slowly slipped back into myself, into a deep presence that had always been there sustaining me but which I was often too busy or distracted to fully encounter. I felt like I had got my life back. In the gospels Jesus speaks about the 'Kingdom of God'. The monastery seemed to be providing the space,

support, and structure to really experience and live this reality consistently.

As autumn slowly turned to winter and Advent approached, my experience of time began to change. Another system of time, the Liturgical calendar, the weeks of Ordinary Time punctuated by saints' feast days, usurped the secular calendar so that I had to frequently check in my diary what date it was. I was getting caught up in another stream of time, a system that was aloof to the world's dictates and measurements - a timelessness time. Time seemed to pass both quickly and slowly simultaneously like a child playing with a TV remote control who alternates between the fast forward and the reverse buttons at once. The days passed fluidly, rhythmically marked out by the offices, by routine, and by my duties. The sweet melancholy and somber majesty of the modulating Gregorian chant evoked God as terrifying, dangerous, and real - singing these ancient prayers of praise and anguish could at times evoke the same feelings of awe and wonder one feels from the summit of a high mountain. The Hours of the Divine Office, the times we sing Psalms in choir, were for me pit stops throughout the day when you reconnected to the presence that is always there, but which can be obscured through all our busyness and tyranny of doing.

Nothing was rushed or stressed, but grounded in an ever-present presence. Everything was done in service of and secondary to our primary purpose of worship and prayer. Coming from a task and goal-oriented working culture it took me a long time to readjust to the new rhythm of monastic life where there is no task or goal apart from being free to serve God alone. The monk has no "job" or specific task, as Thomas Merton understood:

The monk is not defined by his task, his usefulness. In a certain sense he is supposed to be "useless" because his mission is not to do this or that

job but to be a man of God. He does not live in order to exercise a specific function: his business is life itself. This means that monasticism aims at the cultivation of a certain quality of life, a level of awareness, a depth of consciousness, an area of transcendence and of adoration which are not usually possible in an active secular existence. This does not imply that the secular level is entirely godless and reprobate, or that there can be no real awareness of God in the world. Nor does it mean that worldly life is to be considered wicked or even inferior. But it does not mean that more immersion and total absorption in worldly business end by robbing one of a certain necessary perspective. The monk seeks to be free from what William Faulkner called "the same frantic steeplechase toward nothing" which is the essence of "worldliness" everywhere (Contemplation in a World of Action, p. 7).

This timelessness time in which I was sinking ever deeper was accompanied by a gradual slipping away from the mooring, letting go of all the upwoundedness and preoccupations of my former life. For me the monastery opened up a richer experience of time, a fullness of time that I had lacked in the outside world. The thing I struggled with the most was really accepting that I was called to Be with Christ - he called his disciples to be with him, to simply delight in his presence and to listen to him like Mary, whereas I often found that I was the fretting, busy Martha. Part of the process was realizing that I was not the lead partner, I didn't call the steps, but I needed to let go, surrender, and trust the movement of my numinous dance partner. That's the hard part - learning to trust. I don't know about the future but I am living each day as best I can in God's presence and taking one small step at a time. And feel very blessed and privileged to be here.

Malartú Daltaí le Scoileanna thar Lear

Br. Cillian Ó Sé OSB

1. Intreoir

Cuid bhunúsach de chlár na hIdirbhliana i Scoil na Mainistreach is ea an malartú idir dhaltaí ár Scoile agus daltaí ó scoileanna i dtíortha eile. Ní dhéanaim cur síos anso ach ar an malartú le scoileanna san Airgintín, sa Bheilg, sa bhFrainc, sa Ghearmáin agus san Ostair; baineann cur cuige faoi leith leis an malartú le scoileanna san Astráil agus sna Stáit Aontaithe.

