



# GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE

GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND

ISSUE 16   AUTUMN 2022   [WWW.GLENSTAL.COM](http://WWW.GLENSTAL.COM)   PHONE: (061) 621 000



**GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND**

Prayer is the foundation of our monastic life and each day in the monastery is centred around times of prayer, together and in private. The backbone of our prayer is the 'Liturgy of Hours' – sometimes called the 'Divine Office' or the 'Work of God' – where the monks gather in the Abbey church at appointed times to chant psalms and sing hymns to God, to listen to the Scriptures and to pray for the needs of the world. This daily round of worship consecrates the course of the day and night as the community gathers in the stillness of the morning, at the setting of the sun, and at the closing of the day.

**W E E K D A Y S****6:35am: Matins and Lauds (Morning Prayer)****12:10pm: Conventual Mass****6:00pm: Vespers (Evening Prayer in Latin)****8:35pm: Compline (Tuesday - Friday: Night Prayer)****8:35pm on Saturday Nights: Resurrection Office/Vigils****S U N D A Y S****7:00am: Lauds (Morning Prayer)****10:00am: Conventual Mass****12:35pm: Sext (Midday Prayer)****6:00pm: Vespers (Evening Prayer in Latin)****8:35pm: Compline (Night Prayer)**

Liturgies are broadcast each day as per our daily timetable:

**[glenstal.com/abbey/webcam/](http://glenstal.com/abbey/webcam/)**

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**A Time of Transition**

As we move into the autumn months and the summer becomes a distant memory, we take a little time to reflect back with you on what has been happening in the monastery over this time. The solemn profession of Br Justin was the highlight of our summer in Glenstal. A monk taking solemn vows and entering our community for life is a major moment in the life of any monastic community. We wish Br Justin well as he returns to Jerusalem to continue his course of studies in theology.

Another significant event over the summer months was the appointment of Fr Martin as an official of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome, with special responsibility for relations with Anglicans and Methodists. Fr Martin had, until recently, been Headmaster and then President of Glenstal Abbey School. He takes up his new job in September, living at Sant'Anselmo. Finally, Br Oscar departs for Rome where he will begin his studies in theology at the Angelicum University. He will live in the Abbey of Sant'Anselmo, the international student house for Benedictines in Rome. We wish Br Oscar well in his studies. We are expecting two new faces in Glenstal in September, as two new novices have applied to join our community.

As a new academic year begins and schools and universities reopen, we wish all of you every blessing and I hope that you enjoy reading about a Glenstal summer in the pages of our Chronicle.

With every blessing,  
**Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB**



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 SOLEMN PROFESSION
 

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# Suscipe me Domine

Justin Robinson OSB

Feast of the Transfiguration, August 6, 2022



The ceremony wherein one vows oneself forever to monastic life is ancient, solemn and beautiful. Dating from the sixth century, it requires handwritten promises on parchment signed on the altar with pen and ink. Even more poignant is that Thomas Robinson comes from England and is prepared to vow himself for the rest of his life to a monastery in Ireland. (Surrounding the altar, flowers from the garden happen to be red, white and blue for the occasion!) Training in Jerusalem and making himself fluent in Arabic, our newly professed

brother is committed to the communion in love of all peoples on earth. As our monastic retreat had ended the day before, most of the Glenstal community were present, including Fr Placid who had made solemn profession eighty years previously. The high point was Justin wowing the congregation with his soulful rendering of the *Suscipe* chant in its three different ascending registers. It is taken from Psalm 119: "If you uphold me by your promise, I shall live; let my hopes not be in vain". We hope that his won't be either. ■

