

GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE

GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND

ISSUE 17 WINTER 2022 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.

WEEKDAYS-

6:35am: Matins and Lauds (Morning Prayer)

12:10pm: Conventual Mass

6:00 pm: Vespers (Evening Prayer in Latin)

8:35pm: Compline (Tuesday - Friday: Night Prayer) 8:35pm on Saturday Nights: Resurrection Office/Vigils

SUNDAYS -

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/

GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE :: ISSUE 17 WINTER 2022

www.glenstal.com phone: (061) 621 000

THE COVER shows a modern copy of a Late Medieval German statue of the Madonna and Child. In her right hand, the Virgin is holding a bunch of grapes. This is a very common motif in medieval imagery. The grapes represent fertility and abundance but also - and primarily - the wine of the Eucharist in which Christ, here sitting on Mary's lap, becomes really present.

The Cornerstone that Binds Us as One



As we come to the end of another year and as we celebrate with joy the feast of the Nativity of the Lord, it is our joy to be able to share with you some news of our Abbey and the wider Glenstal community.

This year, as we celebrate Christmas, war rages in Ukraine. We are deeply aware of the suffering this has caused, the human tragedy and the resultant humanitarian crisis. This Christmas we offer prayers for peace as well as support to our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Christ came among us as the Prince of Peace and the only true and lasting peace comes from him. Nobody can take this from us.

In the past year, our community has had the joy of celebrating the Ordination of Fr Jarek and the Solemn Profession of Br Justin. We have also shared in the joy of welcoming a new member, Br Colmcille, into the novitiate. There have also been moments of sadness with the deaths of Br Ciarán, Fr Brian and Fr Placid. May they rest in peace.

The work of the community and the activities carried on here over the past year, together with our life of prayer, have only been possible because of the kindness and generosity of so many. We wish each and every one of you every blessing this Christmas and New Year.

With every blessing,

Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB

IN MEMORIAM

Placid Murray

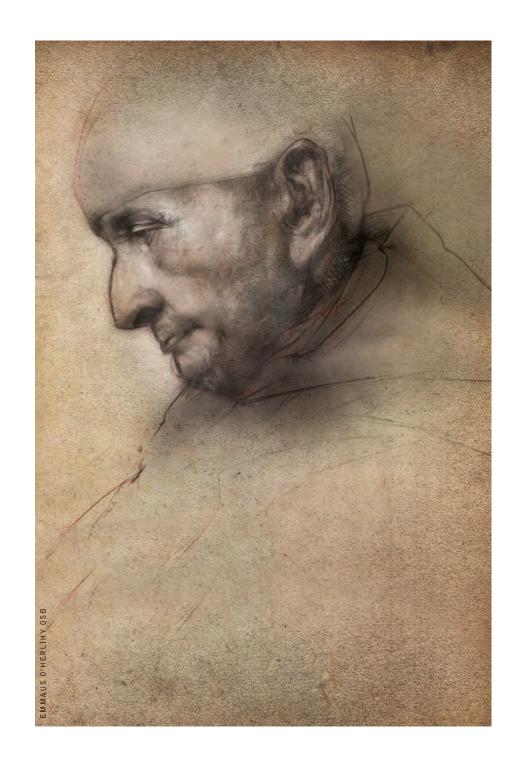
Monk of Glenstal 1937-2022

Michael Murray was born in Lismore, Co. Waterford, on 7 October 1918. After the early death of her husband, Mrs Murray moved with her young family to Dublin. Following school at Blackrock College, and on the recommendation of the headmaster of that school, Dr John Charles McQuaid CSSp, Michael Murray entered Glenstal on 2 September 1935, receiving the name Placid. He made simple profession on 6 January 1937. Shortly after this, he was sent to Maredsous, where he studied philosophy and began to study theology. On the outbreak of the Second World War the community at Maredsous, along with Brother

Placid, fled briefly to the south of France, returning to Belgium when that country surrendered to the invading German forces. Abbot Celestine Golenvaux, fearing danger to an Irish citizen in occupied Belgium, sent Brother Placid to Sant'Anselmo in Rome to complete his theological studies. It was during his time in Sant'Anselmo that Brother Placid developed his love for the works of John Henry Newman, a love that remained with him all of his life.

