



# GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE

GLENSTAL ABBEY, MURROE, CO. LIMERICK, IRELAND

ISSUE 18

SPRING 2023

[WWW.GLENSTAL.COM](http://WWW.GLENSTAL.COM)

PHONE: (061) 621 000



With Spring, birdsong has  
returned to the woods  
surrounding Glenstal Abbey.

**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 (Monday - Friday: Night Prayer)  
Resurrection Office/Vigils (Saturday)****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/)**

GLENSTAL ABBEY CHRONICLE :: ISSUE 18 SPRING 2023

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## New Beginnings and Hoped-for Transformations



Greetings once again from the community here in Glenstal Abbey. This time of the year is filled with hope, new birth and lengthening days. Light is returning after the darkness of winter and so we journey, in hope, through Lent into the season of Easter.

Here in Glenstal we are blessed to live in a very beautiful place and this time of the year we witness the miracle of nature waking from deep slumber. In our Chronicle we want to share with you some of the stories of Glenstal Abbey over these past few months; the moments of joy and the moments of sorrow.

Groups and visitors have returned to the Abbey after their COVID absence and life is slowly returning to normal for us all. We are very happy to host the Easter Retreat again this year and it is a great joy to see old friends return and to welcome new faces to these grace filled days. We are truly blessed to be able to celebrate these special moments together.

Sadly, our community bade farewell to Br Anselm on 10 February. May he rest in peace.

As we journey onward through the Season of Easter and into the summer months, let us continue to remember in our prayers all our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. We remember in particular the two monastic communities of our own congregation in Zhytomyr and in Lviv. We pray that the Lord will bless his people with peace and rain down justice on this troubled land.

We send you greetings and blessings in this Holy Season.

**Abbot Brendan Coffey OSB**

## IN MEMORIAM

# Anselm Hurt

## Monk of Glenstal 1997-2023



SIMON SLEEMAN OSB

**“Strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead  
and our hope that your servant Anselm will also rise again.”**

Prayer from the Funeral Liturgy

**ABBOT BRENDAN COFFEY OSB**

The story of every life has a beginning, a middle and an end. The last moment of the story crystallizes all that has gone before; it sheds light on what has passed. Clement of Rome compares death to the firing of a clay pot; it fixes us once and for all. In Christ, the whole of our life story, from birth to death, is taken up into God’s life. This is our Christian hope and this is why we have gathered here today to offer these prayers for Anselm.

Julian of Norwich, Br Anselm’s compatriot, tells us that “none of what happens in time and none of the toil and suffering that we have to endure in this world will be wasted; it will all be turned to God’s worship and our endless joy.” The life of each one of us is what it is. We cannot turn back the clock and start again. The mistakes we make endure, as does the good we do on our pilgrim journey. The pain we have caused others cannot be taken back and dissonant notes are never annulled, they remain in the air and their sound is jarring, but they can find a musical resolution in the larger score and this is what we call mercy.

Br Anselm had a long and unusual life. Michael’s journey, Michael was his baptismal name, took him from being an Anglican to becoming a Catholic, and from monk to parent and in later life, monk again. We extend our sympathies to Michael’s children, family and friends. Michael’s was not a typical journey, that is for certain, but Anselm was not typical in any respect. He would have appreciated very much the description of the heavenly banquet as an image for paradise. That, his pipe and the crossword and he will be perfectly content

In the monastery, he led a simple life, so regular you could set your watch by his every movement. He was a creature of habit and that routine never changed, in the kitchen, his sewing room, or listening to the Book at Bedtime on radio 4.

The crossword was an invariable part of Anselm’s daily routine. Crosswords evolved from ancient word games discovered in the Roman ruins of Pompeii. They teach us that we make progress in small steps; that it’s good at times



to ask for help; that problems have solutions and that most things are connected. We thank him for these important lessons.

