



GLENSTAL ABBEY
CHRONICLE

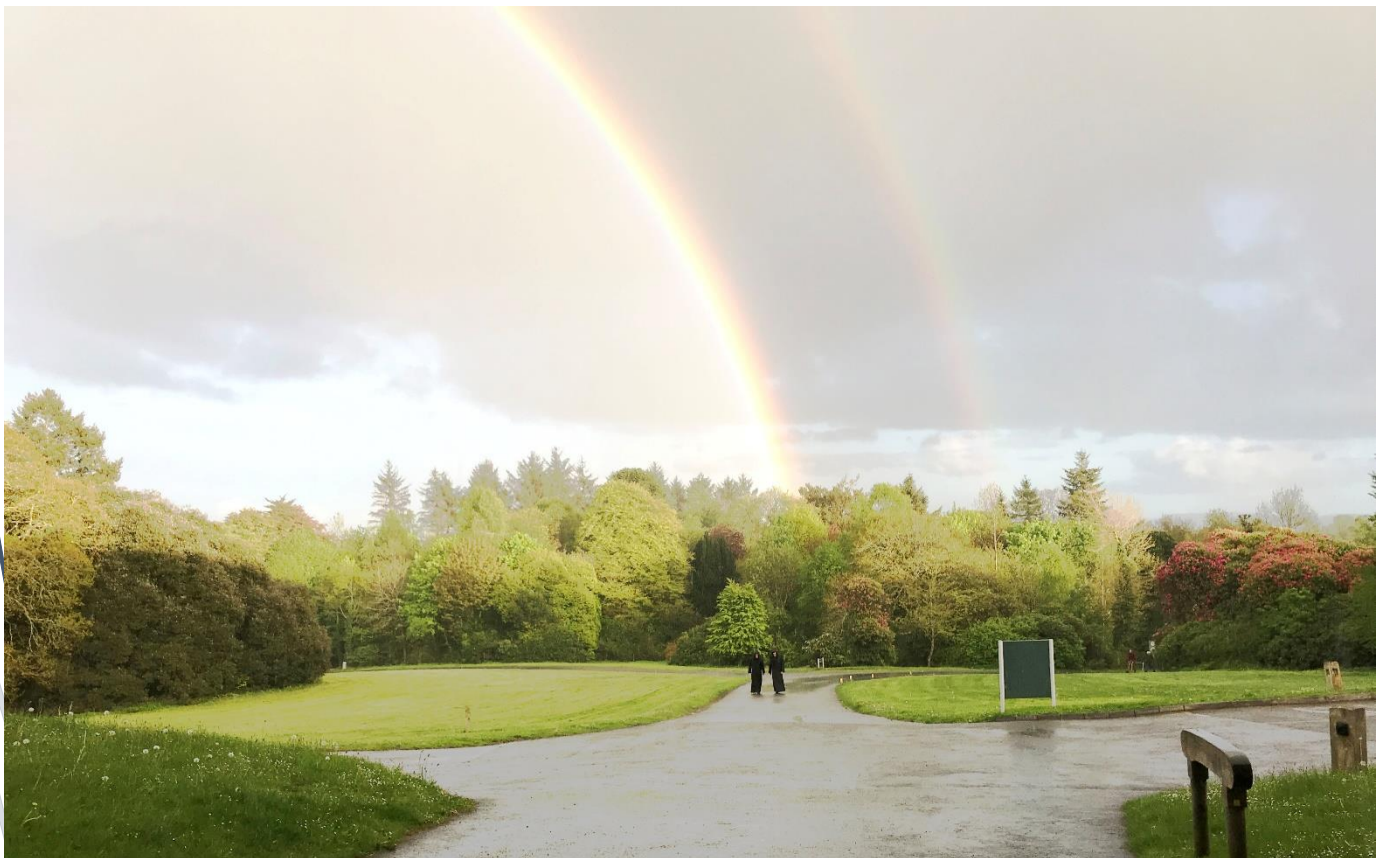


Glenstal Abbey

Issue 4

Living Monastic
Life in Glenstal
Abbey
1927-2018

GLENSTAL ABBEY
Murroe, Co. Limerick
www.glenstal.org
www.glenstal.com
(061) 621000



Autumn/Winter Edition
2018



Welcome

At the end of this calendar year, as we approach the great celebration of the birth of the Saviour, we are happy to share these stories with you in the fourth edition of the Glenstal Chronicle.