On the grounds of delicate health, Dom Placid was ordained priest ahead of his time, at the Abbey of Saint Scholastica at Subiaco on

HENRY O'SHEA OSB



20 December 1941. He celebrated his First Mass in the nearby Sacro Speco church of Saint Benedict's monastery. The disimproving military situation in Europe and the ambiguous status, in international eyes, of Ireland, still a member of the Commonwealth, but neutral, suggested that Dom Placid should return home. This he did

the resignation of Dom Bernard O'Dea in 1952, Dom Placid became Glenstal's second Conventual Prior. He held this position until Glenstal became an Abbey in 1957. During his time as Prior, Father Placid completed the abbey church and created the present monastic refectory by integrating several rooms on the ground floor

Asked what it was like to have reached his 104th birthday, Fr Placid replied in his customary deadpan way, "I find there is very little peer pressure now".

by what he frequently described as an inconvenient train journey, up through Italy, across the south of France and the north of Spain to Portugal, where he boarded a flying boat from Lisbon. At the time, the route from Lisbon to Foynes was one of the main conduits for the infiltration of Allied spies into a belligerent Europe.

Returned home, he became assistant novice-master and taught religion and German in the Priory School for several years. Following of what is still called the Fathers' Wing. He developed a strong interest in the liturgy and was very involved in the setting up of *Societas Liturgica* and was its first President from 1967-1969, with the first of its cycle of biannual meetings taking place at Glenstal in 1969. He established the annual Liturgical Conference at Glenstal, which he continued to organise until it was discontinued in 1975.

Following the election of Abbot Joseph Dowdall, Father Placid

had time to return to his research on Cardinal Newman. This resulted in the publication, in 1969, of Newman the Oratorian, Cardinal Newman's Oratory Papers, for which Father Placid received a doctorate in theology from Sant' Anselmo. A consultor of ICEL, the International Commission for English in the Liturgy, established during the Second Vatican Council, Father Placid became involved in many projects for the translation of liturgical texts into English. In 1970, he was asked by the bishops of Ireland, Great Britain, and Australia, to chair the committee that translated the Liturgy of the Hours for use in these countries. The resulting breviary, in three volumes, remains the standard breviary for most non-American speakers of English. Father Placid's final involvement with ICEL was as a consultor for the communion prayers of the revised Roman Missal of 2011.

In the years before this last endeavour, he took great delight in mastering the use of the computer. This greatly aided his final major project on Cardinal Newman. This involved co-operation in a planned five-volume edition of the cardinal's unpublished Anglican sermons delivered between the years 1824 and 1843. The great Newman scholar, Father Charles Dessain, of the Birmingham Oratory, had specifically asked shortly before his sudden death, that this task be entrusted to Father Placid. Volume 1 appeared in 1991 and Volume 3, the latter co-edited by Father Placid, was published in 2010.

During his final years in the abbey, Father Placid, while continuing to teach classes in the Novitiate and tutor boys from the school in German, helped in monastery reception and as a confessor. Father Placid spent the last fourteen years of his long life in Millbrae Nursing Home in Newport, Co Tipperary. Up to shortly before his death, he had an active ministry in this facility. During these years, he came to the monastery for Mass and lunch every week and the celebration of his birthday, up to his 104th birthday, which the community anticipated on 4 October 2022. He died peacefully after the First Vespers of All Saints, 2022. ■



Glenstal Liturgical Conference

With the relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions, Glenstal Abbey was able to open its doors once again to participants in a liturgical conference at the end of October. Now that people are allowed to attend liturgies in person again rather than just following online, the conference's title was Recovering Liturgical Space.

Abbot Brendan welcomed the participants and introduced the conference, recalling biblical words long associated with the dedication of Church buildings: "This Place was Made by God, Locus Iste".

Sr Johanna Wiese OSB, Prioress of Dinklage in Germany, and specialist in Sacred Art and Architecture, rooted the discussion of liturgical space in the liturgical experience itself, pointing to the Easter Vigil as the model that

informs best liturgical design.
Drawing on her own rich experience in the world of design she shared varied and beautiful examples of contemporary Church architecture, commenting on the manifold ways in which the multiple relationships within the liturgy have been articulated (monastic community and wider community, presider, altar, ambo, etc).