2. Eagrú

Malartú *au pair* atá i gceist. Ciallaíonn sé sin go gcaitheann gach dalta a ghlacann páirt ann seal áirithe ag freastal ar scoil a pháirtí. De ghnáth, téann ar ndaltaí thar lear ag tosach Téarma an tSamhraidh i gcóir tréimhse de 8 seachtain ar a laghad. Faigheann siad lóistín i dteaghlach a bpáirtithe agus bíonn siad páirteach ina lán imeachtaí ina saol laethúil; téann siad ar scoil lena bpáirtithe; agus ba cheart dóibh gach iarracht a dhéanamh imeascadh go tapa leis an bpobal ina dtimpeall.

De ghnáth, tagann na páirtithe iasachta anso le linn an dá théarma eile, .i., Téarma na Nollag agus Téarma na Cásca. Más dalta cónaithe é páirtí an dalta iasachta, faigheann an dara duine freisin lóistín sa Scoil, ach caitheann sé laetheanta saoire le teaghlach a pháirtí; más dalta lae é an buachaill anso, caitheann a pháirtí iasachta a thréimhse in Éirinn mar aoi sa theaghlach sin.

3. Spriocanna

Cad iad cuspóirí na scéim malartaithe seo? Ar an gcéad dul síos, tá cuspóir thar a bheith

phraiticiúil léi: seans a thabhairt don dalta snas a chur ar an nua-theanga iasachta atá roghnaithe aige do Scrúdú na hArdteistiméireachta, go speisialta maidir leis an dteanga labhartha. Bíonn an timpeallacht ina gcaitheann an dalta a thréimhse thar lear an-chlaonta i dtreo cleachtadh na teanga iasachta, toisc go mbíonn sí á húsáid mar ghnáth-theanga chumarsáide gach lá. Bíonn rogha ag na daltaí idir an bhFraincis, an Ghearmáinis agus an Spáinnis. Labhartar Fraincis mar ghnáth-theanga chumarsáide sa bhFrainc agus i ndeisceart na Beilge; Gearmáinis sa Ghearmáin agus san Ostair; agus Spáinnis sa Spáinn agus san Airgintín (féach thuas).

Baineann cuspóirí eile ginearálta leis an scéim. In aois seo an domhandaithe, tá an taithí atá le fáil ó bheith mar aoi i dteaghlach iasachta, ag freastal ar scoil thar lear, agus ag imeascadh le cultúr iasachta, an-thábhachtach le féin-mhuinín agus leathanaigeantacht a chothú. Freisin, bronnann sé tuiscint níos doimhne agus meas níos mó ar ár gcultúr dúchais féin.



The Guest House at Glenstal Abbey

Fr Christopher Dillon OSB

Hospitality to the pilgrim is enjoined on the monastic communities which follow the Rule of Benedict and Glenstal Abbey is no exception to this precept. Further to the generosity of a friend and donor, the community at Glenstal Abbey is in a position to provide comfortable quarters and beautiful surroundings for the guest who stays with us.

The day is punctuated by the times of prayer in the church, in which the guests are welcome to participate and the meals which are provided, morning, noon and night, in an atmosphere of quiet



recollection. There are walks on the avenues, in the gardens and in the woods for the energetic. There is space for reading and writing, for those who prefer that.

Spiritual accompaniment or a quiet conversation with one of the brethren is available, on request.

Those who wish to avail themselves of this hospitality should contact the Guest House at guestmaster@glenstal.com or telephone the Abbey Reception, at 061.621000.

Retreat Days

Fr Simon Sleeman OSB

Some years ago, Timothy Radcliffe OP gave us a retreat in Glenstal. His opening phrase has stayed with me - 'a retreat is about making you feel discontented again.' This took me by surprise - but has made more and more sense ever since. It is so easy to become complacent and stuck in a rut. This aim, 'to make you discontented again' is not the only aim of a Glenstal Retreat Day but it is part of it. They are also occasions to take time out - to stop and reflect. These goals may be over ambitious! But do come and join us anyway.

Dates

30th September: "The Benedict Option and why we need it now."

14th October: "Ageing Well"

4th November: SBNR: "I am spiritual but not religious".

