



GLENSTAL ABBEY
CHRONICLE

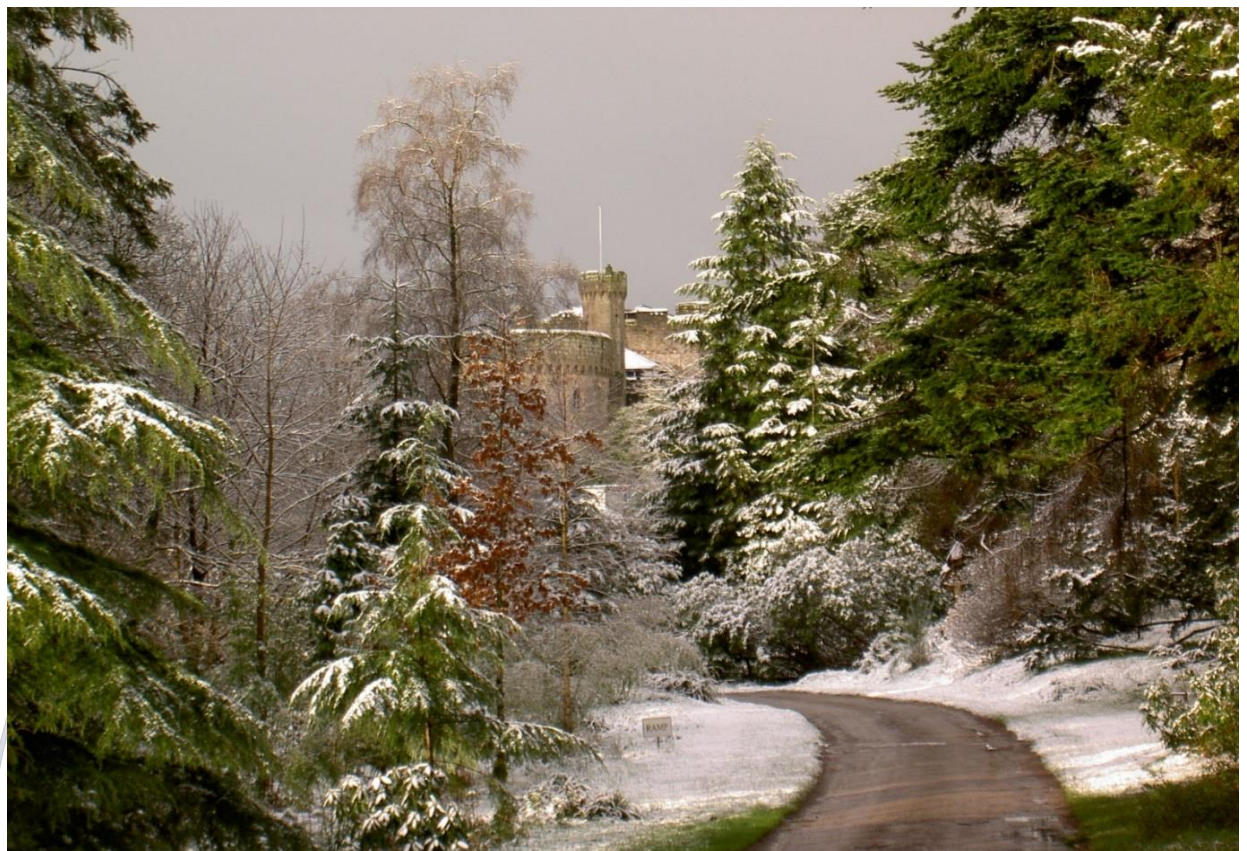


Glenstal Abbey

Issue 2

Living Monastic
Life in Glenstal
Abbey
1927-2018

GLENSTAL ABBEY
Murroe, Co. Limerick
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Christmas / New Year Edition
2017 / 2018



Welcome

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.

In the past year the community has had the joy of celebrating ninety years of monastic life. We have also shared in the joy of welcoming a new member, as well as the sadness of bidding farewell to Fr Seán, who has gone to his eternal reward. What has been achieved is thanks in no small measure to the kindness and generosity of so many. We wish each and every one of you every blessing this Christmas and New Year.

Brendan Coffey OSB
Abbot of Glenstal

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Community News



Community Retreat

July 24-29

The Community Retreat this year took place in the Abbey from July 24 until the morning of July 29. The retreat director was Fr Liam Tracey O.S.M., who

reflected with the community on the Rite of a Dedication of a Church.

At the end of the retreat the monastic community renewed their vows at Conventual Mass on the feast of Sts Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

Kenya A Reflection

Jack and the Kenya Crew of 2017

“As for him who is making progress in the religious life and in faith his heart enlarges”
~ Saint Benedict



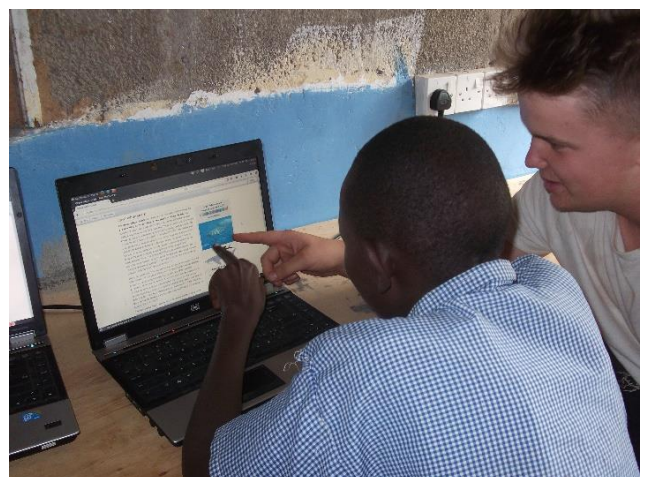
The decision to travel to Kenya was not one I made lightly. It was a huge commitment both from the fundraising perspective and taking part in the trip itself. That said, it was undoubtedly a great cause and something we all knew we wanted to be a part of. (I saved some money on haircuts too!) From the moment we arrived in Lale'enok it was one exhilarating experience after another. I couldn't dream of doing each and every one justice, but from tracking lions with Maasai scouts to walking with baboons, visiting one of the first known sites of human existence to the TATA Chemicals factory, there wasn't a dull moment.

While our adventures through the Kenyan bush were both thrilling and memorable, it will be the Kenyan people

that I will have the fondest memories of. They were hospitable to no end from the night of our arrival, guiding us to and from our tents in the pitch dark. In a land under the strain of drought, they are a people bursting with life.