Dr Anna Gannon of Cambridge University brought us back to Anglo-Saxon England, and the

COLUMBA MCCANN OSB

liturgical building work of Bishop Wilfrid of Northumbria. Wilfrid is perhaps most associated with the Synod of Whitby, at which agreement was reached that the dating of Easter should follow the Roman, not Celtic computation of the liturgical seasons. The increasing importance of Roman influence was however, established not only regarding times and seasons but, very substantially in stone and mortar. Dr Gannon gave fascinating examples of 'things Roman' finding their way into Church buildings: not only architectural design such as the basilica plan, but even the recycling of Roman building materials for Church use.

Fr Henry O'Shea OSB gave a talk entitled *The Fullness of Joy in Your Presence – Intimating the Eschaton*, in which he emphasised the importance of remembrance, invocation of the Holy Spirit and mission in the liturgical experience. He pointed to some of the pitfalls that can prevent us from experience the joy of the liturgical encounter, and also gave an account of the various ways in which that encounter was expressed in the architecture and visual design

of the abbey church. He pointed to future oriented dynamic of the liturgical celebration: "Christ has died, Christ is risen, *Christ will come again."*

Fr Luke Macnamara OSB and Br Emmaus O'Herlihy OSB gave participants a taste of the divine mediated through visual art: Fr Luke presented the icons of our icon chapel, and Br Emmaus gave a tour of his art on display in the church and library.

Dr Jonathan Price of Tel Aviv University gave a Jewish perspective via Zoom from Jerusalem: the meaning of temple sacrifice as ultimately about drawing close to God and the importance of the synagogue as a place of study and worship, especially after the destruction of the second temple. He opened a window into the prayer of the synagogue, embedded with sacrificial meaning taken from the temple. While devout Jews continue to pray for the restoration of the temple, he proposed that this could be legitimately understood as a prayer for a time of peace and light in our world. >> Page 28

Upcoming Events at the Abbey

GLENSTAL OBLATE MEETING 4 FEBRUARY 2023

Being a Benedictine Oblate is not so much about attending meetings but about living a Benedictine spirituality in your own home and your own parish. But many people speak about the challenges of living our Christian identity in contemporary society, and the need for support. Our Oblate meetings provide that kind of support for those drawn towards Benedictine spirituality. This, the first Oblate metting of 2023, will begin at 10.30am with tea & coffee, a talk at 11am, leading to community Mass at 12.10pm. After Mass the Oblates will have lunch together and continue with a second session, concluding the day at around 3 pm.

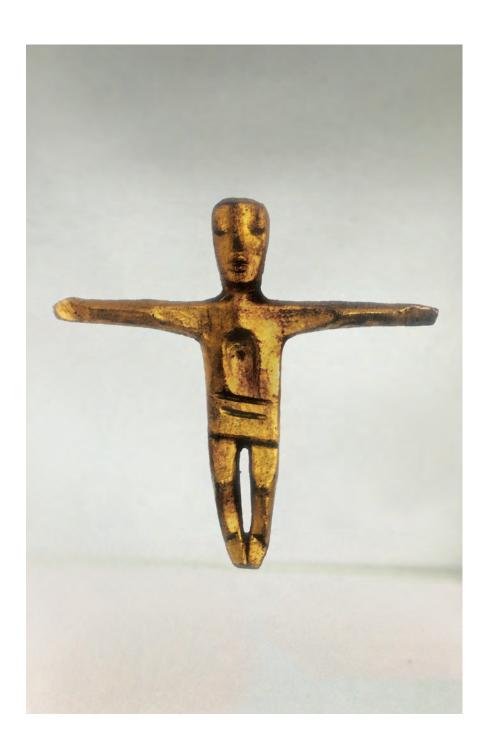
OPENING TO THE DIVINE LIGHT 11 FEBRUARY 2023

Participants are invited to explore, with Frs Senan, Columba and Luke, the Transfiguration Gospel through text, chant, icons, and liturgy. The multisensory immersive experience

will enable participants to experience the Gospel in new and fresh ways. The day runs from 10am - 4.30pm. Lunch and refreshments provided. Suggested donation: €70. For further information and to book your place: events@glenstal.com or 061-621005.

