



GLENSTAL ABBEY  
CHRONICLE



Glenstal Abbey

Issue 3

Living Monastic  
Life in Glenstal  
Abbey  
1927-2018

GLENSTAL ABBEY  
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Spring/ Summer Edition  
2018



## Welcome

These past few months have been very eventful for the Glenstal Community. We are happy to share these stories with you in the third edition of the Glenstal Chronicle.

The long awaited success of our school senior rugby team in winning the Munster Senior Cup was a moment of particular joy for the wider Glenstal Community. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all involved in this great achievement.

With great joy we celebrated the Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour at Easter. A very large number of retreatants joined with us for the Triduum Liturgies. May the joy and peace of the Risen Saviour be with all of you and all those you hold dear. We wish you a restful holiday this summer season.

Brendan Coffey OSB  
Abbot of Glenstal

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## Glenstal Abbey School - Munster Champions 2018

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### Glenstal **Abbey** School Munster **Champions**

#### **Denis Hooper OSB**

Glenstal Abbey's 79-year wait for a first Munster Schools Senior Cup ended amid memorable scenes at Musgrave Park on Sunday 18 March.

Glenstal richly deserved this historic breakthrough with an outstanding second-half display against the biting cold wind, having turned around level at 3-3.

Scoring chances were few in the opening period, with CBC setting up the first points from a penalty after 27 minutes.

Glenstal drew level a couple of minutes from the interval when Ben Healy found the range from 30 metres.

While defences dominated the opening half, the game opened up considerably in the second, with the Glenstal team creating the greater opportunities.

A super run from Andrew Hogan produced Ben Healy's second penalty for 6-3 after 42 minutes. Caolan Dooley scored a fantastic try only eight minutes later, following Mark Fleming's storming run.



CBC hit back immediately which was converted from the touchline to reduce the lead to the minimum, 11-10.

Glenstal continued to press with ball in hand, most notably through Ronan Quinn, whose darting run led to the clinching second try, scored by Patrick Prendergast, on the hour. Critically, Ben Healy converted for 18-10.

It hardly mattered that Christians grabbed their own second try in the closing act, five minutes into injury-time. This was Glenstal's day.

The elation after the game was incredible with the players, coaches, past players, supporters, parents, monks, staff, Old Boys and lots of friends celebrating this historic win.

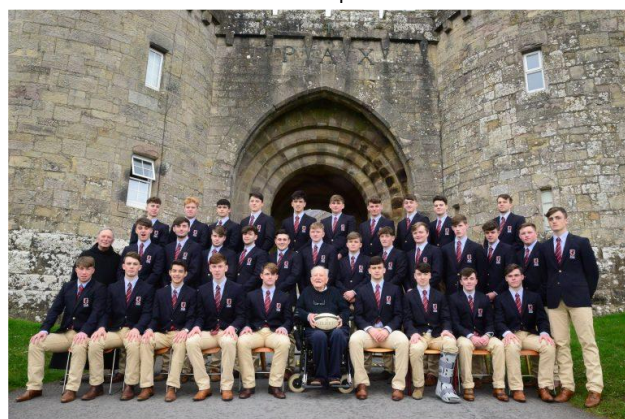
The 79 year wait has finally ended. The Munster Cup has come to Glenstal.

Huge credit to everyone involved: to the players; Sean Skehan and his coaching staff; to the Backroom team; to all those who played for Glenstal over the years who in their own way set the bar higher and higher and who made this win possible.

The spirit of Fr Peter Gilfedder, who introduced Rugby to Glenstal all those years ago was hovering over Independent Park that Sunday afternoon. Fr Peter's influence on Glenstal rugby will always remain with every team to put on the Glenstal jersey.



1970 – Munster Cup final Team



2017 – Munster Cup final Team

*GLENSTAL ABBEY: Aran Egan; Andrew Hogan, Harry Benner, Caolan Dooley, Ronan Quinn; Ben Healy (capt), Andrew Walsh; Harry Boland, George Downing,*

Patrick Prendergast; David Kelly, James Fitzgerald; Ronan Leahy, Mark Fleming, Conor Booth.

Subs: Ronan Hanley for Andrew Hogan injured, 58 mins, Mark Walsh for James Fitzgerald; Brian Leonard for Andrew Walsh, 63 mins; Scott McKeown for Harry Benner, 67 mins



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## Jubilee Celebration

### Celebrating 70 Years of Monastic Profession

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

Abbot Celestine celebrated his Platinum Jubilee (70 years of monastic profession) in the Abbey Church, surrounded by his community and a few members of his family, shortly before Christmas 2017.