It was a privilege to learn about and experience their culture first hand. Joel and his team were at our beck and call day and night, never once in poor form. I, myself was a bit grumpy to have gotten up at 4am again to try see lions and fail again, but there wasn't a word from our chefs, Chenzen and Liz who were up cooking our breakfast!



Of course the most important part of the trip was Olkiramatian Arid Zone Primary School, specifically its students. Our time teaching was hugely successful, with standards 5, 6 and 7 learning computer skills, and standard 8 learning English. However, we learned far more from them, whether in the classroom, in the yard or on the football pitch. We were both welcomed and bid farewell by the school with traditional Maasai song and dance, performed by the students. With every interaction in the school, my heart “enlarges”.

In conclusion, we want to thank each and every one of our supporters for all the time and effort they dedicated to the Kenya crew. Every cake baked, letter written, coffee sold and so many more forms of fundraising made this trip happen! We are grateful to have been allowed take part in the trip in the first place, as it has been a once in a lifetime opportunity. I will cherish the memories made and people I have met forever.



99 Years Young



On Saturday 7 October, Glenstal's most senior monk by profession, Fr Placid Murray, rejoiced to celebrate an extraordinary milestone in his life. It was his 99th birthday. Fr Placid has been resident at a nearby nursing home for several years but he remains a regular visitor to the monastery, and returned home on Saturday to celebrate his birthday, joining his brethren for Mass and lunch.

October 7 is also the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and in his homily during Mass, Fr Henry linked the two celebrations.

“When we look at the Rosary, we see that it is a wonderful recapitulation of the mysteries of the life of Christ and with that a concise compendium for our own contemplation of those mysteries.

“We call to mind Blessed Columba Marmion's saying that Christ's mysteries are our mysteries.

“We celebrate this Mass in the company of our confrere Father Placid who is celebrating his 99th birthday. We thank God for a life spent meditating on these mysteries of which we have just spoken and trying to imitate what they contain. We thank God for Fr Placid’s life-long work for the liturgical celebration and living of these mysteries as well as his scholarly elucidation of them in his many publications on the teaching of Cardinal Newman. We pray for continued good health and growth in a life permeated by the spirit of Mary when, in the words of the gospel we have just heard, she replied to the angel, ‘Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.’”



After Mass, the community gathered in the monastery refectory for lunch. Father Abbot spoke briefly on behalf of the

community, congratulating Fr Placid and wishing him all the best for the one hundredth year of his life. Still strong, Fr Placid blew out all the candles on his birthday cake in one go.

Ad multos annos, Fr Placid!

Fr Seán Ó Duinn RIP



Seán Ó Duinn was born in Kilbarry, Co. Cork on 7 November 1932. Educated by the Marists in Dundalk, Co. Louth, he spent a period in the Marist Novitiate in Devon before entering Glenstal in 1953, taking the name Bonaventure. After studies in Kimmage, Tallaght and in the monastery at Glenstal, he was ordained priest in August 1960.

Fr Bonaventure trained as a horticulturalist at the National Botanical Gardens in Dublin and worked for several years in the gardens and greenhouses at Glenstal, growing flowers for sale. Throughout this time, his interest in liturgical studies and in Irish culture and spirituality was growing. He graduated from the Liturgical Institute in Trier, Germany, in 1975, having written a thesis on *The Night in Irish Piety*, which was later published in Irish translation as *Amhra Coimrí*. During this time he developed an abiding interest in the liturgies of the Eastern Churches and for several years he celebrated the Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom in the Abbey church on Sunday afternoons. Before infirmity made it impossible for him to do so, he relished any opportunity to travel to Dublin to attend the liturgies

of some of the many Eastern Christian communities - Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox - who had come to make their home in Ireland.

After his studies in Germany, Fr Bonaventure had begun to explore early Irish Christian liturgical texts and was persuaded by the late Prof. Pádraig Ó Fiannachta to pursue Celtic Studies in Maynooth, graduating with a PhD in 1998. This was to shape the rest of his monastic and academic life. Widely regarded as one of the greatest experts on Celtic spirituality, he taught in Maynooth and in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, and wrote extensively for Irish-language periodicals, lecturing all over Ireland, Great Britain and beyond. His two most important books are *Where Three Streams Meet* (2000) and *The Rite of Brigid* (2005).

In declining health for several years, Fr Bonaventure spent the last few years of his life in Millbrae Lodge Nursing Home in Newport, Co. Tipperary, where he died peacefully on 9 October 2017.

*Suaimhneas síorai tabhair dó, a Thiarna,
agus go lonraí solas suthain air*

Glenstal Liturgical Conference

To commemorate the 90th anniversary of our foundation, Glenstal Abbey hosted a liturgical conference

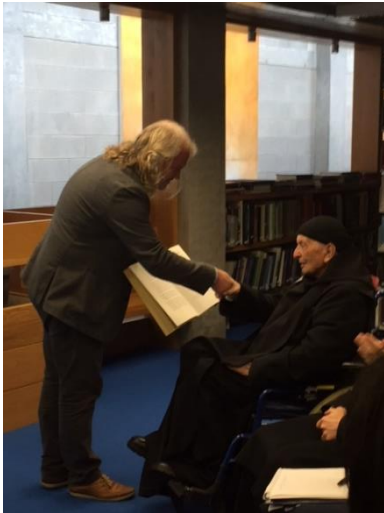
which examined the role of sacramentality in a secularised world from 20-22 October. Over three days we touched on these and other contemporary liturgical themes in papers and workshops, in the context of shared monastic liturgy.



Among those who gave papers at the conference was Prof. Joris Geldhof, president of *Societas Liturgica*.



On the Saturday morning Prof. Geldhof made a presentation to Fr Placid

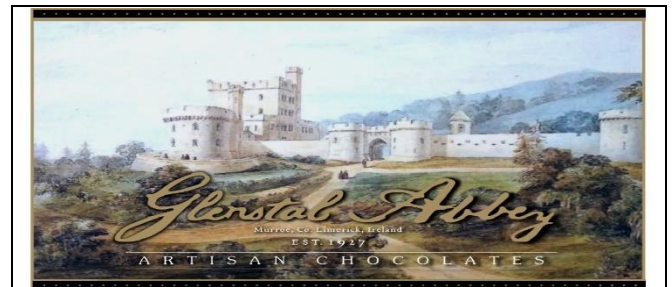


on behalf of *Societas Liturgica* in recognition of his lifetime of scholarly contribution. Fr Placid was the first president of *Societas Liturgica*.