One day each one of us will come before the altar of God, as Anselm does today, and on that day, all we can do is ask for mercy. Christian courage allows us to open our eyes and see how vulnerable we are. To face our fragility and our mortality is to be brave. Nevertheless, our bravery comes from the knowledge that Christ has conquered sin and death and he is waiting for us. Psalm 115 says "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor do any who go down into the silence." It is death, which most clearly shows us what courage is. Our faith makes a difference to the way we die.

After a long life of many and varied chapters, we arrive today at the end of this volume of the story. Anselm's final days were spent in the loving care of the staff of Millbrae Lodge Nursing Home and University Hospital in Limerick and we thank them for their care and attention. The words written

by another Anglican convert, St John Henry Newman, seem appropriate here:

I went to sleep;  
and now I am refresh'd,  
A strange refreshment:  
for I feel in me  
An inexpressive lightness,  
and a sense  
Of freedom,  
as I were at length myself,  
And ne'er had been before.  
How still it is!  
I hear no more the busy  
beat of time,  
No, nor my fluttering breath,  
nor struggling pulse;  
Nor does one moment differ  
from the next.  
I had a dream:  
yes, some one softly said  
"He's gone"  
and then a sigh went round  
the room.  
And then I surely heard a  
priestly voice  
Cry "*Subvenite*"  
and they knelt in prayer. ■

## Upcoming Events at the Abbey



### TASTE AND SEE: EXPLORING THE EUCHARIST WITH THE MONKS OF GLENSTAL 10AM – 5PM SATURDAY, 29 APRIL 2023

This one-day retreat involves a group of 5 monks leading participants through an exploration of the depths of the mystery of the Eucharist. The approach is multidisciplinary and explores such topics as theology, liturgy, chant, music, art, history, and is geared to a broad audience.

### OBLATE MEETING SATURDAY, 29 APRIL 2023

We look forward to welcoming our Oblates for their Eastertide meeting on 29th April. Our Oblate David

McBurnie will continue the artistic approach to spirituality, using *visio divina* to enrich our understanding of the Resurrection Mystery as conveyed through the paintings of Stanley Spencer. Fr Lino will delve into the thought of the medieval English author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, uncovering wisdom about contemplation and its effects on the right ordering of our daily living.

### ONE-DAY SUMMER RETREAT WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE AND THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2023

This retreat is offered on Wednesday, 28 June and Thursday, 29 June 2023. Relax, reflect, pray and enjoy the company of others in the peaceful and beautiful surrounds of the Abbey. It begins at 10 am with tea and coffee at registration. The day will include talks, Mass, lunch, Holy Hour with the option of Confession, and afternoon tea. The retreat day ends at 5 pm but all are welcome to remain for Vespers at 6 pm. Cost: €50. To book, call Reception (061 621005) or email [events@glenstal.com](mailto:events@glenstal.com) ■



MATTHIAS GRÜNEWALD, THE RESURRECTION (DETAIL: FIRST OPENING), ISENHEIM ALTARPIECE, C. 1515.

## Centrepiece

For St Benedict, Easter is the turning point around which arrangements for liturgy and communal life revolve.

**COLUMBA McCANN OSB**

The Saturday before Lent we had our retreat day for Oblates and Associates, to help set a course for the season. The next Oblate meeting will be on Saturday, 29 April, well into the Easter season. The big event between these is, of course, the Easter Triduum.

St Benedict gives us no details in his rule as to how to celebrate the Triduum. One reason for this might be that the special liturgical practices of these holy days are the property of the whole church

and not something that requires special treatment for monks. The Triduum is for everyone! At the same time, it is clear that Easter is extremely important to him. Easter is, in fact, the centre of the year for St Benedict, and he uses it as the fulcrum for the necessary timetable changes that take place between winter and summer. The celebration of the night office and its arrangement of psalms changes to summer mode at Easter. The timing of meals likewise changes at Easter. Easter is a celebration that

Benedict looks forward to 'with joy and spiritual longing' (RB 49).