Life continues to be very busy here in Glenstal. These past few months have seen great developments in the monastery's plans and in the Studium and Retreat Programme. There have been a number of very interesting successes too in the school and you can read about them in these pages.

It is a great joy for me, at this time of the year, to have the opportunity to wish you all every blessing in this holy season and every happiness in the New Year.

Brendan Coffey OSB
Abbot of Glenstal

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Community Retreat 2018



Community Retreat

This year the Community Retreat took place on the first week in August and was preached by Fr Brian McKay O.Carm.

The week of retreat is an opportunity each year for the monastic community to spend time together as a community and reflect on the talks and

conferences given by the retreat director. It is a valuable time for us as a community and we close the monastic guesthouse so as to have the place more or less to ourselves.

It is a time for us to pause and take stock and recharge the batteries for another year. At the end of the retreat we renew our monastic vows during our Conventual Mass as we give thanks to God for the gift of our monastic vocation.

Sat May 18th Glenstal Abbey

Retreat Day for Home-Carers

Rest, Reflect & Renew your Spirit



Information / Booking

**Glenstal Abbey
Murroe
Co Limerick**

**Phone |
061 621005**

**E-mail |
events@glenstal.com**

A one-day retreat for those caring for a

Relative in the Home ...exploring...

... altered dynamics in family relationships

... wellbeing of carers & those cared for

... wisdom from St Benedict's Rule

9am Registration Monastery Reception

5pm Finish (option of Vespers @6pm)

€30 Tea & Coffee breaks / Lunch included

Report from the General Chapter

Henry O'Shea OSB

While almost every Benedictine monastery of men is autonomous under its own abbot (or conventual prior), these monasteries, whether autonomous or on their way to autonomy, all belong to a monastic Congregation. A Congregation is a loose grouping of monasteries formed for the purposes of general oversight of monastic observance and the conducting of elections of the superiors mentioned above. The head of a Congregation is usually known as the Abbot President, an official with very limited powers, but who functions as a centre of unity, without impinging on the autonomy of any house. There are 19 Congregations in all, some regionally based, some nationally and some with houses in several continents. Glenstal belongs to the Congregation of the Annunciation, formerly known as the Belgian Congregation, which in 2017 had 527 monks and 21 nuns in 27 monasteries situated from California in the West to India in the East, present in many European countries and in three African countries.

Every four years the Congregation meets in a General Chapter. The role of the Chapter is stated in No. 124 of the Constitutions of the Congregation: "The

General Chapter exercises within the Congregation the supreme legislative and judiciary powers in all matters concerning the progress and reform of monastic life. It also deals with matters concerning the common good, as well as relations between monasteries." From 4th to 11th September, 2018, the Chapter met in the Abbey of St Scholastica at Subiaco in Italy. While this monastery does not belong to our



Congregation, Subiaco has a special place in Benedictine life. Further up the road from St Scholastica is a much smaller monastery which is built into the side of the hill around the actual

cave, the *Sacro Speco*, where St Benedict lived as a hermit in the late 5th century before being persuaded to become abbot of a nearby community.

This year, the participants at the Chapter included most of the superiors of the autonomous houses accompanied by an elected delegate from each house. Glenstal was represented at the Chapter by Abbot Brendan, Father William, as First Assistant to the Abbot President and member of the Council of the Congregation and by Fr Henry, Secretary General of the Congregation and elected delegate of

the community. There were also some invited guests, one a Belgian prioress who gave a daily reflection on the Rule of St Benedict, and a second prioress who spoke about the difficulties and opportunities of ageing communities. A new feature of the Chapter was the presence, from Ireland, of a professional facilitator, a lady who organized and moderated group- and plenary- sessions on the spiritual theme of the Chapter, "You are all Brothers – Fraternal Life in Community". The languages of the Chapter were French, English and Polish and simultaneous translation was provided.

The Liturgy of the Hours was sung in Latin using chant-books prepared by Prior Senan of Glenstal and Mass was celebrated in the three languages of the Chapter.

Among the official 'juridical' business was the granting of autonomy to a monastery of men in Rwanda and the granting of affiliation to a community of Ukrainian sisters, an Anglican community of men in England and a community of monks in Peru. Affiliation is a general spiritual and fraternal association with the Congregation but does not involve full membership.