In his homily for the occasion Abbot Brendan said,

*As you grow rich in years and as the body weakens, the words of the psalmist become your own words, "truly I have set my soul in silence and peace, as a weaned child in its mothers arms, even so is my soul". The monk*



*remains always youthful before the Lord, in the presence of the God of Jacob, for he is God with us, Emmanuel. To follow him is to be forever young...*

*Looking back over your long life, rich as it is in experiences and memories, that guiding hand of providence, the Digitus Dei, is surely present and can be felt by an open and attentive heart. The Lord to whom you have given your life remains always faithful and always vigilant. And so, on this day of jubilee, "May Christ live in your heart by faith and may you be planted in love and built on love." Ad multos annos!*

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## Fr Basil Forde RIP



Garrett James Davitt Forde was born in Dublin on 14 June 1934, the son of Gerald Forde and Kathleen Fleming. The inclusion of 'Davitt' among his Christian names honoured the fact that Michael Davitt (1846-1906), founder of the Irish National Land League, had been his father's godfather.

Garrett was educated by the Christian Brothers at O'Connell School in North Richmond Street, where his father was a teacher. After secondary school, he studied at Norwood Technical

College in London, following which he began a career in accounting. He married Madeleine Frances (Fran) Lee in London in September 1958 and together Garrett and Fran had four children, Caroline, Gerald, Garrett and Ciarán.

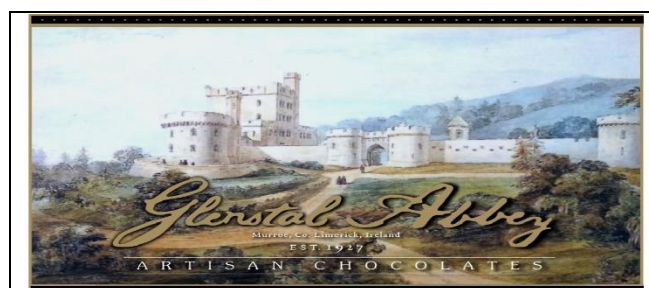
Back in Dublin, Garrett worked in several companies, including a short spell operating his own chemical packaging and auctioneering business. He spent sixteen years as an accountant and later as a director of Kinsealy Farms in north County Dublin, which later became part of Fyffes, the international fruit distribution company. Active in various professional and religious organisations he was a Grand Knight of the Knights of St Columbanus. He was an avid golfer, bridge player and horse racing follower, three passions that he was to maintain throughout his monastic life as well.

Sadly, Fran died in April 1986, and shortly afterwards, Garrett began exploring the possibility of a monastic vocation. He entered the novitiate at Glenstal Abbey in November 1987 and was given the name Basil. He made profession a year later, and following theological studies at the Milltown Institute in Dublin was ordained priest in April 1994. Fr Basil fulfilled various roles in the monastery, including teaching Business in the school and running horse-racing and golf outings for the boys. He also served as School Chaplain for a number of years. In later years he was a familiar face around the monastery

reception, welcoming visitors and bringing many of them to the Icon Chapel.

In declining health for several years, Fr Basil spent the last few years of his life in Millbrae Lodge Nursing Home in Newport, Co Tipperary, where he died peacefully just after 5.00 pm on January 24th 2018. As well as his monastic brethren, he is survived by his brother and two sisters, four children and seven grandchildren.

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



*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](mailto:chocolates@glenstal.com)  
[www.glenstal.org/shop](http://www.glenstal.org/shop)*

## Easter at Glenstal Abbey: March 2018 The Ceremonies of Holy Week and the Easter Retreat



This year the celebration of Holy Week began as usual on Palm Sunday morning with

the blessing of the palms and procession from the school atrium to the Abbey Church. The atmosphere was magical as the assembly made its way through the swirling mist and into the church. After



assembling in the Abbey Church, the community listened to the reading of

Saint Mark's account of the Passion before celebrating the liturgy of the Eucharist together.



On Holy Thursday the Community was joined by a large crowd of



retreatants and visitors for the celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. During the liturgy of the *Mandatum*, the Washing of the Feet, the Abbot washed the feet of six men and six women who were on retreat with us for Easter. This action recalls the action of



the Lord himself who rose from the table and washed the feet of his disciples. The assembly then brought the gifts to the altar and celebrated the Eucharist. After the celebration of the Eucharist the