25th November: "Getting in touch with your inner tortoise - preparing for Advent and the Christmas Season".

Retreat Days 2018 We hope to have David Tacey, an Australian author who has written extensively on spirituality and also the well-known author and speaker, Thomas More, join us for a retreat day.

UPCOMING DAYS

Saturday 30th September: "The Benedict Option and Why we Need It Now"

This phrase sets the tone for this retreat day as we examine why Benedict's Rule is as relevant today as ever. Benedict wasn't interested in bullying people into holiness. Rather he sought to provide a way of life which would ensure that our "hearts would enlarge and that we would run in the way of God's commandments with the unspeakable sweetness of love". We will look at some elements of his design to achieve this ambitious goal.

Saturday 14th October: Ageing Well

As we all live longer and longer, can we age well? Are there things we can do to help? This day will reflect on the challenges of ageing. It will consider what spiritual practices we can use to help bring us successfully through this 'third stage' of life.

Saturday 4th November: SBNR - Spiritual but not religious.....

An increasing number of people describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. If asked to explain what they mean, most people are quite vague in their answers. Some speak of the wonders of nature and wanting to deepen their spirituality. Others are disillusioned with formal religion and want their own spirituality. Others, notably some church leaders, are concerned about the vagueness of the term spiritual. This day will reflect on what we mean by spirituality today and examine if it is possible for religion and spirituality to coexist once again.

Saturday 25th November: Preparing for Advent and the Christmas season: Getting in touch with your inner tortoise.

Life is fast - Pope Francis calls it the 'rapidification' of life. I like speed and the adrenaline rush that goes with it. But there is another side to me which is being neglected and which I need to stay in touch with - my inner tortoise. I suspect I would be happier and more productive if I did this and lived my life rather than racing through it. Pascal claimed that many of our problems derive from our inability to sit still. We need time and stillness to draw together the fragments of our lives. This is especially true as we

approach the Christmas season. This day will reflect on the gradual speeding up of our lives and how we can slow down and be ready to bathe ourselves in the celebration of the Christmas season.

The Abbey also offers a series of talks during Advent and Lent in the monastery library.

ADVENT AT THE ABBEY – Hearing the Prophets Speak

Sunday 3rd December 2017

"Awaiting the Lord God who will wipe away the tears from all faces (Isaiah 25:8)" - Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB

Saturday 9th December 2017

Ruth and Boaz – A Story of Hope and Promise - Pádraig McIntyre OSB
(The carol service is on Sunday 10th December)

Sunday 17th December 2017

"Meeting the Lord your God who is in your midst (Zephaniah 3:17)" - Luke Macnamara OSB

LENT AT THE ABBEY – Readings of the Great Vigil

The seven Old Testament readings at the Easter Vigil are very challenging at first glance but each illuminates a specific facet of the Mystery of Christ's death and resurrection which we celebrate at Easter. This year's series of Lenten talks will examine one of these readings each Sunday.

Sunday 18th February 2018

A New Beginning (Genesis 1:1-2:2) - Terence Crotty OP

Sunday 25th February 2018

A Costly Sacrifice – the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22:1-18) - Luke Macnamara OSB

Sunday 4th March 2018

Crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15-15:1) - Francis Cousins

Sunday 11th March 2018

The Lord's Courtship – Discovering God in the Desert (Isaiah 54:5-15) - Dr Jessie Rogers

Sunday 18th March 2018

Discovering the Way to Mysterious Nourishment
(Isaiah 55:1-11) - Columba McCann OSB

Sunday 25th March 2018

From Death to Life – Water Old and New (Ezekiel 36
& Romans 6:3-11) - Martin Browne OSB

Talks will take place in the Monastery library at 4.30pm, followed by tea and coffee at 5.15pm. All who come are welcome to attend Sunday Vespers in the Abbey Church at 6pm. Suggested donation €5