The spirituality of Christ's dying and rising spreads beyond the Easter season. Every Sunday begins with a special vigil that singles out this day. Benedict doesn't give the reason for this, but examination of the liturgical context of his times and his sources

instinct to keep watch during the night. Night can be a graced time of encounter with God: it was at night that the great Exodus out of Egypt took place – Passover Night; it was at night that the Lord called the boy Samuel; it was at night that the angels sang of the birth of Jesus; it was before dawn of Easter Sunday that the tomb was found to be empty.



LEOPOLD LAYER, RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST (BEEHIVE PANEL PAINTING), 1859.

shows that the importance of Sunday derives from the resurrection: it was the day on which the risen Lord appeared to his disciples. The vigil of Sunday carries with it something of the mystery of the Easter Vigil. The fact that monks get up early in the morning on other days is also a vestige of this

Dying and rising constitute the central dynamic of Christian living. Through the downward journey of humility, we rise to God (RB7). Through patience we share in the sufferings of Christ, so as to share in his kingdom and be brought "to everlasting life" (RB Prologue). ■



## Sustainable Energy

**LEO CUDDIGAN**

5th Year student at Glenstal Abbey School

Over the past year, a committee led by Fr. Luke has been developing an Energy Master Plan for the Glenstal campus. The plan entails mapping out the campus' energy use, reviewing actions that have already been taken to conserve energy and conducting feasibility studies into future projects that will reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

The plan was launched in the school and monastery on 12 December 2022 and at a public meeting on 21 February 2023 where four 5th Year students presented the steps

Glenstal took in this process and outlined how other communities might take similar action.

The publication of the Master Plan empowers Glenstal to seek grant funding for future renewable energy projects, such as a solar photovoltaic installation. We look forward to pursuing such initiatives later this year which will enable the campus to take a massive step forward in energy sustainability. These initiatives will be profiled in the Summer issue of the Glenstal Abbey Chronicle. ■





## Holy Week in the West Bank

JUSTIN ROBINSON OSB

It is undoubtedly one of life's greatest privileges to be in the Holy Land and to live the Christian calendar in the very places where the story of our faith unfolded. Holy Week begins at Bethpage on Palm Sunday, where thousands of pilgrims wind their way down the Mount of Olives singing and waving palm branches on their approach to the Old City. It is a festive atmosphere, as locals and foreigners mingle together in prayer, song and dance on the route where Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The Latin Patriarch — taking the place of Christ — is joined by his clergy at

the rear of the procession and leads a prayer service when the procession concludes at Saint Anne's Church, tucked inside the Lion's Gate and just a stone's throw away from the golden Dome of the Rock, the site of the Temple in Biblical times.

Just as the holy city became packed with devout Jews coming for the feast, nowadays the start of Holy Week sees an enormous increase in visitor numbers coming from all corners of the world. The streets become filled with pilgrims from the three Abrahamic faiths, as Holy Week coincides with the Jewish

PHOTOS: BAPTISTE COUPERY

festival of Passover and the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

A liturgical connoisseur will find a range of options for worship in various languages around the city. Although Jerusalem is where it's all going on, my most moving experience has been to celebrate the liturgies of Holy Week in the West Bank town of Beit Sahur, as I did last year. Praying with the local people reminds me of the importance of this native community, as the Palestinians are the heirs to those who first came to faith in Christ in that land between the Jordan river and Mediterranean Sea. Their faces resemble, perhaps, the faces of the first Christians who hail from this place, and their struggles today ought to be a concern for Christians all around the world.

Back on the tourist trail, it is a moving experience to visit the Upper Room on Mount Zion and to be close to the place where the Last Supper was celebrated. Of course, all of these sites are packed with pilgrims and so it's hard to catch a moment of quiet prayer. Afterwards, a stroll down to the Garden of Gethsemane puts us between centuries-old olive

trees which we imagine listening to the anguished prayers of Jesus on the night he was betrayed. Heading back to Mount Zion, we accompany the arrested Jesus and arrive at the church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu, to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas and the site of Peter's betrayal.