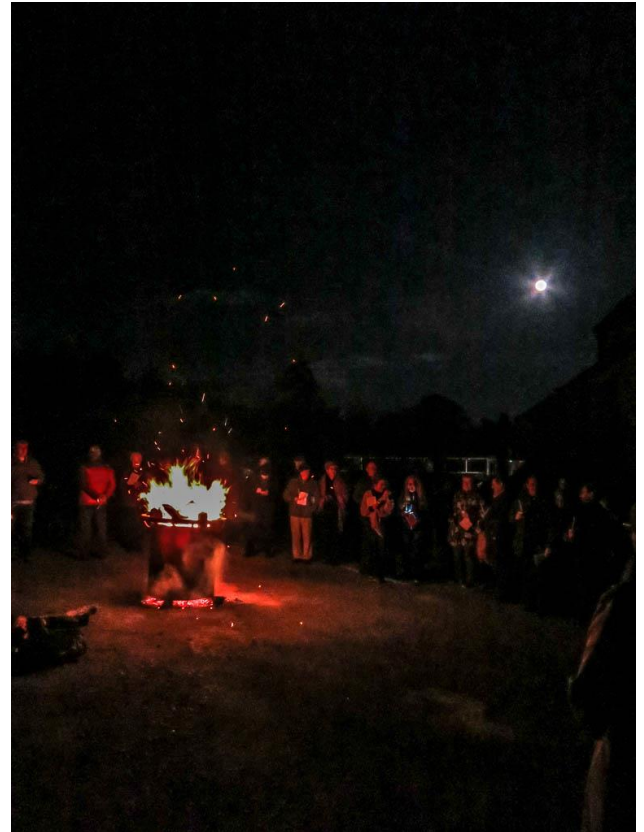
Blessed Sacrament was solemnly brought in procession to the altar of repose.



On Good Friday we celebrated the Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. St John's account of the Passion was sung by three cantors and after praying together the Good Friday Intercessions for the needs of the Church and the world the veneration of the Cross took place. The cross was carried in procession up the nave of the church,



halting three times so that it could be raised and venerated. The entire assembly had the opportunity to come forward and in a very personal moment venerate the wood of the cross on which hung the Saviour of the world. The Liturgy concluded with the service of Holy Communion.



On Holy Saturday we celebrated the Great Vigil. We began in darkness outside the church and after blessing the fire and preparing the paschal candle, the flame was brought to the candle



and it was lit. After the *Exsultet* was sung we listened to the readings of the Great Vigil, sang the Alleluia and the Gospel, blessed and were sprinkled with the water of baptism and celebrated together with great joy our Eucharist.





## Report from the Woods: March 2018

**Anthony Keane OSB**

This is the time of death, of things thrown down and seasonality. The Earth in withered widows' weeds mourns the long past year and awaits the new. In the Tropical Valley the leaves of tall banana plants, that once flourished as proud, green and graceful banners, bestrew the ground in pale tatters.. The



death of winter covers the land, relentless and magnificent in its remorseless thoroughness. Elsewhere, the *Deodaras*, or Indian Cedars, long for Spring: their evergreen coats have taken a battering and they wait for fresh shoots and renewal. However, Four Himalayan *Magnolia Cambellii*, each forty feet high, have seen off such winters before, and emerge from the snow and frost with swollen full flowering buds at the tip of each shoot ready to explode like supernovas in white and purple and red. These Magnolias owe

nothing to the honey bees, having evolved millions of years before them. Before their leaves appear they send



out their spectacular precocious flowers to invite beetles to slumber parties among the pink and white sheets, and as the beetles tumble around, and move to the next flower where the action is, pollination occurs.

Sorry Father Simon, nothing for your honey bees here; the system was designed before they appeared on the scene. However, these same bees are doing very well in the woods, pollinating the oak, gathering the toffee-like nectar from the Spanish chestnut and feeding on the flowers of Ivy well into the Winter. A tall and rather gaunt Californian Redwood stands South East of the Gymnasium. A massive growth of Ivy has already succeeded in climbing half way up. What do we make of all this profusion, as if Ivy were the evil snake in

the garden whispering neglect, Aquinas would aver that this woodland plant too has a soul. Further, it has an important role to play in the otherwise bare High Forest. Here, on this tall Redwood, it creates a well thronged tower block, a habitat where Woodpigeons nest and thousands of other creatures feed and forage.

Along the Front Avenue from the White Gate (black) to the Masters' Drive, where the storms of recent times have rent, smashed and uprooted oak trees, the colourful Jays have been busy sowing acorns where they spotted any gaps. This remarkable bird can stash up to eight acorns down its gullet before proceeding to the edge of the forest where it digs little holes and sows them. The German Jays are particularly methodical in their approach, sowing them in rows at one metre spacing, and offsetting the second row by half a metre. The Irish jays are a little more hit



and miss, though what they do sow is generally spot on. Some of their oak here grow at over two metres in a single year.

Meanwhile on the upper Back Avenue, the Pinetum continues to grow, we know not how. On the South side, (right hand side going down) the prickly *Taiwania cryptomerioides*, having been



struck and felled by a flying top of Silver Fir, humbly touches the earth, like a fallen warrior waiting to gather its strength. On the North side, deeper in the forest around the veteran and broken Sitka Spruce, bare cuttings of coastal Redwood, with faded foliage, begin to take root and show promise of this year's fresh shoots. These shoots were cut from the base of the trees, for Coastal Redwoods, like Monkey Puzzles, probably in response to rampaging Jurassic and Tertiary mega herbivores, produce basal shoots full of auxin and general vigour. Further down the Back Avenue, on a narrow strip of planting just beyond the car park, a pair of Japanese Umbrella Pine are beginning, at last, to feel at home. They used to live in these parts before the ice age, and they provided most of the amber found in the Baltic. Their needles are arranged in whorls around the shoots, like the spokes of an umbrella.