The main juridical act of this year's Chapter was the election of a new Abbot President in succession to the outgoing Abbot President, Abbot Ansgar Schmidt of Trier in Germany, who had resigned after holding the office for 14 years. On Sunday 10th September,

the Chapter elected as his successor, Dom Maksymilian Nawara, of the Abbey of the Nativity of Our Lady at Lubin in Poland. Since Dom Maksymilian was not already an abbot, he received the abbatial blessing in the Sacro Speco on



Monday 11th September at the hands of Abbot Bernard Lorent, Abbot of Maredsous, which can be considered the mother-house of the Congregation. With the new Abbot President, a new Council of the Congregation

was constituted in a process involving election and appointment. Abbot Brendan was appointed First Assistant.

A Chapter is not all about juridical matters or spirituality and a social element was added by a guided afternoon excursion to the ancient papal town of Anagni, associated with many popes but primarily with Pope Boniface VIII who reigned from 1294 to 1303. The participants sang Vespers in the cathedral, most famous for its crypt, the 13th century frescoes of which are almost completely intact and retain their original vivid colours.

CARING *for* SELF
in the
SERVICE *of* OTHERS

Sat March 2nd or 9th
GLENSTAL ABBEY



Rest, Reflect & Renew your Spirit

A one-day retreat for clinical & support staff in

Long Term Care Facilities

reflecting on; ... the staff & resident relationship

... wellbeing of staff

...wisdom from St Benedict's Rule

9am Registration Monastery Reception

5pm Finish (option of Vespers @6pm)

€30 Tea & Coffee breaks / Lunch included

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Barrington's Bridge: 1818-2018

Brian Murphy OSB

The inscription on the Bridge, well known to all who pass by, conveys some basic facts about its construction. The Name "M. Barrington" tells us the name of the person who authorised it; the name "Doyle" tells us the name of the man who constructed it; and the figures "1818" tell us the year of its building, the month was August.

Before addressing the reasons why Matthew Barrington may have wanted to build the bridge, it is helpful to recount the precise information that we have of James Doyle who built it; and thanks to an unpublished article by Patrick McDonnell, a substantial body of information is available. James Doyle opened his iron foundry in Clare Street, Limerick, in 1806 and was one of the first foundries in Ireland to use the recently invented cupola furnace. There he made stoves, kitchen ranges, fire grates, kettles and many other items; but McDonnell concluded that "the most notable product of the foundry was the Iron Bridge known as Barrington's Bridge".

The bridge itself is just over 16 metres long (c. 53 feet), and 9 curved cast iron pipes of just over 30cms (c.1 foot) support the road above. It was, as McDonnell observes. "The first iron road

bridge to be turned out by an Irish foundry". For this reason alone it is most appropriate that the 200 years anniversary of the bridge should be commemorated. In passing it should be noticed that the Ha'penny Bridge in Dublin, between Merchants Arch and the former McGrath Brother's Tea emporium, with which it is often compared, was opened in May 1816, but was cast in Shropshire in England, and was only for pedestrians. Other iron foundries were opened in Limerick at this time, for instance that of Thomas Newsome, in 1818, and Philip Doyle – the Hibernian Foundry – in 1817. The story of similar businesses and other commercial and social enterprises has been wonderfully told by the Limerick Civic Trust in a two volume series "Made in Limerick" (2003) which provides an indispensable backdrop to the political history of Limerick and Ireland. The volumes also provide an acute reminder that while magnificent structures like this bridge were being erected there was terrible poverty and deprivation among the working classes and farm labourers. In 1831, well before the great Hunger / Famine, it was recorded that famine-like conditions existed in Limerick and William Corbett, the English traveller, recorded in 1834 that he found in the city "more misery than any I could have believed existed in the whole world".