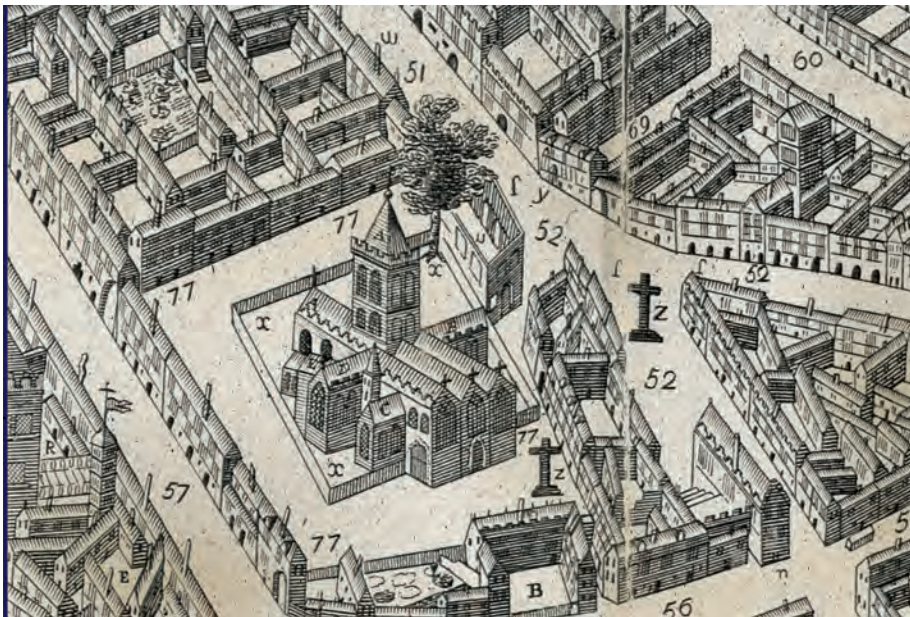
**MARK PATRICK HEDERMAN OSB**

PHOTOS: DENIS HOOPER OSB AND IRENE FENTON



DENIS HOOPER OSB





## The West Awake

Introducing a new study titled, *'Modest and civil people': Religion and society in medieval Galway* authored by Dr Rachel Moss & Br Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB

Sometime during the year 1508, Stephen Lynch FitzDominick, a Galway merchant and four times mayor of the town, returned home from a voyage. Noticing some building work on the hill overlooking the harbour, he enquired as to its nature and was informed that a new Augustinian priory was being constructed. Intrigued that such a major project should be undertaken without his knowledge, he asked about its patron and learned

that it was his own wife, Margaret Athy, a devout benefactor of good causes, a Compostela pilgrim and, like Lynch, a member of one of the town's 'tribes', the fourteen merchant families who dominated its civic, economic and religious life. What his initial response was is not recorded, but Lynch went on to become one of the chief benefactors of the house, generously endowing the Augustinian community on his death in 1536.

« ABOVE: Tomb of Sir Peter French, Franciscan Friary, Galway.  
BELOW: Seventeenth century map of Galway city.

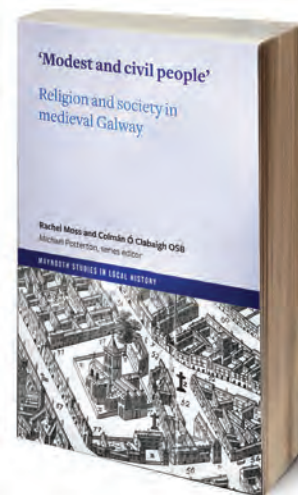
Whether apocryphal or not, this story illustrates the remarkable flowering that occurred in the civic, economic and religious life

of Galway in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The town occupied a unique situation in Medieval Ireland. Conspicuously English in its religious and political allegiances, it existed in an overwhelmingly Gaelic hinterland, far from the institutions of the colonial administration. Having cast off the overlordship of the de Burgh family by the mid-fourteenth century, it functioned as a quasi-oligarchy dominated by its merchant elite until well into the seventeenth century. Its position as a prosperous port town exposed Galway to influences from England and the Continent. *'Modest and civil people'* examines how all these elements found expression in the town's civic and religious institutions as well as in its remarkable medieval art and architecture. It argues that the revival of the town in the late fifteenth-century sprang from a programme of economic, political and religious renewal that transformed it into a self-confident, self-regulating urban community, a veritable City of God.

*'Modest and civil people'* is published by Four Courts Press as part of the Maynooth Studies in Local History series and is available from the publisher (<https://www.fourcourtspress.ie/welcome/>) or in local bookshops.

DR RACHEL MOSS is Associate Professor in the History of Art and Architecture at Trinity College Dublin, specialising in Irish medieval material culture. She was editor and principal author of *Art and Architecture of Ireland. Volume 1 Medieval c.400–1600AD* (London, New Haven and Dublin, 2014).