Those attending the conference were also treated to a concert for violin and piano by Br Cyprian and Br Jarek of our community.



The monastic community recently took the decision to stream our liturgies live on our website. This means that wherever you may be in the world you can now join with us in prayer. The community celebrate the Eucharist each day at 12.10pm and 10am on Sunday. Matins and Lauds are at 6.35am and 7am on Sunday. Vespers is at 6pm and Compline at 8.35pm. The Office of the Resurrection is celebrated at 8.35pm on Saturday evenings.



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

Enquiries welcome at chocolates@glenstal.com
www.glenstal.org/shop

To stay in the Guesthouse or a God Pod –
guestmaster@glenstal.org

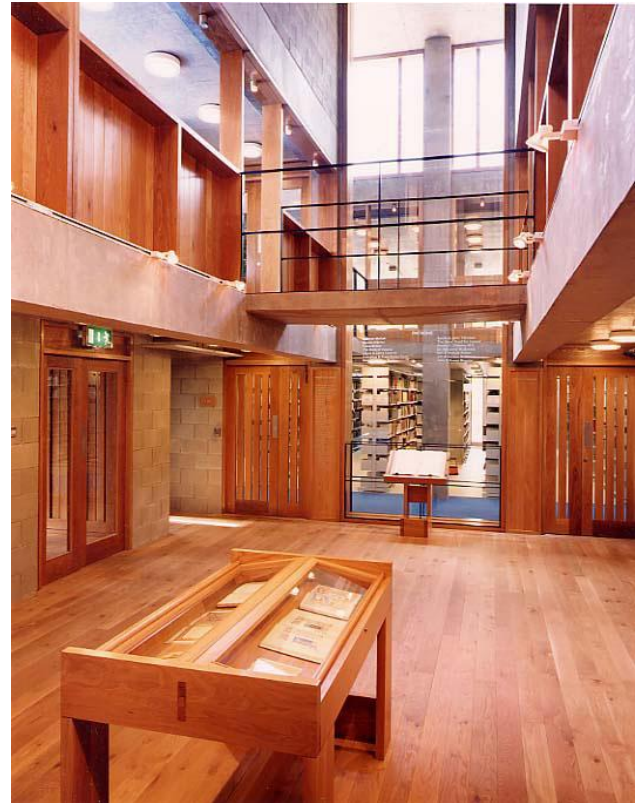
Visiting Groups, Hospitality, Events –
events@glenstal.com

General Monastery & Prayer Requests –
monks@glenstal.org

Glenstal Abbey Library



The history of the library at Glenstal is, not surprisingly, intimately bound up with the history of what is still a relatively young monastic community and reflects the strivings of that community at various stages of its development. For the community of six Belgian monks arriving at Glenstal Castle, the former residence of the Anglo-Irish Barrington family in 1927, it was in Dickens' phrase 'the best of times, it was the worst of times'. The best because every new foundation calls forth enthusiasm and support, the worst because it was taking place in a country still coming to terms with independence, the aftermath of a civil war and in a world economy soon to be devastated by the Wall Street crash. Pioneers don't make good librarians and while there were a number of men of very high intellectual calibre among the founding fathers (Idesbald Ryelandt, Bede Lebbe) most of their energies were poured into establishing a monastery, an art school and a boys secondary school at a time of economic stagnation.



The library collection has grown steadily from its humble origins in 1927 and is now one of the largest private libraries in Ireland, holding approximately 58,000 volumes, manuscripts and nearly 100 journal runs. The focus of the library is primarily theological but it contains substantial holdings in the areas of Irish history, Irish literature, biography and art. It also houses a collection of antiquarian books ranging in date from the 15th to the 19th centuries, as well as the monastery archives.

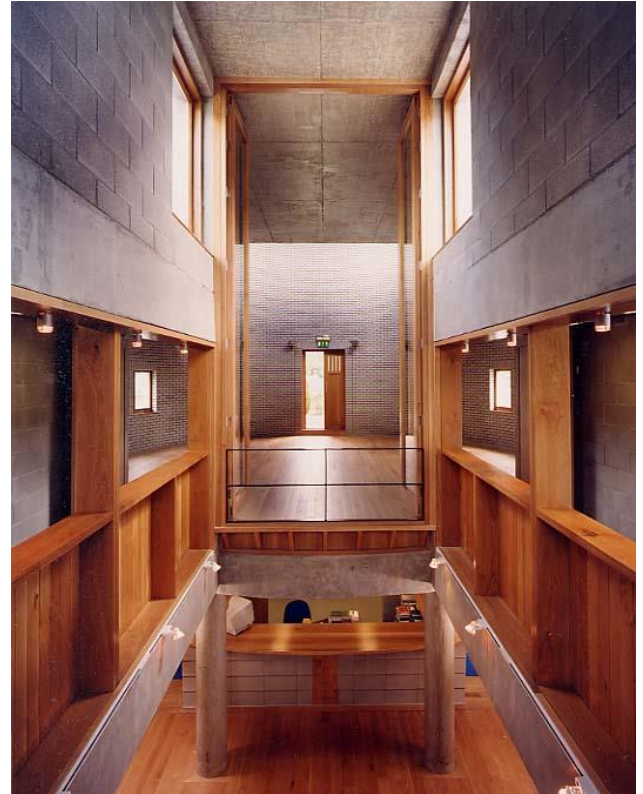
The new monastery library was blessed and opened by Abbot Christopher on 22 June 2001. Designed by architects Richard Hurley and

associates, Dublin and built by Tom Hayes Ltd, Killaloe, it represents the second phase of the monastery's development plan. Architecturally the building is very striking with the exterior echoing many existing features of the castle, monastery and guesthouse. The interior is no less impressive with the combination of white oak fittings, glass and fair face blockwork creating a calm, peaceful environment that is ideal for study. In 2002 it was awarded the annual award of the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland.

The new building has a capacity of 120,000 volumes and is connected to a large number of databases and electronic resources via the Internet, with all study carrels being provided with power points and IT sockets.

Some important collections of books have come to the library by way of bequest and donation, as have many furnishings and fittings. The library building is itself an expression of our benefactors' generosity and the community is deeply grateful to all of them.

The monastery library provides, for the first time, an adequate home for our books and for all who come to use them. It is our hope that those who come here will find it a place of refreshment and peace and that the resources they find here may, in the words of the late Cardinal Basil Hume, OSB, help us to strive towards a civilisation of love.