## Lent at the Abbey – Report on the Lenten Lecture Series

A series of talks was held on each Sunday of Lent in the Monastery Library. The talks focused on six of the Old Testament readings which are read each year at the Easter Vigil. From the earliest centuries of the Church's history, these readings have been specially chosen for the holiest night of the year. Homilies and commentaries for almost two millennia attest to the spiritual nourishment these readings provide to successive generations. They are, however, challenging: e.g. the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, or the Crossing of the Red Sea which leads to the drowning of many Egyptians. Nevertheless, they are deep reservoirs for contemplating the mystery of God's love - whose depths we can never reach - which culminates in the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus and which we celebrate in a special way at the Easter Vigil.

The talks were given by Dr Jessie Rogers, Fr Terence Crotty OP, Fr Columba, Fr Martin and Fr Luke. Francis Cousins' talk fell victim to the snow of Storm Emma but is to be rescheduled for September. The talks will be published next year, along with contributions for the remaining readings of the Vigil being prepared by Prof Susan Docherty, Sr Mary T. O'Brien PBVM, Sr Céline Mangan OP and Fr Thomas Esposito O Cist. The book, entitled *The Glenstal Companion to the Readings of the Easter Vigil*, edited

by Fr Martin and Fr Luke, will be published by Columba Press. Hopefully, it will bring the joy of Easter shared at the talks to a wider audience.

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## Visit of US Seminarians from St Paul's Seminary, Minnesota

A group of 16 US seminarians with Fr John Klockeman spent a weekend on retreat at Glenstal from January 12th-14th. The seminarians joined the community for prayer and daily Mass, and they also received inputs from several members of the community. They had two sessions on "Exploring Parables" with Fr Luke and talks on "St Columbanus" and "Praying with the Fathers" by Br Emmanuel and Br Jarek respectively.



Fr Cuthbert gave a well-received practical presentation on "Benedict's Rule - Opening the Toolbox" and Br Colmán gave a guided tour of the grounds and icon chapel. Br Cyprian (piano) and Br Jarek (violin) teamed up

to give a meditative concert to assist the seminarians in their reflection. The sixth years met with the seminarians for an informal get together on Saturday evening, from which both groups learnt much. This is the second year that we have run this retreat. A measure of its success is that St Paul's Seminary wish to come for a longer period next year.

## Visits to Glenstal

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, open daily from 10.00am until 5.00pm.



All visitors are welcome to join the Community at times of prayer though you may visit the Church at any time. We are happy to assist you in devising a day tailored to your specific needs. Some groups like to have a spiritual talk by a member of the community. Tea / Coffee / Scones and Lunch can also be provided. Contact us to discuss your requirements. To make a booking please email [events@glenstal.com](mailto: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.*

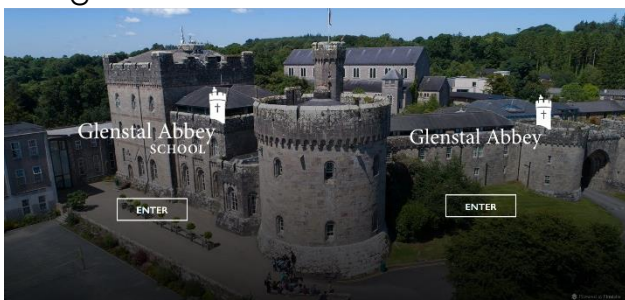
*The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) is available in the church on Saturdays between 3.00pm and 4.00pm.*

*At other times, please inquire at the Monastery Reception.*

## New Glenstal Website and Webcam

In the modern world it is very important to make use of social media and information technology to get your message across. The wider Glenstal Community have spent a great deal of time reflecting upon and increasing our presence in this area.

We have recently launched our new website for both the monastery and school [www.glenstal.com](http://www.glenstal.com). We share a portal page from where the visitor can navigate.



The new website is very interactive, with lots of images, videos and easy to locate information for the visitor. The website provides up to date details and information on both the school and the monastery, including courses and events being held at Glenstal.

It is also possible to make bookings for courses, read the Sunday Homily, check the events calendar, or book into the Guesthouse. The online shop is also available via the website [www.glenstalshop.com](http://www.glenstalshop.com) providing access to books, gifts and much more.

The monastery and school also have their respective Facebook and Twitter accounts which help keep you up to date.