COLMÁN Ó CLABAIGH OSB, monk of Glenstal Abbey, is a medievalist specialising in the history of religion and monasticism in Late Medieval Ireland. With Fr Martin Browne OSB, he co-edited the various volumes of the Glenstal History Conference proceedings, most recently *Households of God: The Regular Canons and Canonesses of St Augustine and of Prémontré in Medieval Ireland* (Dublin, 2019). ■



## Abbey Updates

will play its part, as the infallible design of God is worked out in each of us.

### ABBEE OBLATE UPDATE

Fr. Columba has returned from Rome and both he and Fr. Henry have agreed to work together with our oblates and associates. It is planned to have an in-person meeting of oblates and associates on Saturday, 5th November. This is the first date available in the guest-house/catering calendar. More details will be available closer to the time, but it is hoped to clear the backlog of oblations at a Mass for oblates on that day. The *Glenstal Oblater* will continue to appear at roughly three-week intervals and the resumption of the webcam talks will be announced soon.

### GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION FOR TOMMY RYAN ON HIS RETIREMENT

Tommy Ryan marked his retirement from Glenstal on 12 August last with a morning coffee in the



### GLENSTAL COMMUNITY ANNUAL RETREAT

Beginning with the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, and drawing on a rich heritage of witnesses from patristic, monastic and contemporary life, Bishop Erik Varden OCSO of Trondheim helped us to deepen our appreciation of the wonder of being made in the image of God, how that image can become obscured, and how it is magnificently restored in Christ.

Pessimistic views of the human being abound today, reducing us to a bundle of biological drives. Jewish and Christian tradition help us however to see that God's intention to create us 'in his image' is something so glorious that it shocks the angels into awesome silence. Despite the stories of human failure, history is an immense symphony, in which everything





monastery reception area. The monastic community and staff, gathered to thank a much loved and respected colleague. Tommy began his current phase of employment with Glenstal Abbey in 2006, sixteen years ago. However, he first came to work in Glenstal back in the 1960s, in the Abbey School. A very quiet presence, Tommy has left a major mark on the Glenstal of today. His care for and work on the grounds has made our much admired physical environment what it is. Tommy's hand lies behind much of what the visitor and pilgrim experiences when they walk through our extensive grounds. His dedication to his work over so many long years is an enormous achievement. We wish Tommy well as he moves to the next phase of his life story. He leaves us with our grateful thanks and admiration for a job extremely well done.

### GLENSTAL'S CHAMPION HURLER SAM O'FARRELL REACHES FOR THE STARS

Our own Sam O'Farrell, 5th Year student in Glenstal Abbey school, has been selected for the All-Star All-Ireland Minor Squad. This prestigious selection comes hot on the heels of an earlier triumph: Sam captained the All Ireland winning Tipperary Minor Hurling team on July 3 when Tipperary defeated their arch-rivals, Kilkenny. Another fantastic achievement for Sam, and one which all at Glenstal can celebrate with pride. ■



## Upcoming Events at the Abbey

### WORDS OF LIGHT AND POWER: MEDITATING WITH THE BIBLE YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT Saturday 10am - 5pm, October 22

Participants will discover ways of meditating on the word of God through reading, chant, art, and the prayer of the rosary, with contributions from Frs Senan, Luke, Columba, and Jarek. Refreshments and lunch provided. Suggested donation €30. Contact 061 621005 or luke@glenstal.com. There is limited guest accommodation for those who wish to come for the weekend programme from the Friday to the Sunday.

### CREATING SPACE FOR THE HOLY GLENSTAL LITURGICAL CONFERENCE October 29 - 31

What was first: liturgy or the church building? Of course both developed with each other. The first Christians met in private houses to celebrate Eucharist, share the bread and experiences with the risen Lord. With growing power and influence of Christianity the size of Church buildings grew.

The enfolding of liturgy followed. Or did the enfolding and enriching forms of liturgy need more space? And what does that mean for today? Are we still able to fill the ancient "houses of god" with ... our prayer, our encounter with God and with the Holy? Do we still thirst for communion with the Lord and with each other?