The Gardens of Glenstal Abbey

Brian Murphy OSB

Some words of introduction are necessary and may be surprising: firstly, Glenstal Abbey and Glenstal School are not in Glenstal! Both the abbey and school are located in the townland of Garranbane. The Barrington family, when they decided on a name for their castle in the early nineteenth century, did not like the name of Garranbane and chose instead the name of a

neighbouring townland, Glenstal, in which they also owned a lot of land. In all the Barrington family possessed about 9,500 acres. I was forcibly reminded of the reality of these townland names recently when talking to our postman, and asking him where his next destination was. He replied that he was going to Glenstal. This reality is recognised in some official forms: for example when members of the Community receive notification of an election, it is addressed to them as residents of Garranbane - not Glenstal Abbey.



Secondly, and equally surprising, is the fact that all of the present property of Glenstal Abbey, c. 500 acres, was, in fact, the garden, or parkland estate, of the Barrington family. The design of the estate was selected and carried out by Sir Matthew Barrington (1788-1861; baronet 1846): it featured two main avenues; the surrounding lakes; the many walkways surrounding the castle; and the renovation of the older walled gardens. These features are clearly visible on the Ordnance Survey map of 1843 and still exist today. The Barrington farm land and their famous game shooting preserves were separate from the parkland estate, although, for a

time, there was a nine-hole golf course on both sides of the front avenue.

The first specific garden created by the Barringtons was the Lady Garden, which was so-called after the lady of the house: the first was Lady Charlotte Barrington. This was designed to be seen from the Castle; it was even aligned on a slope that enabled this vista to be seen to maximum effect. The Ordnance Survey map of 1843 clearly depicts the large stone walkway in front of the castle which looks south to the Galtee mountains and east to the Lady Garden. The recent new school building has revealed the extent of this walkway and Sir Fitzwilliam Barrington (1909-2003; last baronet 1980)) told me that the family often looked from it to the fountain and pergola in the Lady Garden. When we restored the garden in 2009, we did not replace the pergola but a new fountain was put in place. For reasons of maintenance, there was no attempt to carry out an extensive planting of flowers but the paths and lawns were made good and a wild flower planting was undertaken on one side of the garden. In this area 16 silver birch trees were planted to commemorate the men executed in 1916 and one tree to commemorate Winnie Warrington, the only daughter of Sir Charles (baronet 1930-1943), who was the accidental victim of an IRA ambush in May 1921. Thanks to the kind gift of Mrs Jackie Frawley a different type of snow drop (*galanthus*) has been placed in front of each tree: for example, Pearse has

chedworth; MacDonagh, greenfields; Clarke, walrus and Winnie Barrington, Lady Elphinstone. One corner of the garden has been carefully tended as a special place for all season flowers by Irene Fenton.



On leaving this garden, a path leads over a bridge to the oldest part of the estate and one leaves the townland of Garranbane and enters the townland of Cappercullen. The bridge was designed by William Le Fanu and erected in 1866. He was a civil engineer who was married to Henrietta, the daughter of Sir Matthew Barrington. The magnificent bridge provided views to the north of the glen with its ancient ruins and to the south of a specially created lake and a boat house. Looking up the glen there are on the right two rare tree rhododendrons, one with a striking white flower; and, to the left, the foundation stones of the fourteenth century Mulryan Castle are clearly visible for some 50 metres. The gable end of Cappercullen House, which was built on these foundation stones and which dates to c. 1600, is also visible, although covered in

ivy. It was this house which inspired Sheridan Le Fanu to write his famous ghost story, *Ullter de Lacy, A Legend of Cappercullen*, in 1861. The owner of this house, George Evans (1655-1720), was responsible for building the walled gardens that adjoin the house. His son, also George Evans (1660-1749), who became Lord Carbery in 1715, retained an interest in the deer park and the gardens, although his main residence was at Bulgaddon Hall, Kilmallock.

*The bridge was designed by
William Le Fanu and erected in
1866.*

The most precise evidence that we have as to the date of these walled gardens comes from a charter of King Charles II of England and Ireland (his formal title) which was sealed on 31 July 1692 and was ratified by the English administration in Dublin on 20 June 1683. The charter, which is in the Abbey archives, allowed George Evans to establish a deer park on his land at Cappercullen and Murroe. In order to keep the deer out of his house and garden, George Evans must have completed the walled garden by this date. The walls were not only built to keep out the deer but also to keep out the native Irish who were united in trying to drive out the English settlers who had taken their land. The Cromwellian settlers had begun to build fortified gardens in

the 1650s and the need for such gardens became even more acute when the wars in Ireland took place between James II (1685—1688) and William III (1689-1702). It was only after the siege of Limerick and the signing of the Treaty of Limerick in October 1691 that the need for fortifications ended. The walled gardens at Glenstal, therefore, have a special significance as a prime example of a fortified garden. This was recognised by an official of the OPW (Office of Public Works) who, in a visit this summer, expressed the opinion that the entire complex of walls dated to the 1680s thus making it one of the finest examples of fortified gardens in Ireland.



Sir Matthew Barrington made a new entrance into these walled gardens in about 1840 and transformed one part of the enclosure into an Italian style Terrace garden and it remains so to this day. His successors, Sir William (third baronet 1861-1872) and Sir Croker (fourth baronet 1872 – 1890), maintained his plans for the garden and added two heated glass houses: one for grapes and one for peaches. When An Taisce began their restoration work on the garden in the 1970s, they were careful to preserve the remains of these features

and we followed their example when we began our work in 1986. The walls of the glass houses for grapes were made good and the remaining Victorian floor tiles were re-laid around the pond. Likewise the walls of the peach house were preserved and an attempt was made, by following the advice of Linneaus, to plant flowers which were known in the seventeenth century and which, therefore, matched the age of the garden. In 1990 and subsequent years the second and third terraces were specially designed and planted with plants, flowers and trees that are named in the Bible.