The real success story of recent months, however, has been the church webcam. There has been a lot of positive reaction to this service from right around the world. It is now possible to tune in to all our liturgies, live, or to play back a recorded liturgy later. Always a popular feature since we began the service last Christmas, we saw a huge surge in activity during Holy Week for our liturgies. The number of views each day of the Triduum took us by surprise:

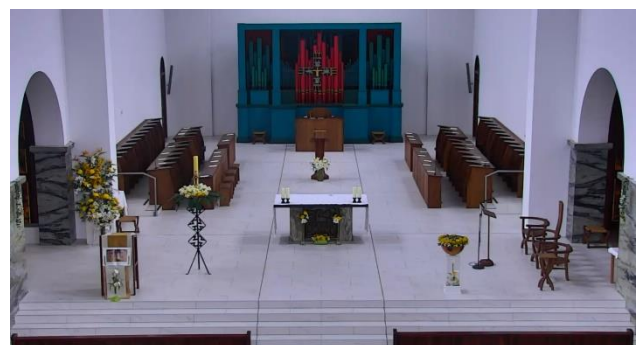
Holy Thursday: 2,992 views

Good Friday: 3,745 views

Holy Saturday: 3,796 views

Easter Sunday: 2,282 views

The webcam service is of particular benefit to the elderly and housebound and those who are no longer able to get to their local church. It is our privilege that so many have



decided to join us in prayer each day and we give thanks to God for this blessing.

## The Easter Moon

**Brendan Coffey OSB**

You may have noticed the beautiful Easter Moon on Holy Saturday night this year. It was particularly clear here in Glenstal. Do you know why the moon is so important for the date of Easter? The answer is far more complicated than you might think!

*“Fourteenth of March, I think it was” he said. “Fifteenth” said March Hare. “Sixteenth” said Dormouse. “Write that down” the King said to the Jury; and the Jury eagerly wrote down all the three dates on their slates, and then added them up, and reduced the answer to shillings and pence. (Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland)*

The issue concerned who stole the tarts, but it sounds suspiciously like a debate over the date of Easter.

Throughout history the dispute over the date of Easter has been treated as a theological question and this, coupled with firm resistance to mathematicians and astronomers making meaningful contributions, compounded the difficulty in finding a satisfactory resolution. The majority of Christians today follow the calendar which is put in front of them without ever fully understanding how or why we celebrate the most important of our feasts and why that celebration occurs on this day rather than that.

Although the mathematics is off-putting, a basic knowledge of the Easter question can help open our eyes to an important aspect of the paschal mystery. For many the fact that Christians around the world cannot agree to celebrate Easter on the same day is scandalous. Is this understanding justified? Was there ever a time when Christians celebrated Easter on the same day? Why do we celebrate on different days? Does celebrating on a different day represent a different belief, or a different ritual practice, or something else?



Easter, the most important of our feasts, was traditionally linked to the celebration of the Jewish feast of Passover. Passover gradually took on a new meaning for the early Church. During the days of Passover the early Christians celebrated Christ as their paschal lamb. The gospels record how the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus took place in close proximity to the Jewish Passover.

Originally, the date of Easter was linked to the date of the vernal equinox and the age of the moon and this was



established by direct observation. The problem with this system was that this date could vary with longitude. Another difficulty was the insertion of leap days into the calendar, which caused the equinox to fluctuate around the actual event. Because of these difficulties direct astronomical observation was abandoned and replaced by cycles which were used to predict the astronomical events. This theoretically permitted the calculation of a date for Easter which would be valid worldwide.

The Council of Nicea in 325 put an end to the controversy with its decree that Easter was to be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon of spring. Constantine insisted, after Nicea, that a common date be followed for the celebration of Easter. Nicea did not provide us with a table to follow in calculating the Easter date, but it did prescribe a formula. Both Alexandria and Rome developed the custom of

sending out letters announcing the date of Easter.

Easter Sunday, the anniversary of the Resurrection, was to be celebrated on the first Sunday which came after the 14th day of the paschal moon (the days being counted from the appearance of the new moon). The paschal moon was the first whose 14th day fell on or after the vernal equinox.

The Council of Nicea gave the basic ground rules which Christians of all traditions still follow, but Nicea did not provide the mechanics for determining this Easter date. Finding an appropriate computation system has been a fundamental problem down through history. The fact that even today Christians of different traditions follow different calendars means that they calculate the date of Easter differently. In Western Christianity, the date of Easter is based on the Gregorian calendar and can fall between March 22<sup>nd</sup> and April

25<sup>th</sup>. The Eastern Christian tradition bases its calculations of Orthodox Easter on the Julian calendar, which differs from the Gregorian calendar by 13 days. This results in a possible date range of April 4<sup>th</sup> to May 8<sup>th</sup>. In 2018 Western Christians celebrated Easter Sunday on April 1<sup>st</sup>, while Eastern Christians celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> April. However, both Western and Eastern churches agree that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox, but always after Passover.