The name "M. Barrington" inscribed on the bridge leads us to turn from the practical aspects of the bridge to the personal considerations that led

to its building. The simple name “M. Barrington” and not “Sir Matthew Barrington” is, in itself, significant: Matthew’s father, Joseph, did not receive the title “Sir Joseph” Barrington until 8th September 1831, soon after the building of Barrington’s Hospital. A reminder that the family was not always

Roman Catholic and the marriage took place in a Catholic Church, as did the baptism of Matthew. Catholics were debarred from many professions until the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and, at some time, Matthew must have become a member of the Church of Ireland.



prosperous; quite the opposite. Matthew was born in 1788, the first child of Joseph Barrington and Mary Bagott and the eldest of eight children. His father was a pewterer and his mother's family had a boot shop; both very ordinary businesses. Moreover, his mother was a

Matthew enrolled at Kings Inns, from 1804 to 1809; he qualified as a solicitor and practised in Dublin (13 Fitzwilliam Street) and Limerick (George Street). In January 1814, he married Charlotte Hartigan, the daughter of the late Dr William Hartigan, who had a

marriage dowry of £2,000 together with some land in Limerick. Later in the year he was appointed crown Solicitor for Munster with a salary of £15,000 a year. It was against this background that he could contemplate the creation of a great estate in East Limerick, and the building of this bridge was an integral part of these plans. It has been suggested that the land in his wife's dowry may have prompted his move to the barony of Connelloe in West Limerick. It is also possible that his

in 1818, Barrington's Bridge was built and the family moved into recently built Clonkeen House;

father's mother, Jane Canter of Ballyvarra, who had land in the Barrington's Bridge area, may have been the cause of his interest in the region. Matthew's father, Joseph, was responsible for the building of a flour mill here in the 1830s. Whatever about the reasons for Matthew Barrington's focus on this bridge and the land beyond, he began taking practical steps in 1818 to acquire property.

Between August and November, 1818, Matthew Barrington was in regular correspondence with Bartholomew Stritch, the solicitor acting for the female branch of the Carbery family, in order to lease some of their property. This extensive property, with a centre at Cappercullen House, extended over many townlands. On 17th August, 1818,

he asked Stritch "May I ask you to find out the legatees and make a bargain for me with them?" After some exchange of views, Matthew Barrington agreed, on 11 December 1818, to lease some of the Carbery property including the townlands of Cappercullen, Garranbane, Glenstal, Meentolla and several more. Cappercullen had 322 acres; Garranbane, 1,035 acres and Glenstal 1,015 acres. It was in order to implement his plans for that area that, in 1818, Barrington's Bridge was built and the family moved into recently built Clonkeen House; to be more precise it acted as a second home. In 1819, Matthew's father, Joseph, was made a Freeman of Limerick City; an award that may be related to the building of the bridge.

Although questions remain as to the exact motivation for Matthew Barrington to acquire the land once the lease was agreed, he immediately began to develop it. In 1819, his wife Charlotte made a coloured copy of the county map which showed the townlands, the houses of the gentry and ancient monuments. One can imagine Matthew Barrington studying this map as he took the first steps to develop his project. These first steps were directed to the planting of trees. A "Memorandum as to Planting, 1822 – 1850", in the Abbey Archive, records tree planting for these years. It was no ordinary tree planting; 66,000 hardwood trees were planted in 1822/23; 50,000 hardwood trees in 1823/24; 36,000 in the year 1824/25. Trees

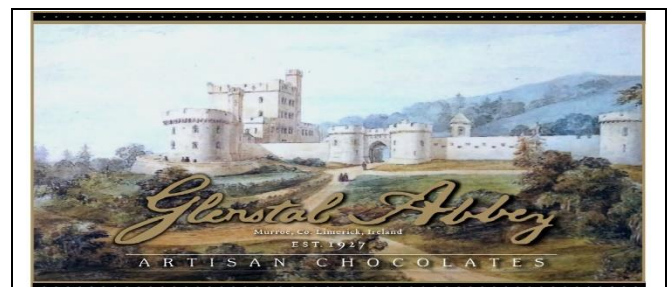
for nurseries were also planted. Most of these trees were provided by an agreement with Arthur Baylor of Fermoy. In 1829, about 130,000 trees were bought from O'Keefe's of Dublin, and, at the end of that year, 600 rhododendrons were bought from Thrings of Liverpool. Tree planting on a similar, remarkable scale continued for many more years. More research is needed on the tree planting industry at this time, but it is clear that, even before the building of Glenstal Castle, Barrington's Bridge would have provided vital access for these thousands of trees. Plans for building a castle home could only begin after further land transactions had been finalised.