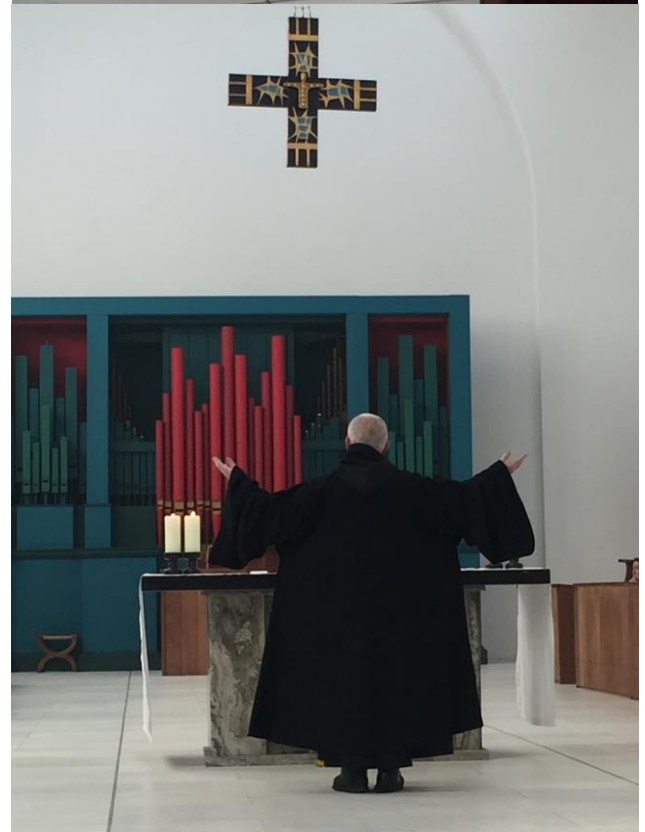
On one level the planting may be viewed as a botanical exercise but on a deeper level, which was the intention, the planting may convey spiritual realities in a real, if unusual, manner. Here is not the time, or space, to expand on the special significance of fig trees, vines and olives (all in the garden) but one general observation may help to convey the spiritual focus that was intended. It is well known that the story of creation, the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus all took place in gardens. It is possibly less well known that the very last words of Jesus on the cross

made reference to a garden: when the good thief said to Jesus, "Remember me, when you come into your kingdom;" Jesus replied, "To-day you will be with me in paradise." Paradise is derived from the Persian word for a garden and Jesus is, in effect, saying to-day you will be with me in the garden of the Lord. It may be helpful at time to make a version of this prayer our own: we may say "Lord Jesus remember me in your kingdom" and we may find assurance in his words that "To-day I am thinking of you in paradise." We do not walk the surface of this earth alone: that is one of the messages from a Bible garden.

Finally, it should be recorded that the planting of the trees of the Celtic Ogham calendar and alphabet was undertaken in 2013 with the advice of Fr Seán Ó Duinn of our community. They were planted in circular fashion in the walled enclosure above the terrace garden. This year, as Seán was dying, memorial stones giving details of the 13 trees were placed in front of them. He died on 9 October 2017. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Jubilee

Congratulations to Fr Anthony Keane OSB, who celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Monastic Profession during Mass in the Abbey church on Saturday 25 November. He renewed his vows during Mass.



A large group of his family and friends were present for the celebration and joined him and the monastic community for a festive lunch in the school afterwards.

Lent at the Abbey – The Readings of the Great Vigil

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

Sunday 18th February 2018

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

Sunday 25th February 2018

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

Sunday 4th March 2018

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

Sunday 11th March 2018

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

Sunday 18th March 2018

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

Sunday 25th March 2018

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

Talks will take place in the Monastery library at 4.30 pm, followed by tea and coffee at 5.15 pm. All who come are welcome to attend Sunday Vespers in the Abbey Church at 6.00pm. Suggested donation €5

Visitors to the Abbey

The Abbey welcomes visitors and visiting groups to join with the monastic community for daily Mass and the celebration of the Offices. Typically groups arrive in time for the Community Mass with Gregorian Chant in Latin, which is celebrated each weekday at 12.10pm, and on Sundays at 10.00am. This is followed either by lunch or tea/coffee and scones.

Visitors can walk the Front and Back avenues at their leisure. The lands have a wide variety of specimen trees and flowers and are a wildlife sanctuary. Part of the remains of Ireland's primitive oak forest lies along the edge of the front avenue. Please note that the school buildings and playing fields are not normally open to the public.

A Reception area is located on the right hand side of the entrance arch. Toilet facilities are provided and a vending machine selling hot drinks is available. There is a shop with a wide range of books and gifts, which is generally open daily from 10.00am until 5.00pm.



You are especially welcome to join the Community at times of prayer and for Mass, though you may visit the Church at any time.

We are happy to assist you in devising a day tailored to the specific needs of your group. Some groups like to have a spiritual talk by a member of the community or an opportunity to avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Tea / Coffee / Scones and Lunch can also be provided. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

For more details about what we can offer or to make a booking please email events@glenstal.com or call 061 621005

Daily Timetable

Visitors are welcome at all liturgies, which take place in the Abbey Church.

SUNDAYS

8.35 pm	Resurrection Office/Vigils (on the preceding evening)
7.00 am	Lauds (Morning Prayer)
10.00 am	Conventual Mass
12.35 pm	Sext (Midday Prayer)
6.00 pm	Vespers (Evening Prayer – in Latin)
8.35 pm	Compline (Night Prayer)

WEEKDAYS

6.35 am	Matins and Lauds (Morning Prayer)
12.10 pm	Conventual Mass
6.00 pm	Vespers (Evening Prayer, in Latin)
8.35 pm	Compline (Night Prayer – Monday excepted)

All services, except Vespers are chanted in English, with some Latin hymns and antiphons. While the Eucharist is celebrated in English, the ordinary and proper chants are sung in Latin. Please note that the timetable may change slightly on certain solemnities and feastdays.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is available in the church on Saturdays between 3.00pm and 4.00pm.

At other times, please inquire at the Monastery Reception.

Email: events@glenstal.com

Tel: 061 621005



Saint Benedict

The monks of Glenstal Abbey are Benedictines and take their name from their original founder, St Benedict. Benedict was born in the year 480, in the town of Nursia, Italy. The Roman Empire had come to an end only four years before, in 476, and thus the young Benedict grew up in a country where the decay of the old Roman civilisation was in evidence everywhere. His parents were Christian and sent him to study law in Rome when he was about sixteen years of age. However, the atmosphere of the great city shocked and depressed him. He decided to leave Rome and for a short time joined a small group of like-minded young men at a place called Enfide.



His companions called themselves monks, but they followed no rule, each apparently ordering his life as he wished. Not satisfied with this situation, Benedict, though still under twenty, resolved to lead the stricter life of a hermit. According to the testimony of his first biographer, Pope St Gregory the Great, Benedict found a narrow cave at a

place called Subiaco, where he spent three years in solitude and prayer.