## Glenstal Abbey Shop

**Glenstal Abbey Shop is located in the Reception area of the monastery, selling a wide selection of books, cards, CDs, religious goods and gifts**

We ship worldwide and our new online shop is now live

[www.glenstalshop.com](http://www.glenstalshop.com)



- ◆ **Books** (*specializing in Scripture, Theology, Liturgy, Monastic History and Spirituality*)
- ◆ **Works by Glenstal monks**
- ◆ **Glenstal Abbey Chocolates**
- ◆ **Gregorian Chant & Organ Music CDs**
- ◆ **Hand-bound journals made to order in Glenstal Abbey Book Bindery**
- ◆ **Glenstal Abbey School merchandise**
- ◆ **Jewellery**
- ◆ **Icons and religious art**
- ◆ **Selection of cards**
- ◆ **Religious Gifts**





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## Visit of the Escolania de Montserrat

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On the evening of the sixteenth of April 2018 the Escolania de Montserrat began their first tour of Ireland with a concert in the Abbey Church here in Glenstal. The visit to Ireland was arranged by the Spanish Embassy and the Ambassador visited Glenstal last year to make all the necessary arrangements.

In 1025 the great Abbey of our order at Montserrat was founded. The Escolania, the famous Choir School for boys, was founded during the thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries. From that

time until today the Benedictine monks of Montserrat and the Escolania have celebrated the liturgy at Montserrat with the numerous pilgrims who have climbed the mountain to pray before the Black Madonna, the patron of Catalonia.

The choir sang beautifully before a packed church. They stayed two nights in Glenstal and also gave a concert in Limerick at the Redemptorists' church before leaving for Dublin and a concert at the Pro-Cathedral. From there they returned to Catalonia. It was a great

privilege for all of us to be part of this historic visit.



## Forty Years with the Bees

**Simon Sleeman OSB**

I found my first swarm of bees at home when I was eight. They were hanging from a branch near the house. I knew nothing about bees but somehow, I knew a swarm was valuable. I had no way of catching it, but I had a younger brother, Paddy.



Duncan, my second brother and I, decided that Paddy was the person to catch the bees. We promised to make him bee-proof and split the profits, if

profits there were. After some negotiation, agreement was reached. We glued old fertiliser bags together to make a bee suit, leaving a small opening, covered with muslin, so he could see what he was doing. We hoped he was bee proof.

Next we needed something to put the bees in. Butter, in those days, came in wooden boxes. And we had a butter box. Upturned, it would fit round the swarm, a mass of 50,000 bees.

Paddy, looking like someone from outer space, walked in to the swarm and held the box under the mass of bees. Meanwhile, Duncan and I stood our ground, a good twenty feet away, with long poles ready to dislodge the bees. We had jackets but we were not bee proof.

Strike one and part of the swarm was dislodged into the box - strike two and the bees were everywhere. Duncan and I moved back. Paddy stood there, holding the box of bees. He didn't flinch and placed the box down on the stand nearby. There were bees all



over Paddy, but most were in the box and ready for market. Bees secured, we

led Paddy off to a barrel of water in the yard, and urged him to get in - we knew the bees would drown once he went under water. He got in and he was safe.

We later sold the bees to John Ryan Purcell, a family friend and split the profits!

My second encounter with bees was while studying in UCD and staying in Balnagowan, the university hostel Glenstal had in Dublin. Fr Philip was in charge and had two beehives in the well-kept kitchen garden. My room looked out over the garden and the bees.

Periodically, a gentleman wearing a suit and tie came and opened the hives with his bare hands. I looked on

and her husband were fastidious eaters. They never confused their bodies by eating protein and carbohydrate together - so no fish and chips. They ate bread and honey for breakfast, but no fry. They ate so much honey that they imported it by the barrel. They served us tea, honey and brown bread and we did the deal and Br Eugene and I began to load the six cedar wood hives and then she surprised us, 'take the lot', she said....and that included many more hives, an extractor, feeders, bee suit....everything needed to run an apiary!

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**I established an apiary and attended a  
beekeeping course in Gormanston College to  
learn about the management of bees.**

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from my window and was impressed. His name was Jack O'Brien, a retired guard. I watched him. There was something about the way he worked with bees that put them at ease. He got the odd sting, but it never bothered him. He was my first teacher.

I was smitten and determined to get my own hives (or rather hives for the monastery, as we own nothing- they are not 'my hives' rather they are 'our hives'). On my next visit to Glenstal I met with Abbot Augustine and agreed to get six hives. Br Eugene knew an American woman living in Killaloe who was moving back to the USA and selling her equipment. We went to investigate. She

Subsequently I thought about that barrel of honey - Glenstal honey sells in the shop like the proverbial hot cakes - but because of the vicissitudes of the weather I can never produce enough to supply the monks, not to mind the shop. I heard it suggested that if you add a little holy water to a barrel of water it all becomes holy. I wondered could the same principle apply. If I imported a barrel of New Zealand honey and added a jar of Glenstal honey...could I sell it all as Glenstal honey? Even my conscience couldn't cope with that possible sleight of hand.