To stay in the Guesthouse or a God Pod –

guestmaster@glenstal.org

Visiting Groups, Hospitality, Events –

events@glenstal.com

General Monastery & Prayer Requests –

monks@glenstal.org



Oak Jubilee

Fr Martin Browne OSB

Glenstal's most senior monk, Fr Placid Murray, celebrated his Oak Jubilee – the 80th anniversary of his monastic profession – on Friday 6th

January 2017. Fr Placid made his first profession on the Feast of the Epiphany 1937 in the Abbey of Maredsous in Belgium, Glenstal's mother-house. Fr Placid, who is 98 years old, is currently resident at a nursing home in nearby Newport, Co. Tipperary, but he returned to Glenstal for his jubilee, where he and the monastic community were joined by many of his relatives and friends.

In his homily, Abbot Brendan reflected that 'our lives as monks are lived in a constant relationship with all the varied events of the world around us, from the sublime to the ridiculous. One unique Spirit, that of the Father and of the Son, animates everything. Our multiple charisms are a reflection of the seamless robe of Christ the Saviour who is made manifest this day, in Jordan water, at the miracle of the wedding at Cana and in kingly gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Each one of



us is given a fixed span of days to allow the Lord become manifest in our own lives. For a monk that manifestation comes primarily through the Work of God in choir, to which you Fr Placid have been most faithful. It is a tremendous testimony to fidelity, all too seldom seen today in any walk of life, that someone faithfully carries out their work for eighty years. As the psalm puts it – eighty for those who are strong.'

After the homily, Fr Placid renewed his monastic profession before the altar. He then sang the *Suscipe*, a verse from Psalm 118 which is dear to all monastics. It is chanted by each monk on the day of his profession and every year at the community renewal of vows. On the day of his funeral, the brethren sing it one more time on behalf of their departed confrere before his remains are taken from the church to the cemetery. Before the final blessing of the Mass, Fr Placid gave a short reflection on this verse. The celebrations were rounded off with a festive lunch in the monastery refectory. *Ad multos annos!*

Glenstal Forest

Fr Anthony Keane OSB

After the traumas of scrub clearance and machine driven Woodland Improvement schemes around the time of the new Millennium and the devastating hurricane of 12th February 2014, the forest is beginning to settle down once more to generate an atmosphere of biodynamic self-contained coherence.

Forests left undisturbed settle and clarify like old port, with each species of plant finding its own level of light. When a hole in canopy occurs, chaos occurs with a mad scramble of brambles or pheasant berry and laurel rushing in to avail of the light until the high forest reasserts itself. Such indeed is potentially the scene in the woods north of the house where Tommy Ryan Head, with razor hook to slit the thin spun life, maintains the paths in full light and protects young Sitka Spruce, Douglas Fir,

Western Red Cedar, Port Orford Cedar, European Larch, Silver Fir, Scots Pine, Oak, Beech Spanish Chestnut, wild cherry and Hornbeam which he has planted or which have naturally regenerated in the newly opened spaces.

Elsewhere, the ravages of the last glaciation are being healed, and beautiful trees and shrubs have returned from their mountain refugia in Iran and the Himalayas. Particularly noteworthy for their soon to be revealed autumn colours are the Persian Ironwood and the Chinese *Stewartia pseudo-camelia* var. *koreana*.

The oak have finally put on their heavy mantle of deep summer green. In a few weeks they will declare a second spring and put forth new shoots of Lammas growth, coloured like bright red candles to confuse the deer or to praise the Lord.

*Arbor decor et fulgida,
Ornata regis purpura.*

Fr David Conlon RIP

John Joe Conlon was born in Mount Temple, Moate, Co Westmeath in 1925. He entered the Society of African Missions in Kilcolgan, Co Galway in 1944, and after formation there and in Dromantine, Co Down he was ordained priest in 1950. He pursued further studies in Rome before being assigned to the SMA's mission in Liberia, where he spent five years. Fr John Joe returned to Dromantine in 1958 to serve as Rector of the SMA seminary. After six years in this role he embarked on promotions work, travelling the length and breadth of the country raising awareness and funds for the missions.