There is nowhere better to be than the narrow and cobbled streets of Jerusalem's Old City on Good Friday, where it is surely a once-in-a-lifetime experience to walk the Via Dolorosa following Jesus' route to Calvary. The streets are throbbing with devotees, walking together in prayer with a large wooden cross on their backs. An early start is the best and only way to beat the crowds, before finding a church to celebrate the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion in the afternoon. One appreciates very much the worldwide phenomenon of Christianity during these days, as the varying faces and languages, flags and traditional dress of visitors witnesses to the international following of our Christian faith.

It is a peculiarity of the Church in Jerusalem that the Latin liturgical calendar is slightly different to

that which is celebrated in the rest of the Catholic world. The status quo agreement — an Ottoman era setting-in-stone of relations between the Christian denominations of Jerusalem — means that the times of prayer in 1852 must be observed today too. When the Second Vatican Council moved the celebration of the Easter Vigil from Saturday morning to the evening time, the status quo agreement made this an impossible change to be observed in Jerusalem. As such, the Latin

the final days of their Lenten fasts. Our pilgrims return home, but Jerusalem will come alive again after a week or two as the Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter and the holy month of Ramadan comes to a close for the Muslims.

It is fitting that Eastertide will conclude where the Triduum began, back on Mount Zion. Pentecost will be celebrated at the Dormition Abbey close to the Upper Room, where the first Christians were filled with

### **Streets in the city are filled with pilgrims from the three Abrahamic faiths as Holy Week coincides with the Jewish festival of Passover and the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.**

Patriarch will celebrate the Easter Vigil on Saturday morning at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, watched closely by the other denominations to make sure no breach of protocol is made in the centuries old Ottoman ruling. The city will then be buzzing with pilgrims, in celebratory mode at the Resurrection of the Lord.

As the Good News goes out from Jerusalem to the whole world, our Eastern brothers and sisters enter

the fervour of the Holy Spirit. This year's celebration will coincide with the blessing of Nikodemus Schnabel, our Benedictine confrère, as the new Abbot of the Dormition Abbey. The life of the Church in Jerusalem will then return to normal — or, as normal as life can be in such a hotly contested city — and we will begin again our pilgrim journey through the Christian calendar. The world will have turned its attention to Jesus in Jerusalem, and we will have been privileged to have been here. ■



THIS PAGE: MAGNOLIAS IN BLOOM OUTSIDE THE ABBEY CHURCH; OPPOSITE PAGE: APPLE BLOSSOMS IN CLOISTER GARDEN BY EMMAUS O'HERLIHY OSB



## The Sacrament of Spring

**MARK PATRICK HEDERMAN OSB**

Everywhere dead wood is bursting forth into bloom. Blackthorn, whitethorn, hawthorn: the countryside is dressed in white, shouting the possibility of new life. We are to rise from the dead. Not just on the last day, not just after our own bodily death, but now, *hodie*, today. "You rose from the dead on the day you



EMMAUS O'HERLIHY OSB

**'I said to the magnolia  
speak to me of God and the  
magnolia burst into bloom.'**

**Nikos Kazantzakis**

were born only you didn't realise it," says Boris Pasternak. Realising it means making it real.

Resurrection is not some all-powerful divine act emerging like a thunder bolt from outer space; resurrection is the quiet but visible and tangible effect of the meeting and the union of divine love with human being. When the love of God permeates the human soul, we rise up as bread rises with yeast. If our physical bodies were the product of our spirit alone, it would be the perfect instrument of our spiritual freedom. But we are a mixture of spirit and flesh which creates a tension: because the vertical line of resurrection is crossed by the horizontal line of heredity, the way we are by our human birth conflicts with the way we should be by resurrection. Such is the cross of human existence. The biological fashions us in a way that militates against resurrection; it forms in us a particular will which crosses swords with the 'personal' will of our true spirit. We prefer to live like ants or bees with an in-built code of behaviour, a blue-print for conducting our lives. Birth, marriage, death, these are the horizontal way. We have to change all that, something in the way

you swap diesel for electric when we drive our car. The human engine has to be revolutionized to realise its full potential which is carrying on forever through the fuel of divine love. We should be living creatively instead of conventionally.