I established an apiary and attended a beekeeping course in

Gormanston College to learn about the management of bees. I learnt about the life cycle of bees, the difficulties of swarming, the need to inspect colonies regularly to try and stop swarming and began to formulate my own management techniques. I became a proactive, interventionist beekeeper and rather aggressive in my techniques.

As I get older I realise the bees are happier and probably do better with less management. They self-manage with skills developed over the last thirty five million years. My mother was a more natural beekeeper - she never interfered with them - she just let them get on with it and produced more honey than I did with all my management ideas. She simply opened the hive, removed a comb, left it to drain on the side board and put it back to be refilled. Simple and efficient. And the bees seemed happier and more productive.

At Gormanston I met another beekeeper who has remained a lifelong friend – Jim Duffy. Jim was a well-established beekeeper from County Offaly and a ‘countryside entrepreneur’ - if it grew, he grew it. He made his own wine and mead and used his coffin as a drinks cabinet!

Some years later I went to Ampleforth Abbey to study theology and took the opportunity to visit the most famous beekeeper in the world, Br Adam in Buckfast. He was already in his eighties, but still spent a full day (5.30 am start) with his bees. He had little time for

talking about his theories but let me work, with his wonderful assistant Peter Grace. Peter knew Br Adam’s systems and taught me all he knew.

It was not long after this, that my bees contracted a notifiable disease, American Foul Brood (the equivalent of TB in cattle). The Department of Agriculture informed me they would have to go - their people came and poured petrol into the hives and the fumes killed the bees. The hives were saved, but had to be scorched.

I was reluctant to start again. Later that summer I was giving a biology grind when there was a knock at the door. Someone was looking for me ...something to do with bees. His name was Joe. I peered under the arch and there was a battered, white Hiace van and beside it a dishevelled individual with a week’s stubble but with a warm and open face. I introduced myself. He told me he was a beekeeper over in Bridgetown. He had heard about my bees. Then he uttered the unforgettable words, ‘no beekeeper should be without bees...I have two hives in the back of the van for you’. I could not believe it - someone had heard my bees were dead and brought me two of his precious colonies! I had no choice but to start up again. I later discovered Joe was



a bachelor and has since died. I pray for him.

Beekeeping has provided years of entertainment and fascination - it is never boring and you never know it all. I have eight hives with some bees in them. I am deliberately vague, as the bees have come through the winter very poorly and I am not sure how many colonies will survive.

I love to go out and watch the entrance of the hives, and marvel at the industry of the bees as they fly in out, often laden with brightly coloured pollen on their legs. Pollen is the fish of their fish and chips - the protein - and is in very short supply this year.

And the great thing about bees is that you don't have to look after them



24/7. You don't need to find a minder when you are off on holiday

as you do for your dog or the cat.

And the other great thing about bees is that they are respectful and careful of their environment. I like the point made by Saint Francis de Sales when he says; *"The bee collects honey from flowers in such a way as to do the least damage or destruction to them and he leaves them whole, undamaged and fresh, just as he found them."*

## The Coat of Arms of Glenstal Abbey

**Henry O'Shea OSB**

On 26th March 1982, Mr Donal Begley, the then Chief Herald of Ireland, acting on behalf of the Government of Ireland, granted a coat-of-arms to Glenstal Abbey. The description of the arms in heraldic language, i.e. the blazon, reads, 'Per pale argent and sable a chevron between in the dexter chief a raven's head erased facing to the sinister, in sinister chief a dove's head erased facing to the dexter and in base a lily all counterchanged, with the motto *In Labore Requies.*' A curiosity of heraldic description is that it describes the shield from the point of view of the one holding the shield. Thus, left become right (dexter) and right becomes left (sinister).



As can be seen in the illustration this rather arcane description means: a shield divided vertically down the

centre, the left side coloured silver (argent) and the right side coloured black (sable), these being the traditional Benedictine colours. On the shield is placed an inverted 'V' known as a chevron. This is divided so that the part of the chevron on the silver side of the shield is shown in black and that on the black side is shown in white. In the top left-hand corner is a raven's head to represent St Benedict according to the legend that tells how a raven saved the saint's life by snatching a piece of poisoned bread before the saint could eat it. In the top right-hand corner of the shield is a white dove representing St Columba or Colmcille, joint patron of the monastery. At the bottom of the shield is a divided lily. The white part of the lily represents St Joseph, also a patron of Glenstal. The black side of the lily represents The Blessed Virgin Mary, referring to the chant *Nigra sum sed Formosa*, - I am black but beautiful - from the Song of Songs 1:5 frequently used in liturgies of Our Lady. The motto, *In Labore Requies* - In labour you give rest - is taken from the Sequence of the Mass for the Solemnity of Pentecost and was chosen by Abbot Celestine Cullen, abbot at the time of the grant.