Sensing the call to a more contemplative life, Fr John Joe entered Glenstal Abbey in 1969,

taking the name David. However, he was not finished with Africa. In 1975 he joined the three founding monks of the new Benedictine foundation made by Glenstal in Eke, Nigeria. When this community needed to move and build a permanent home, it was Fr David who negotiated the deal for a site with the local chief in Ewu-Ishan, and he celebrated Mass there for the first time in 1978. St Benedict's Priory in Ewu retained a very special place in Fr David's heart for the rest of his life. Back in Ireland and working in the Bursar's office, he continued to oversee Ewu's finances for many years.

Fr David served in many different roles in later years, including a term as Novice Master and several years as director of Oblates, a ministry which gave him scope to share his great love for *lectio divina* and contemplative prayer. In poor health for several years, he was resident first in Carrigoran House, Co Clare, and most recently in the SMA retirement facility in Cork, where his first religious family took great care of him. He was glad to be back in the midst of his SMA colleagues and resumed using his baptismal name of John Joe. He died peacefully there on the evening of Wednesday 18th January 2017.

Requiescat in pace

The Abbey Church

Fr Senan Furlong OSB

Over the years a number of attempts were made to renovate our Abbey Church, but in the words of the Psalmist, 'their plans that day came to nothing' (Ps 145. 4). Thanks be to God the right day did at last come and the first phase of the church renovation, carried out last summer, was completed at the beginning of November just in time for the abbatial blessing of Fr Brendan. We are enormously grateful to our benefactors for their generosity. Without your assistance we would not have been able to accomplish what we have.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of the refurbishment is the brightness of the interior. The church is filled with light. New clear glass clerestory windows have opened the church to natural light which streams in abundantly, flooding the freshly painted walls of the nave and choir and reflecting on the white ceramic tiling on the floor. The building is vibrant and luminous. The effect of the changing sunlight from dawn to sunset is particularly striking, as is the more mysterious and delicate illumination from the moon and stars at night.

The sanctuary area has been remodelled and extended on either side. It is spacious, simple and serene. The High Altar was replaced with the marble altar from the Blessed Sacrament chapel and this means that Br Benedict Tutty's copper repoussé panel depicting the Lamb of God surrounded by the symbols of the four evangelists is now displayed more prominently. The marble of the

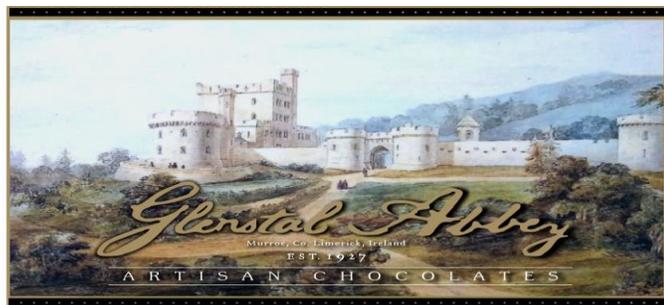


altar mirrors the marble on the pillars in the nave and has a subtle unifying effect. The monastic choir has been simplified and reduced, providing more space for monks who attend community prayer in a wheelchair. Some of the stalls removed from the choir have been fitted in the Blessed Sacrament chapel where they provide an element of privacy for anyone who wants to pray in this beautiful space filled with light and colour from the stained glass windows.

The floor level throughout the church was raised to facilitate the installation of underfloor heating. This is powered by a geothermal system

and the combination of this, better insulation and double-glazing has transformed the environment, particularly during the winter months. A building that was once cold and damp is now warm and comfortable. A new sound system has also been installed and considerable progress was made in replacing some of the lighting with energy efficient LED fixtures. The completion of the lighting system and the replacement of the electrical wiring installed in the 1950s remains a priority.