RETREAT DAY FOR OBLATE AND ASSOCIATES 18 FEBRUARY 2023

On Saturday February 18, we have a retreat day for both Oblates and Associates. Associates are people who value a spiritual connection with Glenstal abbev. without the more formally structured commitment of Oblature. The retreat day comes just before the beginning of Lent and will be an opportunity to reflect on what the season of Lent might mean personally this time around. The retreat day includes a morning talk at 11am, preceded by tea & coffee, community Mass at 12.10pm, lunch, some quiet time in the afternoon, a second talk, and prayer together to conclude the day at around 4pm.



Brother Benedict's Creative Heritage at Glenstal

HENRY O'SHEA OSB

John Gerard (Seán) Tutty was born in Hollywood, Co. Wicklow, on 6 July 1924. He entered Glenstal on 19 November 1949 and was professed on 21 November 1951. While he worked in the daily round of the lay-brothers, helping in the farm, kitchen, refectory etc., it was clear that his interest lay in the artistic field. The monastery's School of Arts and Crafts had been closed in 1946, but a metal workshop had been developed under the direction of Father James Roche.

In 1952, Brother Benedict having shown great potential in this area while helping Father James, was sent to the art school in Glenstal's mother-house at Maredsous in Belgium. He blossomed there and was also much influenced by the monastic observance and attitudes he observed and imbibed in what at the time was one of the most vibrant monasteries in Europe. While always grateful to Maredsous, Brother Benedict had a rooted objection to what he considered an

obsession with 'precious' metals and 'high-quality' materials. Hence, his preference for copper and enamel. Experiments with materials such as chip-board, however, were of less lasting value. Pieces that look magnificent when new, tended to become lack-lustre over time as the basic material degenerated.

Returned to Glenstal, Brother Benedict continued to work in the metal-workshop, gradually replacing Father James and moving slowly from the production of altar-vessels to artistic works. A vear spent in Muensterschwarzach, in Bavaria, from 1961 to 1962 helped him to perfect his technique as a craftsman but also widened his artistic horizons. Already, though, he had produced works of note, one of them being the panel of the Lamb with the Four Evangelists, now in the centre of our main altar.

One of his first major commissions were the altar-furnishings, including tabernacles and crucifixes, for the new Garrison Church in the Curragh Camp, opened in 1960. In this, he worked alongside artists such as Patrick Pye and Imogen Stuart.

Brother Benedict became one of the country's foremost liturgical artists, a term he greatly disliked. He was the right man in the right place at a time when many churches were being re-ordered after the Second Vatican Council and many new churches were still being built. Another factor was his close working-relationship with the architect Richard Hurley, with whom he developed a deep friendship.

While continuing to work on a steady stream of commissions and developing a distinctive style, Brother Benedict was a model of monastic observance — an observance flavoured with his own sardonic slant on human nature and monastic life. For many years in succession he was elected to the Seniorate, the Abbot's council. He acted as zelator — effectively assistant novice-master — where his good sense and balance often tempered the more ideological thrust of other office-holders.