In 1831 Matthew Barrington completed his purchase of the Carbery estate for approximately £30,000 and began planning his castle home. Before engaging on this enterprise he had completed the building of Barrington's Hospital for the poor of Limerick in 1830, which had led to a knighthood for his father. In 1836 the plans of William Bardwell were selected for the castle and a building programme began but it was not until both Charlotte (1858) and Matthew (1861) had died that it was completed in the townland of Garranbane. Matthew preferred the name Glenstal for his castle, but to this day, An Post recognises the old townland designations; and all official mail is addressed for example to "Fr Abbot, Garranbane", - not "Glenstal Abbey". Although the stone for the

castle did not come over this bridge – it was brought from Moher by a specially constructed railway line which was pulled by horses - the bridge clearly facilitated many other practical and social movements, and did so for many years.

For all of these reasons it is good to commemorate the building of the bridge 200 years ago and to give thanks to the Barrington family.

As a postscript, it should be noted that, on 12th August 2018, hundreds of people, young and old, gathered around to mark the bi-centenary of its construction.



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

LUKE *the* ARTIST



Early tradition states that Saint Luke was a painter. Many works are attributed to him in both Eastern and Western Christianity. Luke's writings, namely his Gospel and Acts are known for the vividness of their imagery. Male and female characters brought to life in the narrative have inspired countless artists across various media.

5 SATURDAYS

exploring selected scriptural passages, as they have been interpreted through

icons, art, drama, liturgy, music and cinema.

- Feb 2** | Jesus in God's House
- March 30** | Unexpected Salvation
- April 13** | Entry into Jerusalem
- May 11** | Christ's Rendezvous at Emmaus
- June 8** | Alive with the Flame of the Spirit

Each day will begin with a short exposition of the narrative artistry of a selected scriptural text. This will be followed by a series of talks by a wide panel of speakers. The talks will be illustrated by slide presentations of the paintings, and there will be opportunities to view the icons and to experience the chants and music.

€70 Lunch, Teas & Coffees incl. | Registration 9am | Finish 5pm | Vespers 6pm

Information & Booking

| events@glenstal.com

| www.glenstal.org

| 061 621005

Courses and Events at Glenstal

Luke Macnamara OSB

The Lenten Sunday lectures series entitled “Journeying with God’s People in the Exodus” will follow the story of the Hebrews in the Book of Exodus and explore how we in turn might journey from oppression to freedom in our lives. The series will examine some of life’s great questions and challenges, and how God invites us to respond. The talks will be held on each Sunday of Lent, except for St Patrick’s weekend: March 10th, 24th, 31st and April 7th and 14th.

There will also be a course entitled “Luke the Artist” which will run from February to June. Early tradition states that Saint Luke was a painter. Many works are attributed to him in both Eastern and Western Christianity. Luke’s writings, namely his Gospel and Acts are known for the vividness of their imagery. Male and female characters brought to life in the narrative have inspired countless artists across various media. This series of five Saturdays will explore selected scriptural passages, as they have been interpreted through icons, art, drama, liturgy, music and cinema. Each day will begin with a short exposition of the narrative artistry of a selected scriptural text. This will be followed by a series of talks by a wide panel of speakers. The talks will be

illustrated by slide presentations of the paintings, and there will be opportunities to view the icons and to experience the chants and music. The dates of the days are as follows: February 2nd, March 30th, April 13th, May 11th and June 8th.

There will be two-day long courses on March 2nd and 9th for all those who work in long term residential care institutions entitled “Caring for the Self in the Caring for Others”. The courses will examine the staff – resident relationship and focus particularly on staff wellbeing. Drawing upon the Benedictine Rule’s wisdom of living in community, the course will suggest ways of promoting self-care and also care of one another for the staff. This results in increased personal fulfilment and job satisfaction, and in a better care environment for residents.

There will also be a Home Carers’ retreat on May 18th for those who care for relatives in the home. The course will examine the altered dynamic to relationships that illness or infirmity brings and the consequent challenges. There is a necessary reconfiguration of the stories of these relationships for both the carers and those cared for. Many principles in the Rule of Benedict are of great value in promoting healthy relationships even in the face of significant illness, and in promoting the wellbeing of both carers and those cared for.

Lastly there will be a young adults reflection day (20-35 years old) entitled "Come and See" on February 9th. The day is for men and women to explore the great questions of life and faith: Who am I? Where am I? Who might I become? How might I get there? The questions will be opened up through parables and Gospel stories.

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.