The arms are used in three forms. The full arms are surmounted by a tasselled hat characteristic of Church heraldry. In this case the hat is black and has six tassels on either side, representing the abbatial dignity. Behind the shield is the crozier, also a sign of abbatial status. As in all depictions of the abbatial

crozier, it is shown with a veil (*sudarium*) or sweat-cloth. One theory is that since abbots were not originally entitled to wear gloves like a bishop, the *sudarium* was used to protect the shaft of the crozier. The motto is placed under the arms.



arms, without any additional decoration. The arms are used in their various versions on such things as the official seal of the monastery, on liturgical bindings and



booklets, monastery writing-paper and in other situations where an heraldic emblem is appropriate. The most frequently seen use of the arms is in the heraldic banner flown from the tower of the castle on solemn occasions and in the seasons of Christmas and Easter.

Two simpler forms of the arms are used: one is the shield with the crozier behind it and the other, the simple shield, i.e. the essential part of the coat-of-

arms, without any additional decoration. The arms are used in their various versions on such things as the official seal of the monastery, on liturgical bindings and

## Radiating Peace

Throughout 2017 - our 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary - we invited friends of the Abbey, parents, and Old Boys to provide their advice and feedback on the proposed development initiatives for both the Abbey and the School. The responses received were hugely positive and encouraging.

### **Radiating Peace:**

Building on our four cornerstones - prayer, education, work, and hospitality - we wish to welcome people to our monastery and provide an opportunity to explore and learn about our Benedictine values, so that they might bring this vision with them into their homes and communities.

The Monastic Community is at the heart of **Radiating Peace** and have three key priorities to achieve over the next five years:

1. Completion of the Monastery Church renewal programme
2. Establishment of Glenstal **Studium**
3. Creation of a fund for the education of the younger monks and the care of the older brethren

**Renewing our Monastery Church** is key as it is the dynamic centre of every Benedictine Abbey. With the help of many of our friends we have completed over three-quarters of the project to-

date. It is our hope to finish these vital works to provide an appropriate and comfortable liturgical experience for those who visit and participate in the daily office.



**The Studium initiative** is about providing Benedictine formation for our own novices and juniors, as well as opening these lectures, seminars, and courses to those in formation in other European monastic communities. We also hope to offer these sessions to a general audience so that the values of the Rule of Benedict become a leaven in our society today.

**The creation of endowment funds** will enable us to provide appropriate educational opportunities for the younger monastic generation and provide care for the elderly members of our community who have devoted their lives to the service of God in this monastery.

### **Continuing the Tradition of Excellence**

A Benedictine Ethos insists on the acceptance of every element within the person and the acceptance of each member of the community.

We are essentially rhythmic creatures and educational life needs rhythm and balance between mind, body, and spirit to reveal each child's unique genius and nurture the development of a complete person.

The new vision for our school is a physical interpretation of the philosophy of balance and harmony between mind, body, and spirit:

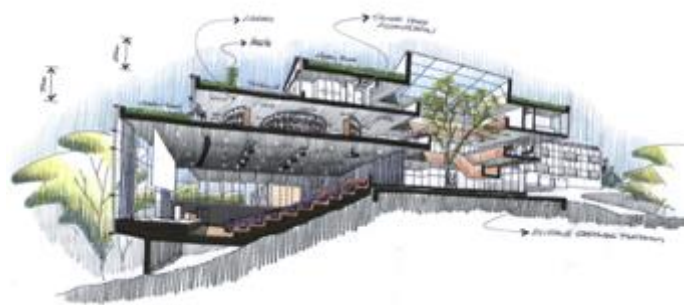
**Phase I, Mind:** (New Academic Wing - completed) Our belief in the human and personal element of education was architecturally crafted to ensure small-class sizes. We promote independent thinking and foster a life-long love of learning

**Phase II, Body:** Building mental and physical resilience is a key skill that young boys require in today's dynamic and demanding world. We provide a wide variety of sports to encourage inclusion, participation, and develop a 'sport-for-life' attitude in each of our students



*Proposed New Multi-Disciplinary Sports Complex*

**Phase III, Spirit:** New and enhanced Arts and Humanities programmes coupled with new facilities (*concept below*) will nurture and develop strong, imaginative, and creative minds, providing opportunities for personal expression and growth, both culturally and spiritually.



*Concept of the Arts and Humanities Building with Theatre, Library, Music Rooms, and Senior Accommodation.*

**Achieving Our Aims – Together:**  
We have the capacity to cover our general operating costs, but any major work in the past has always required funding from private donations. This time is no different. The scale of our aspirations for Glenstal Abbey means that additional financial resources will be required if we are to proceed with these plans.

We have begun an ambitious fundraising initiative and in time we will be requesting support from the wider Glenstal community including Friends, parents (past and present) and Old Boys.

*If you would like to learn more, please contact our development office on:*

Email: [development@glenstal.com](mailto:development@glenstal.com) Phone: +353 61 621090.