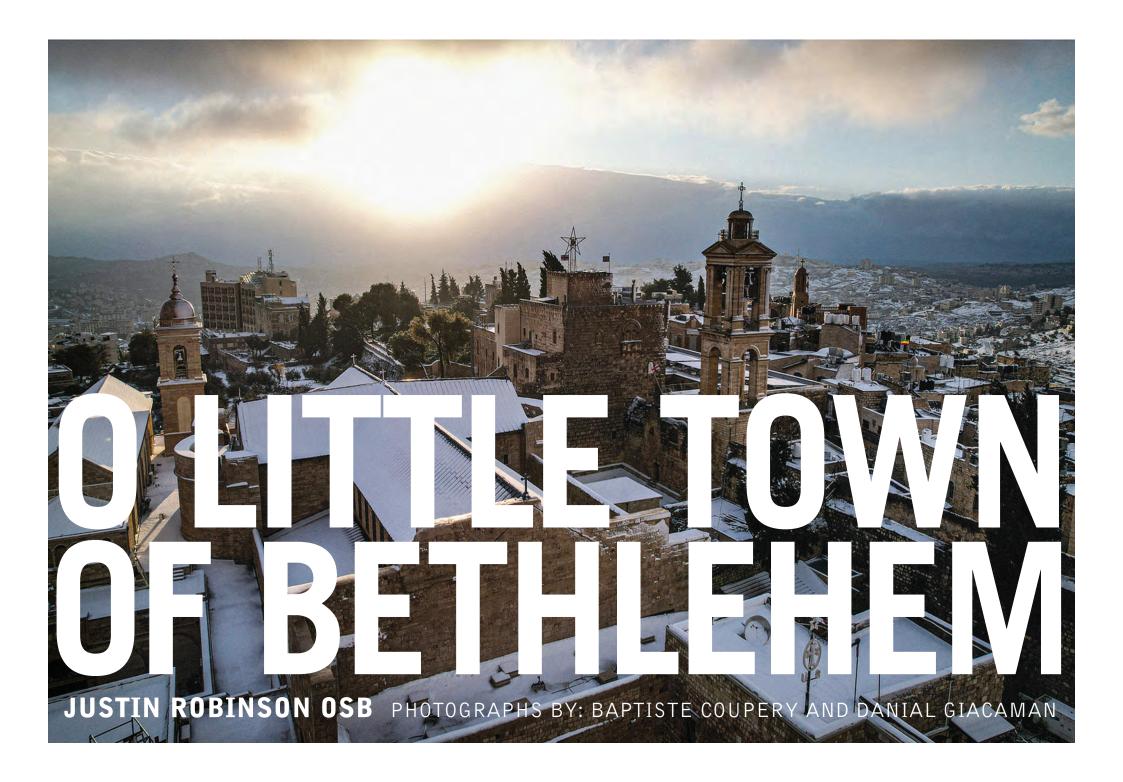
>>> Page 27



















ON A CRISP NIGHT IN LATE DECEMBER, shepherds will keep watch over their flocks in the Palestinian countryside around Bethlehem. Sitting recently in the arid lands of Ash-Shawawra, I sipped bitter coffee brewed on an open fire and wondered if the shepherds sitting around knew that their night vigil would coincide with our celebration of Christmas, where people just like them would be remembered as the first witnesses of the Lord's birth.

At this time of year our minds are turned towards the little town of Bethlehem and the birth that took place there more than two thousand years ago, when God became human. Then an insignificant town in a far-flung corner of the Roman Empire; today a Palestinian town walled-off and under siege; it was chosen as the place of Incarnation

where God would put himself in the midst of our human experience with all its highs and lows. If ever a place needed the hope of the Saviour, it's Bethlehem. The Church of the Nativity is located in the centre of the town, and the surrounding streets are a maze of gift shops, cafés and hotels serving the thousands of pilgrim visitors.

PHOTO ON PAGE 16-17: Bethlehem at Dawn (Danial Giacaman). PHOTOS ON PAGE 18: (clockwise from top left): A Palestinian shepherd boy near Bethlehem (Baptiste Coupery); pilgrims at the Nativity Church (Baptiste Coupery); Bethlehem in the snow (Danial Giacaman); Terra Sancta Scouts marching to Manger Square (Danial Giacaman).

To understand the reality of this little town today, one must visit and, even then, leave their tour bus with its pre-planned route to meet local people, hear their stories and see the situation for oneself.

Located a few kilometres south of Jerusalem, Bethlehem is cut off from that city by a series of walls and checkpoints. The town's perimeters are patrolled by the Israeli military, who make frequent incursions into the town to arrest wanted people, prevent building projects or reaffirm their 'matrix of control.' Once a majority Christian town, today Christians number somewhere around 1 in 5 of Bethlehem's 30,000 residents after mass-emigrations owing to the political and economic situation.