Biological life is circular: Time as birth, growth, decay, death. Resurrected life is time as *kairos* not *chronos*. The Gospels give us these two words to distinguish between the two ways of negotiating the mystery of 'time.' God came on earth to open the possibility of another way of living. Events rather than cycles; milestones rather than metronomes; portholes rather than mere passage of time. We have to set our watches and our hearts to be awake for such moments. Ready for ecstasy. Poised for take-off. It is the difference between living life as slaves in Egypt or as free people on Exodus. The word Exodus in Greek means 'a path out of' – an escape route from the vicious circle of ourselves.

Our natural inclination is to go round in circles. Toeing the line, tramping the treadmill, obsessively cultivating the conveyer belt of the yearly calendar. What shall we do tomorrow?

Look up our diaries to see what we did this day last year. We ritualise routine; are obsessively compliant with calendar compulsion; victims of perennial protocol. We have to stop this clock: we do this by factoring in the vertical in our lives, looking up rather than straight ahead, pausing every now and then to open a window.

Every year is cyclical, yet no one year should be the same as any other. Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn, we should not be prisoners under life sentence ticking off these years with scratch marks on the walls: putting down the time, wishing our lives away. We have to sow, sprout, blossom and reap a new harvest every year.

To prevent the circle from being an eternally repeated error [coming from the word in Latin 'to wander'], we have to develop within us the urge upwards towards the spiral. The spiral is the beginning of resurrection, the movement upwards which transforms the flat and deadened circle into a way upwards and outwards.

The tree as growth upwards and outwards is the model for such spiral



growth. Every ring of the tree's growth represents one year of such movement, every tree ring contains a weather report for the year that was in it, the weather of the time. Each ring describes whether or not we made the effort to move upwards and onwards, or whether we just settled for hibernation.

Resurrection means standing up straight and tall, not lying down or crawling on our hands and knees. We need to develop a back bone if we are to live our lives in the rhythm of resurrection rather than as spineless crustaceans crawling horizontally along a trail strewn with bait by others. Our task in springtime is to calcify without ossifying the spinal column.

Grace is the meccano set which allows us to stand up vertically (with a sacrament for each joint) rather than settle for horizontal lethargy. Sin means in Hebrew and in Greek 'missing the mark': settling for horizontal life rather than the vertical. We were meant to be violins playing music; we prefer to use the delicate instrument of ourselves for stirring lukewarm porridge. We are made of dust and earth, vessels of

clay, pots thrown by an almighty potter. So are the Pyramids, the Grand Canyon, the Cathedral at Chartres. It's not an insult: it's a possibility.

The effect in us of divine love, divine energy, is to break the potbound periphery and open us out through the cracks. We have to be broken open. The walls have to be razed. We have to be ploughed like earth being prepared for sowing. The passion of individualism which is instinctually in our nature as a necessity for self-preservation, self-promotion, self-fulfilment, has to be superseded by the passion of ecstasy, the movement which pours us out into the space between us and other people, accomplishing in us the movement which makes us capable of real love, Capax Dei. We are born individuals; we become persons by this expansion of ourselves into the antechamber of the other. We have to do for ourselves what God has already done for Himself in our regard: break out of our natural mode of being and ensure that our nature no longer determines the limits of our personhood.