This summer it is planned to do some further works. These include extending the ceramic tiled flooring into the side chapels, installing a new confessional and replacing the lighting system in the nave. Revamping the gutters, extending the car park area and completing the interior design remain for a future date. We are very thankful for your help and interest and we ask for your continued support so that, in the words of St Benedict, 'the Lord may bring to completion that work that he has begun.'



Glenstal Abbey Artisan Chocolates specialises in the use of liqueurs from monasteries of Europe to flavour the fondants of chocolate truffles, in particular, famous liqueurs such as Chartreuse and Bénédictine. We also use a Mandarin Orange liqueur which we import from the Abbaye de Lérins, on an island off the coast at Nice, where St Patrick is said to have studied in the fifth century, and a walnut liqueur, Nocino, which we source from an Italian Cistercian convent. In addition our range includes an alcohol-free collection derived from desserts for monastic feast days. The boxes are in 260g and 130g sizes. We also have 75g chocolate bars with quotes from the Rule of Benedict in English and the original Latin and a range of dairy-free bars with fruit from our garden. Enquiries welcome at chocolates@glenstal.com www.glenstal.org/shop

Ordination of Fr Denis

On Saturday 24th June Fr Denis was ordained a priest in the Abbey Church. The monastic community of Glenstal was joined by a very large assembly of relatives and friends of Fr Denis for the liturgy, including visitors from Rome, the USA and Australia.



Fr Denis presided at his First Mass on Sunday 25th June. Fr Denis has been a monk of Glenstal for over thirty years. During that time he has served in a wide variety of roles, mainly in Glenstal Abbey School, including a seven-year term as Headmaster. For the past academic year he has been resident at the Primatial Abbey of Sant' Anselmo in Rome, and studying at the Pontifical University of Saint Thomas (the 'Angelicum') in preparation for his ordination as priest. He had previously studied Theology at Saint Patrick's College, Maynooth.

Cardinal Christoph Schönborn visits Glenstal



The Cardinal was in Ireland with 15 seminarians of the Archdiocese of Vienna and had a number of engagements in Cork and Limerick, as well as visits to important historical sites such as Clonmacnois. Glenstal's former Abbot, Fr Patrick, was a student with Cardinal Schönborn in the Dominican theological faculty in Paris in the 1960s and the visit provided a welcome opportunity for a reunion after nearly fifty years.

11 July also happens to be the Solemnity of our Holy Father Saint Benedict, who is honoured not only as the Father of Western Monasticism but as Patron Saint of Europe. Cardinal Schönborn



referred to this European dimension several times in both his remarks at the welcome reception and in his homily during Mass. He described his visit with some of his seminarians as a pilgrimage of thanksgiving for the contribution made by Irish monks such as St Koloman and St Vergilius to the re-evangelisation of Central Europe in the Middle Ages.

School News



On Wednesday 31st May 2017, in a letter to staff and parents, Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB, together with the Chairpersons of the school's

Board of Governors and Board of Management, announced the appointment of Ms Carmel Honan to the role of Principal of Glenstal Abbey School, with effect from 1st September 2017. The appointment of a Principal to work alongside the Headmaster marks a change in the organisational structure of the school. The current Headmaster, Fr William Fennelly OSB, will continue in that role, with responsibility for strategy, mission, ethos, fundraising, development and the promotion of the school. As Principal, Ms Honan will lead the Senior Management Team, look after day-to-day school management, lead teaching and learning, and have overall responsibility for staff, standards, discipline, policies and HR issues. When he announced the decision to re-structure the school in this way earlier this year, Abbot Brendan said, "We believe that this new structure will equip our school to face the challenges of the future with confidence, while maintaining a strong monastic presence at the helm."