After this period of preparation, Benedict gathered a number of disciples around him and organised them into a community. Already, at this stage, he was determined to reform the accepted way of monastic life in Italy. Above all, he was anxious to introduce regular observance and some form of community life. However, this first experiment met with such opposition that some of the monks tried to poison him. Undaunted, Benedict returned to his cave at Subiaco, and after some years succeeded in attracting to the place a number of young men who were prepared to follow his lead. He built twelve cells or small monasteries in the valley of the Anio, and drew up a Rule or way of life for the monks. Subiaco is thus the cradle of Benedictine monasticism.

Again trouble broke out, this time from a neighbouring priest, so that Benedict, along with some of his monks, was forced to move to a new and very beautiful site overlooking the plains of Campagna.

This place was called Monte Cassino. Here Benedict built a monastery in 529, and also wrote his famous *Rule* for monks. He remained in Monte Cassino until his death in 547. Monte Cassino can be considered the second cradle of Benedictine monasticism. Though the monastery has been destroyed no less than three times – the last time was in 1944 during World War Two – it has always risen from the ashes.



Up to St Benedict's time there was no such thing as Western monasticism. Whatever monasteries existed were adaptations, or imitations, of the way of life followed by the monks of the East. St Benedict can be said to have saved the monastic institution from decline by introducing a number of essential elements. First of all, he insisted on his monks taking a vow of stability. This meant in practice that they should reside and persevere in the monastery they had joined. He did not approve of those monks who were continually travelling from monastery to monastery. Secondly, he insisted that his monks – at

least those who could read – would spend some time, each day, in what he called '*Lectio divina*' (Holy Reading). Many of Benedict's fellow monks were ignorant of the Sacred Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church. Benedict set out a certain time each day for study and reflective reading.

Thirdly, Benedict believed that monks, especially younger ones, needed guidance and discipline. His *Rule* is not a severe one, but rather inspired by discretion and prudent moderation. He wished to arrange everything in the monastery so that the strong might have something to strive for, while the weak ones would not be driven away. The *Rule* is a wonderful harmony of wisdom, good sense and firmness. Modelling his monastery on a Roman villa, Benedict intended that each monastery be independent. It seems unlikely that he intended founding a religious Order as such, but rather a group of separate and autonomous houses. Thus, each monastery has its own traditions, customs and identity. No two Benedictine monasteries are alike in every detail. What gives them a unity is the *Rule*. Indeed, the real influence of St Benedict down the centuries was not so much due to the monasteries he founded, as to the *Rule* he wrote for monks. The *Rule* spread throughout all Europe, and so widespread was Benedictine monasticism during the Middle Ages, that the years 600 to 1200 are often called "The Benedictine Centuries".

Simple Profession of Br Emmanuel

On the Feast of All the Saints of Ireland, 6 November 2017, Br Emmanuel O'Hara made his first monastic profession. The day was deliberately chosen as Br Emmanuel is a historian who spent several years working on the diaspora of Irish monks in continental Europe during the middle ages.

Br Emmanuel comes from Galway and left Ireland when he was eighteen, living for the next sixteen years in Scotland, Norway, England, and Austria, pursuing his historical studies. He gained his PhD in History from the University of St Andrews when he was 27 and then moved to Vienna to work in the Austrian Academy of Sciences as a research fellow for the next seven years.



Br Emmanuel was joined here to celebrate his first profession by his mother, Nuala, family and friends. It is with great joy that the community welcomes a new member into our ranks. Br Emmanuel will work in the shop and

hospitality area with Br Pádraig, as well as continuing with his academic work and further monastic formation. He will also lead the icon chapel prayer sessions with the senior boys from the school.

The View from Down Under

Mark Patrick Hederman OSB

I was invited by the Marist Brothers in Australia to come for two months in May and June of this year 2017. It was the bicentenary of their foundation as an order and they were inviting a speaker to give what will become an annual Marist lecture from now on. Brother Mark O'Connor made me an offer I could not refuse. He would fly me there and back travelling business class and would also pay for my brother Terence [Ted] to come with me.

I couldn't say no and neither could Ted, even though he had a phobia about flying. In the past he could not be persuaded to fly even to England, which he visited now and then using the ferry. So, he had hardly ever been on a plane in his life. But the compelling motive was that his son, [also Ted] had gone to Australia on a working holiday in the year 2000. As a mechanic, his job was to fix cars and broken-down machinery. One car had a dead snake lodged in the engine. Having removed

the snake and put the car back on the road he turned to greet the grateful owner. Shannon Klenitz is now his wife and they have a 10 year old son called Mark. Ted junior could not leave Australia as he didn't have the papers required to allow him back into the country once he had departed. This meant that neither party had met for the last seventeen years.

We were all presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to end that unhappy situation. So, Ted and I travelled the 17,239 kilometres from Dublin to Melbourne, stopping for an hour in Dubai on the way. Travelling business class, you can sleep on a bed, have a Bloody Mary in Dubai, and champagne in your orange juice as you wake for breakfast. The Sauvignon Blanc 2016 at dinner 'has a nose of grapefruit, elderflower and freshly mown grass. The elegant palate is full of vibrancy, citrus and green apple notes with a steely finish.' Two movies and a read of Bill Bryson's *Down Under*, and you have arrived at the other end of the world 22 hours and 45 minutes later.

Think of our ancestors two hundred years ago, some of them convicts, arriving in a boat after five or six months at sea. There was nothing on the shore at Sydney harbour to greet them. Now it is a first world aquatic playground with more than 240 kilometres of shoreline, punctuated by unspoiled beaches, picturesque gardens and pockets of natural bush. Sydney is home

to some of Australia's biggest attractions, the Opera House and Harbour Bridge etc.



Twenty years from now the Dutch, always intrepid travellers, one of whom spotted Australia for the first time in 1606, plan to land on Mars. It's a one-way ticket but over two thousand, including one man from Meath, have already signed on. It will take nine months of travel in a spaceship but the chosen few who land on the red planet will, presumably, have an experience similar to those who landed in Australia when first it was discovered by Europeans. It didn't occur to them that they were intruders, that others had inhabited the land before them. In fact, this year 2017 Australians were celebrating the anniversary of fifty years since they first acknowledged that aboriginal people should be included in the census count. In other words, 1967 was the year they understood politically that indigenous Australians were actually people.