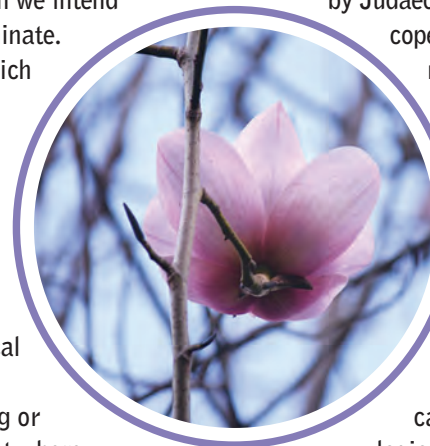
It is not a question of either/or, of choosing this world or the next

world, of choosing God or the creation, of being human or being divine. It is a question of both/and. What is being proposed is not exclusion, denial, mortification, destruction of some particular element of what we are now, in order to develop some hybrid variation of ourselves, grafted onto the divine stem at a point above those areas which we intend to bypass or eliminate. The evolution which we must achieve will be a transformation and elevation of the whole human being to a level where the imperatives of biological reproduction will not be as pressing or overpowering, but where the vocation to love will be more specifically human, more personal, more total.

It is a question of becoming fully human. Our whimpering reluctance is understandable in the way that it is understandable not to want to get out of bed in the morning or not to want to get into an aeroplane and fly. Many children regret having to

become adults; perhaps caterpillars resent having to push themselves to be butterflies. But the point is this: we were made to be persons and persons in love; anything less than that is diminishment, deprivation, emasculation.

The word 'person' was invented by Judaeo-Christianity to cope with the immense reality they were discovering about themselves: that they had been chosen as love objects by God. As the caterpillar moves from chrysalis to butterfly, we too can move from biological life to resurrected life. The latter is accomplished through the power of love which changes us from individuals into persons. We lose nothing of ourselves in the transformation; we emerge whole and entire as we fully are without shedding one leaf or spilling a drop. This is how we were always meant to be. God came on earth to teach us the real meaning of the word love. On this we shall be judged. ■



PADDY O'CONNOR



# Engaging with the Diversity that is Rome

OSCAR McDERMOTT OSB

Rome is *the* city par excellence. Its inhabitants call it simply *l'urbe* (the city) for short. Here, the course of history is reckoned *ab urbe condita*, that is, 'since the foundation of the city', which is synonymous with 'since eternity'.

Rome has been the capital of the world, and in a way, it still is today. People from all over the world are on the move and at home here. Every stone in this city, every face you see here and every accent you hear in the streets and squares of

Rome bears witness to this. Monuments and art from all corners of the earth stand side by side in such density that one cannot help but engage with the history of this fascinating place. In Rome, as in no other city, one learns what it means to be 'church' in all its diversity.

In the implementation of the proverbial *vivi e lascia vivere!* (live and let live!) the Romans are world champions. The Romans are also champions when it comes to coping with home-made chaos. Rome



is a thoroughly chaotic city, but it manages to conjure its own order out of the chaos. For example, the excellently organised bus, tram and metro network is a blessing for this metropolis, which is daily on the verge of collapse in terms of traffic and bureaucracy, yet never sinks. But that, too, is part of the quirks of this beauty.

As imperfect as it is in the general order, as perfect it shows itself in its self-confidence. Whether Greek columns or ancient Egyptian obelisks, of which there is no shortage in Rome, antiquity is omnipresent here and is part of this city's self-image. But not only that. Rome is church. A confrere recently explained to me that living in Rome and reading the letter of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, for him creates relationship across the millennia. Rome is also the city of churches. No one knows how many there are in this city. It is estimated that there are over 900 of them, often four or five in a single place — in Rome everything is in abundance — and most of these churches that still exist today are true masterpieces. Rome, despite all its secularisation, is still Catholic and not least because of the omni-

presence of the Pope, whose likeness adorns postage stamps, bookshops, souvenir stands, hairdressers, bars and greengrocers.