### ADVENT AT THE ABBEY 2022: BEGINNING ANEW EACH SUNDAY OF ADVENT November 27 - December 18

Fr Luke opens the *Beginning Anew* series of talks on the promise of the season, and Fr Jarek points to ways to grow during it. Fr Henry marks the turning point of Advent with its emphasis on joy while Fr Columba explores ways of tuning in to the Lord's presence. These talks will be followed by refreshments and Vespers at 6.00pm. They will take place in the Abbey Library at 4.30pm and will be live streamed and available as recordings. Suggested donation €15. All are welcome. ■



## Jerusalem: City of Faith and Fury

**“Living in Abu Ghosh as part of my monastic formation has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience a different style of monasticism and to see how the Rule of Saint Benedict can be applied in different contexts.”**

Over the past year I have been living in Abu Ghosh in Israel. The monastery of *Sainte Marie de la Résurrection* in Abu Ghosh was founded in 1976 from Bec-Hellouin, an Olivetan Benedictine monastery in northern France which counts Saint Anselm of Canterbury among its former abbots. Led by Jean-Baptiste Gourion – an Algerian Jewish convert – the community of monks and nuns was established to tap into Christianity’s Jewish roots and to build cordial relations with Jews and the State of Israel.

Located in an Arab Muslim village on the Jerusalem to Tel Aviv highway, the monastery includes a Crusader church built on top of a Roman spring, believed to be the site of the Risen Lord’s encounter with his downcast disciples at Emmaus.

The monastery attracts many French Catholics living and working in Israel and Palestine and, faithful to its vocation, its members have built an enormous network of Israeli and Palestinian friends over many years.

PHOTOS ON PAGE 12 (clockwise from top left): Jews pray at the Western Wall; Muslims in Jerusalem’s Old City during Ramadan; Good Friday in Jerusalem.

**JUSTIN ROBINSON OSB**

PHOTOS: BAPTISTE COUPERY





Each week, hundreds of visitors (both foreign and local) come to the monastery to visit its historic buildings, enjoy its beautiful gardens and to learn more about its mission in the Holy Land.

Alongside a rigorous monastic life of prayer and work – especially the production of ceramics and some hugely popular limoncello – various members of the community are engaged in theological dialogues, the learning of Hebrew and Arabic, the exploration of Christianity's Jewish roots and the building of amicable relations with local Jews, Muslims and Christians alike. In doing so, they hope to play a small part in the healing of the divisions which plague the Holy Land and damage the unity of our entire human family.

Living in Abu Ghosh as part of my monastic formation has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience a different style of monasticism and to see how the Rule of Saint Benedict can be applied in different contexts. Contrary to popular belief, monks and nuns living in monasteries

are in fact steeped in the goings-on of our planet. By their constant prayer, they contribute to the well-being of the entire world. By their hospitality, they provide a place of encounter for different and, at times, conflicting peoples. By their study, they come to know the ways of God better and come to know themselves and their brothers and sisters better too.

The community at Abu Ghosh showed me above all how monasteries can be a place of mission, dialogue and encounter. Living as they do in an Arab Muslim village yet with a vocation to Jewish Israelis demonstrates well the complexity of life there. The brothers and sisters at Abu Ghosh have worked hard to build deep and true friendships with people living across the conflicted Holy Land, and to take a genuine interest in their lives. They have witnessed to their Christianity and so contributed to mutual understanding with their Jewish and Muslim neighbours, and they have provided a space for encounter between the divided peoples of Israel and Palestine.

**Continued on page 25 >>**

PHOTOS ON PAGE 14 (clockwise from top): A bread seller in Nablus; An Orthodox priest at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Jerusalem's Palm Sunday Procession.





— *The Golenvaux* —  
**PECTORAL CROSS**  
OF GLENSTAL ABBEY





## At Mass and the Divine Office on major feasts and at monastic professions, when he is chief celebrant, the Abbot here at Glenstal wears what is known as the Golenvaux Pectoral Cross.

A pectoral-, or breast-cross is worn by an abbot as a sign of his office and his role as representative of Christ in the community. He receives such a cross on his election and in wearing it remembers that he takes up his cross daily to follow Christ and lead his brethren to the Saviour.

Abbot Celestine Golenvaux was Abbot of Maredsous in Belgium, from 1923 until his death in 1952. He was the immediate successor of Blessed Columba Marmion and was instrumental in founding Glenstal as a memorial to his predecessor.

The pectoral cross was a gift to him by the oblates, or lay associates, of Maredsous to mark his abbatial blessing on 12th March, 1923. When Glenstal, always close to the heart of Abbot Celestine, became an abbey in 1957, the community at Maredsous presented this cross to Abbot Joseph Dowdall, our first Irish abbot.