At the best of times, life is hard in Bethlehem. Low wages, unemployment and the decades-long Occupation all put enormous pressure on local people. Thousands live in the cramped refugee camps of 'Azza, 'Aida and Dheisheh; their

forbears having fled their towns and villages in what is now Israel in the catastrophe of 1948. Their makeshift tents — a temporary solution provided by the United Nations who believed return would be possible after some weeks — have now become poorly-built residences, each generation building and towering precariously above the next, each generation living in hope of return to their ancestral home 'fi-l-ard tamanye u arbaiin' - 'in the '48 lands.'

The people of Bethlehem have been particularly hard-hit in recent years, especially by the COVID-19 pandemic which devastated an economy heavily reliant on foreign tourists. As the borders were closed for more than a year and a half, thousands of people were left without work and with no means of government support: local tour guides, bus and taxi drivers, hotel and restaurant staff, gift shop owners and their suppliers. This will be the first post-COVID Christmas without any restrictions on foreign entry and, although

PHOTOS ON PAGE 21: (clockwise from top left): Terra Sancta Scouts on parade at the Nativity Church (Danial Giacaman); Banksy art on the Separation Wall (Baptiste Coupery); the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (Danial Giacaman).







visitor numbers will be smaller than pre-pandemic levels, a much-needed boost to the local economy is hoped for.

During the Christmas period, the difficulties of everyday life will be briefly put aside as lights twinkle around town, festive markets begin and scouts march through the

The Midnight Mass will be attended by dignitaries including the president of the State of Palestine, and thousands will file into the crypt of the Nativity Church to touch the spot where it is believed Jesus was born.

The little town of Bethlehem will be an enchanting place of fun, festivity

Like those shepherds who watched their flocks on that first Christmas night, Palestinians of all religions and denominations will travel to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, joined by thousands of pilgrims from around the world

streets in their tartan colours and blast their bagpipes to announce the Saviour's coming. Like those shepherds who watched their flocks on that first Christmas night, Palestinians of all religions and denominations will travel to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, joined by thousands of pilgrims from around the world.

and faith throughout weeks when the Western and Eastern churches celebrate Christmas, I wonder if those shepherds with whom I sipped coffee in Ash-Shawawra will know about all of this festivity in the heart of nearby Bethlehem, as they watch their sheep in the cold and still terrain on Christmas night? I hope so, because Hope itself is coming to Bethlehem and its people, as it is to all of us.

Linguistic Holiday with the **Monks of Glenstal**



BASILE YAO HOLOGNO OSB

A monk of the Abbey of the Ascension of Danyi-Dzobégan in Togo, Brother Basile is currently a student at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome where he is studying for an MA in theology.

Glenstal Abbey welcomed me into their community during the summer to help me with my English. My daily timetable was organised around the liturgical offices and the daily rhythm of community life.

Brother Colmán, my principal teacher, is an accomplished and well-known historian who teaches in Rome and elsewhere. I had classes with him in oral English, dictation of patristic texts and various Irish

monastic texts. He really brought these texts alive for me. With Father William and Father Henry, I studied liturgical texts, pronunciation and elocution. Father Henry also very kindly gave me classes in German. He is a skilled linguist and I greatly enjoyed studying with him. Most of my practice of English was during the liturgy itself.

The community wash up routine after supper gave me a chance to speak with many of the brothers, applying what I learned in various classes. It was the most convivial moment of day, but I also took part as much as possible in the various other aspects of the community life.

Every Sunday after lunch Father John and I went on a hike, either to climb some mountaintop or to cycle through the beautiful countryside around Glenstal. These bracing trips were privileged moments of brotherly exchange.

I really enjoyed the community meals. When the brothers saw how much I ate they realised the extent to which I enjoyed their superb cuisine! Thank you very much Brother Pádraig and the kitchen team: You made me welcome and you did your best to make me gain weight!

In the lived reality of monastic life at Glenstal I discovered a different interpretation of the monastic Rule of Saint Benedict that we all follow. The Vigil office of Saturday evening was a joyful discovery for me. The early morning office was harder to follow.

I would like to thank all of the monastic community for their hospitality and generosity. I am very grateful for their example of monastic witness. I really enjoyed this linguistic holiday with my new brothers in Ireland, and I would dearly love to return.