Rome is full of colourful diversity. Habit, cassock, jeans and Hawaiian shirt are as much a part of the cityscape as Swiss guards in their Renaissance uniform and Corazzieri with sabre and impeccably fitting breastplate in front of the Quirinal Palace, the seat of the President of the Republic. It's nice to experience this colourful diversity, because this is Rome, this is Church, this is world. The peaceful coexistence is touching. Here, the Muslim rolls out his prayer rug in front of the Trinità dei Monti church, while a Mass is celebrated in French and a group of Sikhs take wedding photos on the Spanish Steps, right in front of it. This vastness is invigorating.

When I arrived in the city from Glenstal at the end of September 2022, I found a midsummer Rome. I experienced days with temperatures well above 20°C and sought respite in delicious, homemade gelato. Only in November when the rain clouds thundered on the Aventine, did the grass shoot up and the green

parrots, which are present in Rome in droves, cawed in the date palms in the garden of Sant'Anselmo, immersing it in an almost unreal image. The fact that Romans love life in the streets because of the climate and that the cafés and restaurants are busy around the clock can surely be attributed to this 'sunny disposition' of the city; it gladdens the heart.

Earlier this year I visited Keats' grave in Cimitero Acattolico

(Non-Catholic Cemetery) of Rome, known as the Cemetery of Artists and Poets, and one of the oldest burial places still in use in Europe. Standing there, I could relate to Wilde's description of Keats' grave as the holiest place in Rome. Here one comes to reflect and one becomes calm at heart. This is certainly a sacred place, as is the whole city, which is somehow incomprehensible. Incomprehensible is probably another word for holy. ■







## Seeing the Cross Anew

HENRY O'SHEA OSB

For about the first two centuries of Christianity, the cross was a rather ambiguous symbol. Crucifixion was regarded as the most shameful death that could be imposed on a criminal and so, early Christians were hesitant about emphasising the reality of Jesus' death on the cross. During this period Christians

tended to favour more the symbol of the fish, the Greek word for which, read as an acrostic proclamation, translates into English as 'Jesus Christ, God's Son, Saviour'. With the growth of the Church in and into an increasingly Gentile community, and linked with a growing appropriation of the



reality of the Resurrection, the crossmore and more came to be recognised as an essential part of the Paschal mystery of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ.

While there are earlier depictions of the cross, it is really from the beginning of the fourth century, with the victory of the Emperor Constantine under the sign of the cross, that the emblem came into its own and a development began which led to our modern crucifixes, i.e. a cross bearing the image of the crucified Saviour.

The two crosses shown here were made by our Brother Benedict Tutty in the late 1960s. The ultramarine blue cross was made for a room in what was then the guesthouse. The burnt ochre coloured cross was

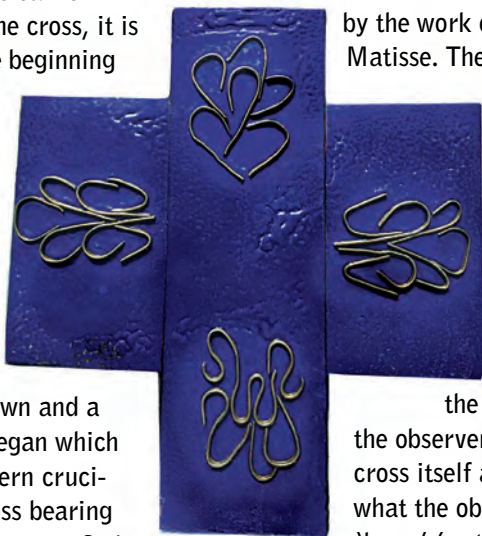
shop and, as can be seen from the illustration, was intended to be hung with the longer side up.

At the time these crosses were made, Brother Benedict was very interested in and influenced by the work of the artist Matisse. The arrangement

on the ochre cross is a development of these motifs. Benedict said that he was trying to draw

the attention of the observer back to the cross itself and away from what the observer already 'knew' (or thought they

knew) about crucifixes but did not, in fact, really see. With the burnt ochre coloured cross, he was, literally, trying to turn the observer's 'seeing' on its head, which with the motifs in the centre, expresses the richness of the before, present and future of the cross. ■



## Educational Encounters that Broaden the Mind

**MARIUS CARNEY**

**Glenstal Abbey School Headmaster**

Encounter with oneself and others is a key feature of a Glenstal education, and we particularly value international encounter which is so ingrained in the experience here.