The cross consists in two halves or panels and measures 9.5 centimetres by 7.00 centimetres. The front panel is made of repoussé silver with electroplate gilding. Repoussé silver is silver that has a raised or

PHOTO ON PAGE 16-17: The opened Golenvaux cross showing the relic contained in a roundel in the centre. PHOTOS ON PAGE 18: (clockwise from top left): The front of the Golenvaux cross; Abbot Celestine Golenvaux; The reverse panel of the cross.

**HENRY O'SHEA OSB**

PHOTOS: EMMAUS O'HERLIHY OSB



relief design hammered out from the back of the piece. The back of this piece usually displays the hammered design in reverse relief. The front of the Golenvaux cross depicts the Crucified Lord between two angels on its arms. The background is like a frieze of stylized Art Nouveau plant-motifs.

The reverse panel of the cross shows the Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus with, at each extremity, a roundel containing, clockwise from the left, the heads of St Joseph, St Benedict, St Anselm and Pope St Celestine V.\*

The technique employed in the making of this side of the cross is called niello. Niello (from Latin: *Nigellus* = 'blackened') is a black mixture or alloy, usually of sulphur, copper,

silver, and lead, used as an inlaid surface decoration which, much like enamel, is fused to an engraved or etched metal base, usually, as in this case, of silver. The gleam of niello, however, is metallic rather than glass-like as in enamel and it is much tougher than the latter.

It is interesting to note that although the cross was presented to Abbot Celestine, he had to make the back of it himself. He was a competent silver- and goldsmith, a fact reflected in his coat-of-arms, which figures three closed gold cups on a red background. He was the only person in the workshop at Maredsous who had fully mastered the niello technique.

It was mentioned above that the cross was presented by the oblates

\* The identification of Saints Anselm and Celestine is conjectural, some suggesting that the saints depicted are Saints Gerard of Brogne and Saint Gregory the Great. The relics of St Gerard of Brogne, a reforming abbot who lived from 895 to 959, in what is now Belgium, are kept at Maredsous. St Gregory the Great, c. 540 - 604 and Pope from 590, wrote the Life of St Benedict, the source of much of our traditional knowledge of the saint. Given Abbot Golenvaux's religious name and given the importance of St Anselm as a Benedictine, abbot, archbishop and thinker, the later attributions seem, at least to this writer, more likely.

of Maredsous. This is commemorated by a Latin inscription on the inside of the back panel: *Oblati obtulerunt oblatozum memento, 12 Martii 1923. Fecit schola artium de Maretiolo, which can be translated, 'Those who offered, offered; remember those who offered, 12 March 1923. Made by the School of Arts at Maredsous'.* The transla-

top of the upright which enables it to be opened. The relic or relics are contained in a roundel in the centre of the cross, but there is no indication of whose relics they are. Nor is it possible to identify the wax authentication-seal covering them.

The Golenvaux cross is treasured in the monastery not only as an

## The Golenvaux cross is treasured in the monastery not only as an artwork of intrinsic interest, but primarily as a memento of our origins in Maredsous and in particular of the relationship with our founding abbot.

tion of the first part of the inscription does not capture the play on the Latin words *oblati*, *obtulerunt* and *oblatozum*, with their references to the presenting oblates.

Until recent times, most pectoral crosses contained one or more relics and some still do. These relics were contained inside the cross or in a capsule set into the back. The Golenvaux cross has a hinge at the

artwork of intrinsic interest, but primarily as a memento of our origins in Maredsous and in particular of the relationship with our founding abbot.

Several members of the present community knew Abbot Celestine who was our ultimate superior from the foundation in 1927 until the monastery became a Conventual Priory in 1946. ■

# Christ Within Me

## Blessed Columba Marmion: Revisiting a Best-Selling Irish Spiritual Author

The spiritual writings of Blessed Columba Marmion spread across the Catholic world like wildfire in the first decades of the twentieth century. A Dublin priest, he became a Benedictine monk in the abbey of Maredsous, Belgium, and later abbot of that monastery. Four years after his death, Maredsous sent monks to Glenstal, the family home of the Barringtons to begin monastic life here in 1927. One might well ask why his writings were such a hit. He obviously brought something fresh to his readers.