Carmel Honan is a native of Ennis, Co. Clare, where she was educated at Holy Family School and Coláiste Muire. After studies in NUIG, she began her teaching career in 1989. She was appointed Principal of St Flannan's College, Ennis in 2012. She also holds an MA in Psychotherapy. She has previously served on both the Board of Management and the Board of Governors at Glenstal and is well acquainted with the school. She brings immense experience and knowledge to this new position and is looking forward to working closely with the Headmaster, Fr William Fennelly OSB.



having to absorb a constant barrage of pressure; with an opportunist line break by flanker Conor Booth proving Glenstal's best attacking opportunity. PBC would go on to score one more penalty goal before the final whistle to ensure victory. This leaves Glenstal still searching for their first ever senior cup title.



Three of the team went on to represent Irish School selections over the Easter Break, those being Mark Fleming, Luke Fitzgerald and Ben Healy.

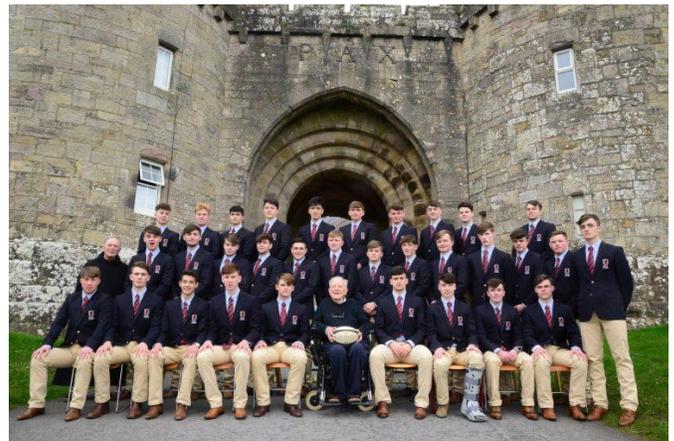
Rugby Senior Cup

Sean Skehan

There was great excitement throughout this year's rugby season as Glenstal's senior team reached the final of the Munster Cup for only the second time in the school's history. The first senior team made the competition's final in 1970 losing out to Rockwell College.

This year's senior cup campaign finished with an 11 - 3 defeat to perennial Cork powerhouse, PBC, in Thomond Park on St. Patrick's Day. The road to the final saw Glenstal record comfortable wins over St. Clement's and Rockwell College in the first round and quarter-final stages respectively, before a nail-biting 21 - 20 semi-final victory over city rivals Ard Scoil Rís.

The final itself saw a huge contingent of old boys and the extended Glenstal community come out in force to support the boys. The match started at a frantic pace and after a bruising first half, Glenstal trailed 8 - 3. The second half saw Glenstal



Looking Towards Our Centenary – Together – with Confidence

Here at Glenstal we are blessed to be one of Ireland's most vibrant communities, with some

thirty-five monks residing at the Abbey. As we entered our 90th anniversary, it was an appropriate time to take stock and look with confidence to our future here in this wonderful place.



At the beginning of Spring we embarked on a consultative process which sought opinions from all those connected to Glenstal on our exciting and ambitious plans for the Abbey and School to:

- Sustain Our Monastic Community
- Preserve the Heritage of the Abbey
- Share the Miracle of True Education

We were deeply encouraged by the very positive feedback, sage advice, and messages of support that were offered.

We have rededicated ourselves to a fifteen-hundred-year-old tradition of Prayer, education, work and welcome. We are currently reviewing the feedback and recommendations and crafting a development plan that will guide us through to our one-hundredth anniversary here in Murroe. We look forward to sharing these findings and plans with you over the coming months.

To assist us with these ambitious initiatives we have established a Development Office and appointed James Ó Murthuile to lead these activities. James previously held the position of

Senior Director with one of the world's leading philanthropic consultancy firms providing counsel for a number of non-profit sectors including: religion, education, the Arts, and human-services.

"It is only with your assistance, support, and guidance that our new vision of *Building a Sustainable Future* for Glenstal Abbey can be realised."

- Abbot Brendan

We Welcome Your Feedback and Advice

We would like to express a heartfelt 'thank you' to everyone who participated in the Planning Phase. If you would like to learn more about our new vision and/or share your opinion with us, you can still do so by following the link below:

www.glenstal.org/survey2017