Over the last year a group of Third Years have collaborated with Benedictine confreres from the Abbey

schools of Münsterschwarzach in Bavaria and Ampleforth in Yorkshire on an Erasmus+ programme exploring the theme of sustainable development and what that means in each country. In such programmes students particularly enjoy the opportunity to meet their peers and to collaborate in joint projects.

Alongside a variety of language exchanges in the Transition Year to schools in Germany, France and Spain, every year a group visit the Abbey School at Delbarton, New Jersey, and the American friends return to experience an Irish summer holiday. This year's group enjoyed both the sights and smells of the Big Apple and Washington DC.

There were many other very rewarding visits too. This year, Juniors have accompanied Fr John on his brilliant and renowned whistlestop tour of Paris, and Senior students have enjoyed two visits linked to the curriculum. Sixth Year Geography students visited Iceland, where in addition to spectacular landscapes and volcanoes, Br Colmán arranged for the group to have the privilege of seeing some of the earliest surviving Icelandic manuscripts, including the oldest copy of Njals Saga, which includes an account of the Battle of Clontarf from the Viking perspective. Each Saturday morning a group of Fifth Year students have been studying Christian art and architecture from late antiquity to the Baroque.

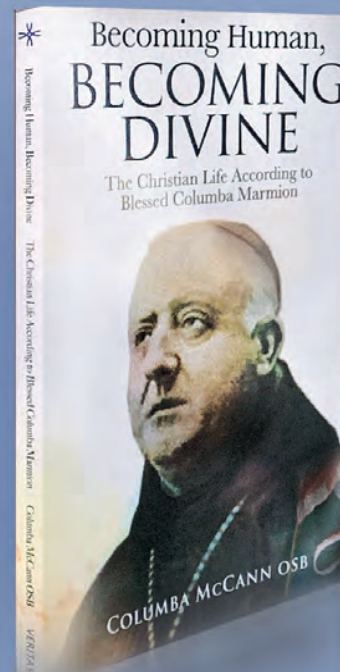
The fieldtrip was a visit to Rome in February. Welcomed by Fr Martin and Br Oscar, students were overwhelmed by the plethora of riches including some less frequented places - the quiet stretches of the Via Appia Antica, Santa Sabina, and S Agata Dei Goti where there is a memorial to Blessed Columba Marmion. Students enjoyed hospitality in both the Irish College and the English College, where there was the opportunity to meet and talk to priests about modern formation in Rome today. The Irish Dominican friars in San Clemente also extended a warm welcome during a fascinating tour of their complex.

It is perhaps a surprising truth in the Internet age, that travel still broadens the mind. It does. It broadens outlook, smashes stereotypes and cliches, offers rich friendship. As I write, the Sunday Gospel is Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, a reminder of the ever present need to create and facilitate encounter with others and with strangers who hopefully will become friends. ■

# THE CHRISTIAN LIFE ACCORDING TO BLESSED COLUMBA MARMION



BY COLUMBA McCANN OSB  
MONK OF GLENSTAL ABBEY



Commemorating the centenary of Blessed Columba Marmion's death in 1923, this introduction puts the reader in touch with the deep spiritual resources of Christian life and suggests how each person can draw from those sources.





# ONE~DAY SUMMER RETREAT

This one-day retreat is offered on  
**WEDNESDAY, 28 JUNE** and **THURSDAY, 29 JUNE.**

Starting at **10am** with **tea and coffee at registration**, the day includes **talks, Mass, lunch, Holy Hour** (with the option of **Confession**), and **afternoon tea**. The retreat day ends at **5pm** but all are welcome to remain for Vespers at 6pm.



GLENSTAL RETREATS  
**events@glenstal.com** OR PHONE **061-621005**