Columba did not set out to be a spiritual writer, and in fact his main publications are collections of talks he gave to his monks. Columba himself thought that the main reason for the success of these publications lay in the fact that they are mostly inspired by his reading of the bible. A close examination of his writings and his personal notebooks shows that his message comes from his own personal meditation on the scriptures. The deeply scriptural aspect of his spirituality was something fresh for his readers,

**COLUMBA MCCANN OSB**





and anticipated an important insight of Vatican II. Another central plank of the theology of Vatican II is also represented in the fact that Columba looked to the liturgy as the primary source of his Christian spiritual life. While he was not a liturgical reformer himself, his own spiritual experience of the liturgy was just the kind of thing the liturgical movement of the early twentieth century wanted

figure of theology, an important aspect of the theological renewal of Vatican II was the recovery of a broader vocabulary of Christian spirituality from earlier centuries. So Columba can be hard to decipher.

Now that we are the centenary of his death, it seemed to me that it would be useful to find a way of presenting the core of Columba's

**“The Holy Spirit loves us with an unspeakable love; He wills our sanctification; His inspirations, all proceeding from His goodness and love, have no other end than to mould us to a greater resemblance to Jesus.”**

*Columba Marmion, Christ the Life of the Soul*

everyone to share, culminating in the liturgical reforms of Vatican II. While the deeper sources of Columba's inspiration were scripture and liturgy, he tended to present his ideas within the prevailing structure of the theology of his own time: scholastic theology based on a version of the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas. As a result he can read like a foreign language to today's readers. While St Thomas remains a towering

teaching in a way that is more accessible to the ordinary reader, and at the same time updating it in the light of important developments since Vatican II. With this in mind, Veritas Publications will be publishing a short book, *Becoming Human, Becoming Divine: the Christian Life According to Blessed Columba Marmion*. It is due to appear on the shelves in November. ■

### ◀ Continued from page 15

All of this is done not through highfalutin dialogues or flashy peace programmes, but through something far more subtle: men and women who have chosen to spend their lives in a faraway monastery in the Middle East, who strive each day to live the monastic life simply and faithfully, and who express an openness and welcome to any and all who come seeking the oasis of peace which the monastery in Abu Ghosh provides.

A particularly formative experience during the past year was the welcome which I extended in the monastery to four young men: two Israeli Jews who were living in Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, along with two Palestinians; one a Muslim from Jerusalem and another a Christian from Bethlehem. After joining us for Middy Prayer (prayed in Hebrew), I took them on a tour before we sat in the warm afternoon sun and sipped

lemonade under the cloister's palm trees. There, the two Palestinians spoke to the two Israelis (one of whom had served in an army combat unit in the West Bank) about how they feel when Israeli soldiers are operating nearby, and the Israelis talked about their hopes for peaceful co-existence and their dismay at

Israel's current political climate.

That afternoon was just one of many experiences which encompassed well Abu Ghosh's entire mission and opened my eyes to the possibilities for monasteries to provide a space for encounter and reconciliation.

I think it neither romantic nor naïve to believe that simply living the monastic life well, wherever we find ourselves, can send out ripples which draw people in and provide something transformative yet done ever so simply, for as frère Brice once reminded me: “sometimes our dialogue is just a cup of coffee.” ■

PHOTO: The Abbey church at Abu Ghosh, Jerusalem.





## Virtus et Fraternitas

The *Virtus et Fraternitas* Medal is awarded by the President of the Republic of Poland to people who helped alleviate the plight of Polish citizens oppressed by totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century.

On 15 June 2022, at the Belvedere Palace in Warsaw, this medal was presented to twenty-three persons of different nationalities, one of them being Fr Lino's maternal grandfather, Pedro Correia Marques.

Pedro Correia Marques was born in São Pedro de Rates, a village in northern Portugal famous for its Romanesque church built by Cluniac monks from La Charité-sur-Loire in France. When he was twelve years old and had completed his third year of primary school, he was sent to the Benedictine monastery at Singeverga.

Pedro spent seven years with the Benedictines, passionately studying Latin and the classics of Portuguese Literature. Half-way through his noviciate, discerning that he was not called to the monastic life, he decided to leave the monastery. For want of a better alternative, he volunteered for an early start to his military

**LINO MOREIRA OSB**



service, and was sent to Lisbon, where republicans were causing unrest. He took part in a number of skirmishes, and was eventually taken prisoner after Portugal had been officially declared a Republic on 5 October, 1910.