Oldest of the seven continents, some of Australia's hills are 4.4 billion years old. This means that they are inhabited by animals, insects, birds and



fish that exist nowhere else on the planet.

These

unique oddballs range from the cuddly to the creepy. Australia is home to the only egg-laying mammals, the platypus and the echidna, and you won't find



wombats, koalas or kangaroos anywhere else.

It is the largest island and the sixth largest country in the world. The Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef off the North-East coast, is 2,000 miles of living organisms long.



Of course, everything here is upside down. We left Ireland in early summer and arrived at our destination in early autumn. To have leaves sprouting as you leave and falling on arrival is weird. And you lose one day of your life somewhere along the way.



Architecturally, Melbourne could be Boston for all intents and purposes. It is a wealthy country and although it has been adopted by many different nationalities, English is the de facto language. About 22% of the population are registered Roman Catholics. It is probably the most urbanised country in the world. The majority live in cities which form a well-heeled ribbon around the edge. For geographical and climactic reasons, the settlers hugged the coastline and avoided the interior which is famous as a sanctuary for indigenous culture and religion. Uluru, or Ayer's Rock, is an iconic landmark and holy mountain at least 600 million years old. The whole experience of coming down under to ancient Australia is well described by Bill Bryson: 'Somewhere in the deep sediment of your being some long-dormant fragment of primordial

memory, some little severed tail of DNA, has twitched or stirred. It is a motion much too faint to be understood or interpreted, but somehow you feel certain that this large, brooding, hypnotic presence has an importance to you at the species level – and perhaps even at a sort of tadpole level – and that in some way your visit here is more than happenstance.'



Although the weather was warm we never swam, even on the very tempting ninety-mile beaches. Salt-water crocodiles, blue-ring octopuses, and box-jellyfish are not the most encouraging companions. No worries about sharks we were assured, a net has been placed at the mouth of the bay which prevents them from swimming in. A net between me and the sharks – no way! I still remember *Jaws!* The Sydney funnel-web spider, the Gwarder or Western-Brown snake, the frill-necked lizard, the red bellied black snake, centipedes and scorpions, make Australia home to ten of the most toxic killers on the planet. Not to speak of the 'mozzies' who, according to our hosts, had all disappeared for the winter – don't you believe it – we were pursued relentlessly as a particularly dainty pair of

lily-livered pin-cushions. Don't panic, as long as you stay locked in your hotel room and keep to the side-walk whenever you go out, wearing a space-suit and carrying a machine-gun, you'll be fine.

The tour of lectures took me on almost the same round of cities as the English Cricket Team currently defending the Ashes: Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. The Marist Brothers work mostly in education and Glenstal Abbey School has contact with St Joseph's College at Hunter's Hill, outside Sydney, known affectionately as 'Joeys.'



Founded in 1888, it has become the largest boarding school in Australia, with over 1,000 students, 536 of whom are boarders. Some of their more recent old boys have come to our school as excellent gap-students, and we have an exchange programme for transition year. They have a massive sporting tradition. Several alumni play for the Australian Rugby team, among them Kurtley Beale. Another distinguished past pupil is Philip Edward Wilson, Archbishop

of Adelaide, who invited me to stay with him during my visit to that beautiful city. I said Mass at Joeys on the feast of their patron, Marcellin Champagnat, with over 2,000 in attendance. They sang *Sub Tuum Praesidium* as a battlecry. They use it at football matches.

Marcellin Champagnat, founder of the Marists, was born the day the Bastille fell, in 1789, and the French Revolution began. The Church in France, irrevocably linked with the *Ancien Regime*, was stifled. Stendhal's novel, *Scarlet and Black* shows how the social ladders which upwardly mobile French people could climb if they were not born to the aristocracy were the army or the church. The Church fell with the nobility.

much to his surprise, because the executioner was paid sufficiently by the sovereign. Such an anecdote describes the position of the Church as an institution at that time. Rebuilding here would not be the work of soldiers fighting against heresy, as with the Jesuits, but the work of a mother [the Marists] with an 'unshakeable belief in her children.' Marcellin was inspired to found 'a new kind of church', one which would be more egalitarian than the one which had been levelled by the Revolution. He was one of the architects of a new church which only broke ground, so to say, with the Second Vatican Council. Marcellin was canonized by Pope John-Paul II in 1999, the year before Columba Marmion was beatified.

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Louis XVI asked to have a priest accompany him to the guillotine, but as any French priest would have been executed also, he was accompanied by the only English priest in Paris at the time, Mr Edgeworth, who later wrote an account of his adventure. We have in our library his copy of *The Imitation of Christ* which I like to think accompanied him with his royal companion to the guillotine. He had Irish connections and was related to the novelist Maria Edgeworth. He escaped with his life,

Reading the history of his Marist organization we can see that within a hundred years of his inspiration, the Church authorities in Rome reorganized it into a traditional shape, imposing upon it structures which they thought obvious and necessary. These entailed divisions between men and women, and between clerics, religious and lay people. What Marcellin envisaged two hundred years ago can serve as blueprint for a more contemporary design.

Australia has been a pioneer in this regard. Here they have recognized that in every Marist Province over 95% of the leadership and work of Marist projects is now in the hands of lay people, who feel a strong vocational call to be Marist. Such must surely be the way forward: some recognized structure whereby these admirable people can belong fully, and can exercise full co-responsibility for Marist life and mission. In this they can become a pioneering paradigm for the role of all laity in the Church the world over. Marists, as Pope Saint John Paul II puts it, should have 'an original and specific way' of making visible 'the presence of Mary' in the Church today.' To follow the example of Mary is to disappear whenever appropriate. In the Christian idiom disappearance does not mean failure or proof that something must have gone wrong. It has always been necessary so that the Spirit may come. 'I am impatient for that loss', James McAuley puts it, 'by which the spirit gains'. New wine needs new wineskins. 21st Century wineskins will not be three storeys high. The new Marist identity should be as leaven, as that element in the Church that loses itself in the batch in order to promote growth in the rest. Relinquishing all status and self-promotion, they would share the self-emptying of Jesus Christ who became as nothing, to serve the springtime of the world. This, among other more mundane things, I learned from my visit to Oz.

Glenstal Abbey Retreat Days 2018

Saturday January 13 March 2018: **'Mystagogy of the Forest', with Fr** **Anthony Keane**

In this programme we let our more ancient fellow creatures, our brothers and sisters of the forest share their secrets of life and co-existence, revealing to us the deep buried treasures of our hidden selves.