Abbey Updates



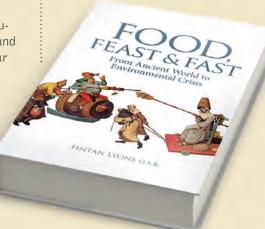
FATHER PHILIP CELEBRATES HIS 95TH BIRTHDAY

On Tuesday, 8 November, the community marked Father Philip's 95th birthday with a celebratory lunch, including a specially baked multi-layered cake by Brother Pádraig. Messages of congratulations were received by post and through social media from near and far. Ad multos annos.

FOOD, FEAST AND FAST

This book aims to change our attitude to food. If providing for food is not quite a problem, eating is something we take for

granted, though we do take notice if we are being treated to a fine dining experience, a feast. But for many of us, eating is something that is just done, with little thought and no fanfare. Some fast today for health reasons, rarely for religious ones, and the popularity of intermittent fasting is growing. This book prompts us to pay more attention to the issues of vegetarianism and animal welfare, and the whole question of how our use of food affects the food supply of impoverished nations, as well as the health of the planet itself.



OBLATE DAY AT THE ABBEY

On 5 November our Oblates were finally able to gather after a long absence imposed by Covid-19. Since the first lockdown we did continue to have oblate days and retreat days, but only with online talks. Being back together in person was a reminder of the mutual support that is important to many of our oblates. The day was opened by Father Henry with a reflection on liturgy and on its future orientation: Christ will come again. The highlight of the day was the reception of new oblates at the community Mass, celebrated by Abbot Brendan. After a convivial lunch, also an important part of Oblate gatherings, the second

session began with individual testimony about the Oblate experience and developed into a discussion about the best way to plan future meetings. It emerged that there was a particular value in group discussion. Scripture based reflection was also highly valued, as was the idea of following a particular theme from one meeting to the next. The meeting concluded with prayer, in which we remembered oblates who had died since our last gathering: John Power, Brendan O'Gorman, Donal O'Connor and Maura Fahey. May they rest in peace. Congratulations to our new Oblates: Stuart Dobson, Seamus Dyer, Pat Gallagher, Joan Finn and Anna Gannon.



Page 14

BROTHER BENEDICT'S CREATIVE HERITAGE AT GLENSTAL

During all of this, Brother Benedict not only held Saturday-morning art-classes for local children in his workshop but became responsible for the foundation-course in the Limerick School of Art, now known as the Limerick School of Art and Design. In later years, his insistence on the importance of drawing and observation as the basis of all artistic exercise led to conflicts with a younger generation of laissez-faire and self-styled "creative" teachers. He also continued to encourage young artists staring their careers.

In 1974, Brother Benedict contracted brucellosis. This led to a complete debilitation which made it impossible for him to work in his usual principal medium of copper. When he had recovered sufficiently, he began to experiment with terracotta, rapidly gaining a mastery of this medium. A testimony to this is the Madonna and Child in the reception-area. Further tragedy struck in late 1980, when Brother Benedict had a stroke.

This did not leave him completely physically debilitated but had a profound psychological effect. He continued to work with terracotta, his focus now being on a series of remarkable wrapped heads and figures, along with abstract shapes. As he regained strength, he discovered that he could work with metal again, but this time with the softer aluminium. He developed a technique for permanently colouring the series of striking panels that resulted.

On 21 March 1996, Brother Benedict participated enthusiastically in the celebration of the *Transitus* of Saint Benedict. He died suddenly in the morning of the following day.

Nearly thirty years after his death, the Madonna and Child, the Stations of the Cross, crucifixes, and the tabernacle in the abbey church bear witness to Brother Benedict's undiminished creative imagination and artistic ability. But more than that, his work continues to be a source of inspiration for both the monastic community and the many visitors to Glenstal Abbey.

GLENSTAL LITURGICAL CONFERENCE

Professor Robin Jensen, of Notre Dame University, helped us to see how mosaics, relics and architectural features of early Roman basilicas transposed images of Jerusalem and its temple into the liturgical 'now' of worship in Rome, with elements that even continued into the baroque era. I had always thought that the twisting pillars of the baldachino in St Peter's basilica were an example of baroque exuberance, some might even say excess, whereas these features are more likely an oblique reference back to the pillars of the temple of Solomon. But the evocation of the earthly Jerusalem was, Dr Jensen pointed out, ultimately a device to invite us into the Heavenly City.