Our website for both the monastery and school can be found at www.glenstal.com.

We continue to receive a lot of positive reaction to our church webcam 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. 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.

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.

Glenstal Studium

The Glenstal Studium continued earlier this year with a very interesting week of studies directed by Fr Columba Stewart OSB. Fr Columba is an American Benedictine monk, scholar, and the executive director of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library in Collegeville, Minnesota. His principal scholarly contributions have been in the field of monastic studies—both Benedictine and Eastern Christian.



Participants on this Monastic Studies Course came from various monastic houses across Ireland and England. A second course will be held shortly.



Reflection Day for Young Adults

Luke Macnamara OSB

On Saturday 15th September a group of university students and recent graduates from university, including some former students of Glenstal Abbey School, attended a reflection day at Glenstal. The reflection day was entitled: "Who do you seek? Come and See." There were a variety of inputs, beginning with a session entitled "Taking Time". This allowed everyone to simply rest and taste the peace of place that Glenstal offers. There followed a short presentation on the importance of stories to understanding life. When people wish to befriend others, they do not provide a list of facts. Instead, everyone speaks of their personal story, their likes and dislikes and what makes them tick. The sharing of stories is key to living well and to personal growth and transformation. The Bible is a library of personal stories, which allow for such transformative sharing. For its readers, the Bible can become a laboratory for learning about living well with oneself, with others and with God. The group put this reading into practice, taking together the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1-12). Some powerful insights came from the life experiences of many of the participants.

There was free time for rest, meditation and also chats. Although the group was very diverse, with some having faced each other on opposite teams at matches, many good discussions were held over coffee. There was much productive sharing of stories and much learning and mutual encouragement from each other's life experiences. This was the first day of its kind and as much an exploration for Br Padraig, Br Justin and Fr Luke as for those who came. A second "Come and See" day is planned for Saturday 9th February 2019.

For further information please contact Luke Macnamara.
Email: luke@glenstal.com



100 Years Young

Fr Placid recently celebrated his 100th birthday with a Mass and celebratory lunch with friends, family and the monastic community.



Abbot Brendan in his homily reminded the congregation of some of the significant moments in his life which spans a century.

"In your own long life, Fr Placid, you have witnessed, sometimes at first hand, the high and low points of the last century. You were born in the final days of World War I in 1918. Benedict XV was

Pope, Ireland was in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising and Europe was in deep shock at the sheer scale of the slaughter the World War had brought. At that time Glenstal had not yet been founded as a monastery.

Over the course of the last century you have seen nine different Popes, four

flying boat to Foynes and eventually back to Glenstal. It sounds more like a chapter from the life of James Bond than a page from the life of a monk.

In that time, however, you were also blessed to receive your ordination as a priest in Subiaco and celebrate your first Mass in the *Sacro Speco*, the cave where St Benedict began his life as a hermit. By happy coincidence we celebrate today the hermit St Bruno, founder of the Grande Chartreuse. In your long life you have worked on scholarly and liturgical publications, been heavily involved in the Liturgical and Ecumenical Conferences here and been a faithful and constant presence in our monastic choir. Newman and his works have always held a special resonance for you, and you have generously shared your insights into his works with others. You have held many roles in this community, including that of superior, and over your long monastic life made many contacts and friendships with visitors to the Abbey which endure to this day."



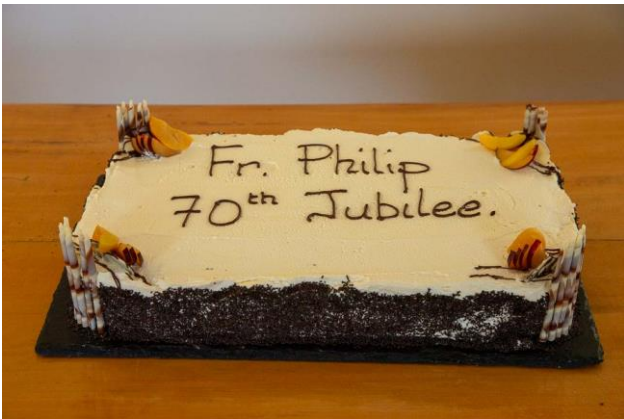
English monarchs, all nine Irish Presidents and eighteen US Presidents. As a student in Rome you experienced at first hand the Second World War, having to make your way home through occupied Italy into Vichy France, then over the Pyrenees and into Spain, from there to Portugal where you were able to get a



Jubilee – Fr Philip

Fr Philip celebrated his Platinum jubilee on the feast of Sts Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, September 29th, in the company of his friends and the community.