Of all the plants, the trees are the most balanced and upright, just as we stand erect among the animals. So, we can feel a connection with them, a haptic connaturality. They connect us gently with the past and with the future; their roots explore for us the underground, while their bare limbs on winter nights trace out for us the stars. The natives among them speak of Ireland's ancient past, while the exotics bring tales of different climes. All of them look to the sun and with limbs uplifted give praise to the Lord.

Who is this for? Glenstal is blessed with many beautiful trees. This day is for anyone who wants to experience the wonders of trees and what we can learn from them.

Saturday 24 February 2018: 'The Rule of Benedict - the oldest Organisational Manual in the world', with Fr Simon Sleeman

Benedict wrote his, 'little rule for beginners', as a guide to organisational excellence. He wanted to establish a way of life that would ensure people live creatively, lives in which their hearts would enlarge with love.

We all live or work in organisations. In these turbulent times, both for us as individuals and for the organisations in which we live and work, it is useful to reflect on Benedict's ideas - they have been in operation since 480!

As we know, there is a whole industry providing tools, frameworks and systems to help achieve organisational excellence. We will explore elements of Benedict's design for organisational excellence including his leadership style and his concepts of stability, conversion, and obedience. He gives us an alternative approach to achieving balance and stimulating creativity.

Who is this for? Anyone who lives or works in an organisation, business or otherwise and who is interested in seeing their company, school, home become more successful and dynamic in its day to day life.

Saturday March 24 2018 'Introducing the Magical World of the Honey Bee...'

"Every creature is a glittering, glistening, mirror of divinity." Hildegard of Bingen.

We are aware of the importance of bees for the future of our life on this planet. How much do we know about them?

We will look at the magical world of the honey bee. How they build in the dark and dance too - how they nurse younger bees and act as guards preventing any strays from getting into their hive. We will get to look at the art of keeping bees and whether this could be a suitable activity for you.

We will sample some of their products, honey, wax, propolis, royal jelly, the sting (at least look at it and how it works). Did you know that bee venom has been used for many years to treat arthritis!

Saturday 28th April 2018 "Is Messy O.K?" With Mark Patrick Hederman and Fr Simon Sleeman.

Many of us want everything neat and tidy in our lives. But life is messy and it is unlikely that we will ever get our lives ordered in the way we would like.

There is some evidence to suggest that in some areas of life, you will be more successful if you stop trying to

control everything and let things be a tad messy. And this can be true of our spiritual lives too. Carl J. Arico comments, in his book, *A Taste of Silence: Centering Prayer and the Contemplative Journey*, "the problem in trying to be human on our spiritual journey is our desire for neatness. We want everything to fit together. Although the spiritual journey has many characteristics, neatness is not one of them. Life isn't neat."

Tim Harford claims that, "A good job, a good building even a good relationship has openness and adaptability. But many jobs, buildings and relationships do not; they are monotonous and controlling. They sacrifice messy possibility for tidy predictability. Openness and adaptability are inherently messy."

We will reflect on how messy life can be and the need to get more comfortable with messiness. Mark Patrick Hederman will join us to look at how the author Iris Murdoch rejected the neatness of philosophy and adopted the novel as a more adequate tool to explore the messiness that is our life.

Who is this for? Anyone who experiences life as messy and would like some reassurance that this is OK!

Saturday May 19th 2018 'Pope Francis meets Robinson Crusoe' with Nóirín Ní Riain, PhD and Fr Simon Sleeman

Laudato Si is the first Encyclical (letter from the Pope to his bishops) on the environment. In this encyclical, Pope Francis urges us towards an "ecological conversion" - to listen to the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor". He is dismayed at the damage we are doing to our 'common home' and he doesn't hold back, "the earth, our home is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth."

He wants us to examine our lives and undergo a 'change of heart' and quickly. In the novel, *Friday or the Other Island*, by Michel Tournier, Robinson Crusoe undergoes such a change of heart - such an ecological conversion.

We will reflect on Pope Francis urgent message to all peoples in 'Laudato Si' - his desire that we wake up to the wonders of creation and the need for us to change the way we live and work on this planet, our fragile home - a home we share with so many other animals and plants. We will use Tournier's novel to explore how we might undergo the ecological conversion Pope Francis is proposing.

Who is this for? Open to all who are concerned with the state of our 'Common Home'.

Sunday June 10th Public Lecture with David Tacey (to be confirmed)

David Tacey is a recognised authority on psychoanalysis and spirituality. He has published several best-selling books on mental health and spirituality. He is an interdisciplinary scholar who works across several fields including, literary studies, psychoanalysis and religious studies.

Glenstal Abbey School News

Christmas Presents

The school community attended the Ceremony of Christmas Presents held in the Atrium during lunchtime on Tuesday December 5th.

The School Chaplain Fr Denis officiated at the brief ceremony in the Atrium and the Choir sang various Christmas carols. School vice-Captain



Tim O'Grady Walsh led the School in the Bidding Prayers. It was a wonderful occasion for the entire school where the students individually brought up presents. These will be donated to various deserving causes in the local Limerick area.

Conor Kearns (2011) Captains Oxford in Colours Game

Conor Kearns (2011) was selected as Captain the Oxford Rugby team which played Cambridge in the annual Colours Game in Twickenham on Thursday December 5th. On this occasion luck was not with them, but this was a huge honour for Conor and indeed for Glenstal where Conor always set the highest of standards.

Conor is the latest in a line of Glenstal Abbey students to make the short trip over the Irish Sea and don the Dark Blue shirt of Oxford where, alongside his rugby, he is reading for a Masters in Pharmacology having studied Molecular Medicine and Immunology at TCD.



Our Gap Students Return Home

Our Gap Students, Austin Rewell, Mitch Tanzer and Josh Smyth, are sadly returning home to Australia after their year with us in Glenstal.

We thank them for their outstanding contribution to the life of the school in so many different ways over the past year and we wish them well for the future.



Feast of the Immaculate Conception

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception was celebrated by the entire Glenstal community starting with Mass in the Abbey Church. All students, staff and monks attended.

Mass was followed by a brief ceremony in the School Atrium where the oldest monastic resident, Fr Phillip and the two youngest boys in the school, Luke Fitzgerald and Luke Fahy lit a candle symbolising the light of Christ in our lives.

A Hurling First

The Glenstal Abbey School Under 16.5 Squad have won the Munster Hurling Cup. This is a first for Glenstal!