When he was finally released, Pedro found a job as a cleaner at the headquarters of *O Rosário*, a religious magazine edited by an Irish Dominican priest, Paul Henry O'Sullivan. The latter soon discovered his employee's literary talents and offered him a small fee for any article he could contribute. That was the start of Marques' career as a journalist. By 1919 he had already become Editor-in-Chief of *A Época*, a daily newspaper. He remained editor until his death in 1972, aged eighty-two.

From the start of the Second World War, Marques regularly reported on crimes and atrocities committed by Nazis in occupied Poland, his main source of information being Adam Zielinski, Press Attaché of the Polish Legation in Lisbon. He wrote a series of articles on the Warsaw Uprising (1 August – 2 October,

1944), and ten days after the surrender of the insurgents he also published a small book entitled *Warsaw, an International Case of Conscience*, in which he decried the fact that Poland had been betrayed by the Allies.

For his public stance in favour of the Polish nation, Marques came under pressure from many quarters, and in particular, he had to face the hostility of those who were using the cover of Portugal's neutrality to voice their sympathy for Germany. After the war Marques condemned Poland's inclusion in the sphere of Soviet influence, and continued to report on its unjust treatment by the Soviet Union.

In recognition of his defence of Poland's inviolable and inalienable rights he was awarded the *Order of Polonia Restituta* on 19 September, 1946. ■

*A full account of the award ceremony and a detailed explanation of the significance of the award can be found in the website of the Pilecki Institute (<https://instytutpileckiego.pl/en>).*



DENIS HOOPER OSB

## A New Academic Year

**DENIS HOOPER OSB**  
Glenstal Abbey School Chaplain

The start of a new Academic year in Glenstal Abbey School is always a jolt to the system: the mind, the spirit and the body. One week your life is relatively calm as you enjoy the last of the summer holidays at home; and the next thing you know, you are in the middle of what can

seem to be total mayhem. It is the same for students and staff alike.

The First Years and the new boys particularly are at the face of this radical change in their lives. The First Years, having worked their way up the ladder to reach the

top in Primary school now have to start all over again! But starting at secondary school they have to start all over again. It is all so new and daunting that it can take your breath away.

At the other end of the scale are the Sixth Years who will now start their "Long Goodbye" to Glenstal Abbey School. Their first day back will be the last time they will return here in September and every school milestone along the way this year they will be ticking off as lasts.

It is quite a mix. Those more familiar with Glenstal Abbey School get into the swing of things almost as if they were never away. Wake-up calls, assemblies, classes, breaks, meals, sports, music, prayers and a myriad of other things to deal with.

The best thing about all of this is that despite the radical change in lifestyle, Glenstal Abbey School works — no matter how strange it

all may seem. And before long, the academic year is under way and the unfamiliar becomes commonplace and Glenstal Abbey School takes on its own unique rhythm, unlike any other school.

Finally, what to say to everyone returning for the new academic year? As St. Benedict tells us: Pray to God that God will bless everything about Glenstal Abbey School in the challenging year ahead. Then, get stuck in! Contribute to the life in Glenstal Abbey School in some way or other. Don't procrastinate. Keep on top of your work. Take up some sporting activity on a daily basis. Join the various clubs and societies on offer that interest you. The Choir is unique in that it involves everyone from First to Sixth Year — in equal measure. So, if you have a note in your head give it a try. Challenge yourself. There is a lot more in each of us than we ever realise. Above all, be kind to yourself and to others. ■



## Glenstal Abbey Garden Cemetery

Glenstal Abbey Garden Cemetery provides a prayerful and peaceful environment for the interment of cremated remains. Each plot can accommodate one or two urns and is marked by a plaque of local grey granite for engraving individuals' names and dates.

Selecting a cemetery and space is an important decision. Advance planning gives you peace of mind and shows care and concern for your family for whom the final arrangements become less of a burden.

If you have questions or would like to arrange a personal tour, please email us at [gardencemetery@glenstal.com](mailto:gardencemetery@glenstal.com) or call the Bursar's Office at 061 621045.





**ADVENT AT THE ABBEY 2022**

# **BEGINNING ANEW**

**Talks by Monks of Glenstal Abbey Every Sunday of  
Advent in the Monastery Library at 4:30pm**



FROM SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2022. FOR FURTHER DETAILS CONTACT:  
**[events@glenstal.com](mailto:events@glenstal.com) OR CALL: 061-621005**