Fr Columba McCann OSB reflected on the liturgical experience for which Church buildings are designed, drawing on the spiritual teaching of Blessed Columba Marmion and Elder Aemilianos of Simonopetra (Mt Athos). These two monastic teachers spoke eloquently about the encounter

with Christ through prayer, word and sacrament.

Fr Jarek Kurek OSB examined closely the kind of liturgical participation laid out in the conciliar constitution on the liturgy acrosanctum Concilium. He drew our attention to the importance of a knowing participation, and referred to patristic authors such as Gregory of Nyssa and Pope St Leo the Great to emphasise the role of the human mind in the encounter with God.

The final presentation was given by Fr Dominik Jurczak OP, Professor of the Angelicum University and Lecturer at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute at Sant' Anselmo in Rome. Using Sacrosanctum Concilium as his principal source for reflection, he drew together many of the themes of the conference, helping us to appreciate that the liturgy is a spiritual experience which we must enter. We need to locate ourselves not only in a church building but within the liturgy itself as an ecclesial reality oriented towards Christ.



Essential Groundwork

Developing a Culture of Dialogue, Debate and Informed Discussion

MARIUS CARNEY Glenstal Abbey School Headmaster

At this year's Mass for the Dedication of Studies on the feast of St Matthew, every student received a prayer card of Caravaggio's

painting, *The Calling of Matthew*. As Abbot Brendan explained in his homily, Caravaggio's core message is a visual metaphor of

the illumination which Christ's presence throws on all who answer his call.

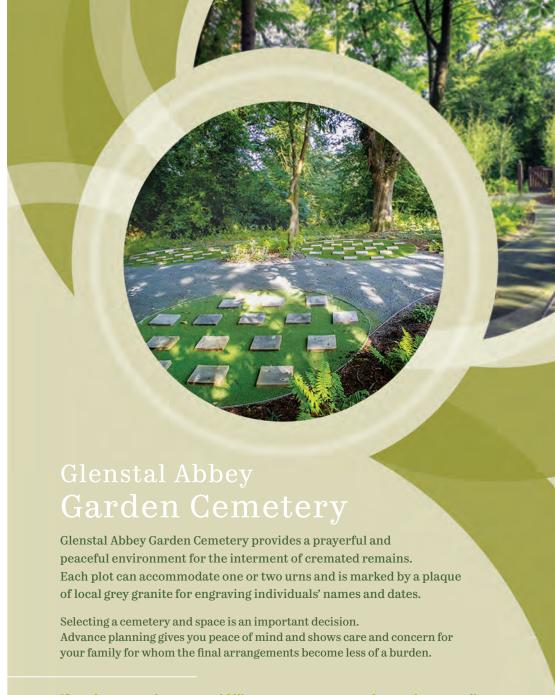
Benedictine education starts in the concrete good of the pursuit of learning, ultimately leading to spiritual illumination and wisdom for our students. Through mastering new and harder subjects, developing skills in sports and arts, and learning to live as a Christian community they build the resilience to receive the still greater knowledge of God. The journey to wisdom and intimacy with God — becoming illuminated — continues as we journey through our lives.

As educators, we find ourselves in a moment of great disruption. The pandemic brought new educational offers, but these, of necessity, made learning a private pursuit. Online learning, successful when it focussed on the development of a technique that could be acquired through repetition and marked by an automated process, inevitably pushed young people

apart. The social development found in the common life and the joy of participation in talk, in sport and music, was abruptly halted. New choir members tell me they have not done any singing since fourth class.

Responding to privation is no easy task: it isn't possible to feed a rich diet to those who have been eating a restricted one. Led by Glenstal's Community of Academic Practice, our focus this year is on oracy and 'dialogic learning'. Teachers are building and developing a positive culture of dialogue, debate and informed discussion – essential groundwork for the short and the long term.

St Benedict presents illumination as listening to the ways of the master and following the instruction of scripture. Accordingly, training students to be active listeners in class is an essential beginning for the here and now and the lifelong pilgrimage to follow, and the hoped, and prayed for, grace of illumination.



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