In his homily Abbot Brendan reflected on Fr Philip's varied monastic career. "In the past seventy years you have lived here as a monk in many and varied ways: as farmer, bursar, monastery minister for transport, teacher



and guidance counsellor in Newport, as well as some years in our house in Balnagowan, to name but a few. It has been a busy and productive seventy years, but monastic life is not about our jobs, it's about ourselves."

Seventy years of monastic life is a major milestone to celebrate. "Fr Philip, when you made your profession seventy years ago you took a step which was irrevocable. The gift you made on that day was final, to God and to this Community. You had no idea back then of what lay in the future, no idea of what

difficulties and joys awaited you. All you knew was that you wanted to give yourself to God in this Community in generosity. There is a recklessness about the choice each of us made to become a monk here. To throw in our lot in this community and in this place. It must be so, because love is reckless and there is no going back!

All of us who commit ourselves to this life of service and love will be only too aware of our own limitations and our failings. But we take courage from the words of Jesus to those whom he has called "You did not choose me. No, I chose you and I commissioned you to go



out and bear fruit". Today we give thanks with you, Fr Philip, not for the fact that seventy years have passed since you made your profession, rather, we give thanks for your service as a monk and for the times when your monastic life has been a sign of God's loving presence in the lives of your brothers and sisters and we wish you peace, health and happiness in the years to come."

Jubilee – Br Cyprian

Br Cyprian also celebrated his Silver Jubilee recently. On that occasion of celebration the abbot spoke as follows:

Devotees of William Shakespeare will no doubt recognise the following lines from the Merchant of Venice, "The man that hath no music in himself, Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds, Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils; The motions of his spirit are dull as night, And his affections dark as Erebus. Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music."

These famous lines are spoken by one of the minor characters in the play, Lorenzo. Jessica, the daughter of the famous Shylock, has eloped with Lorenzo in Act V scene 1, and they are sitting in the moonlight delighting in each other's company. Musicians arrive on stage and Jessica remarks to Lorenzo that she is never happy when she hears

sweet music and that instead it makes her sad. Lorenzo, in a moment of inspiration, explains to her that the sadness she feels is the longing of her soul for the things of heaven. The music has the power to draw this out of the human soul.

The wisdom of ages past believed that the musical harmony of the spheres, the planets, the moon and the sun, was a manifestation of the universal order which God created in heaven and on earth. And so Lorenzo goes on to remind



Jessica that music affects even the wild beasts, and that nothing in nature is immune to its ability to govern emotion. And so he says "Mark the music."

Br Cyprian, we are marking with you here today your silver jubilee of

monastic profession, twenty five years of monastic life in this community. For you and your monastic life, the music which daily adorns our celebration of the liturgy is your harmony and your passion. It is the longing which animates your life as a monk and a gift you generously share with our community. It is your way to God in a life lived under the Rule. In your reading and study you have grappled with the questions it poses us and in your writings attempted to share those theological reflections. It is not for nothing that *mousikos*, in Greek, means a scholar, or a man of letters.

The Gospel today asked us, "when the Son of Man comes, will he find any faith on earth?" What music will he find in our hearts, in our soul? Will he find the longing of Jessica for the things of heaven and will he find that there have been a sufficient number of Lorenzos to keep reminding us of the importance of all of this?

Br Cyprian, after twenty five years of your monastic life in our community we are happy to be gathered here with you today around the altar of God in the presence of the court of heaven to give thanks to God for what has been and for the gift of music from which we have all been able to benefit. That we are able to partake in this act of worship with you daily is indeed our privilege.

Ad multos annos.

Compostela Walk: The Pilgrims' Progress of Transition Year

Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB

We assembled with the monks in the monastery reception at Glenstal early on the morning of Tuesday, 11 September where Fr Simon gave us the traditional pilgrims' blessing and we got the first stamp on our Compostela passport or credencial. We will present this at the cathedral at Santiago and if we've managed to walk the entire distance, receive the Compostela, the official certificate indicating that we've completed the pilgrimage and are *bona fide* pilgrims. After an uneventful flight we arrived in Santiago airport and were bussed to our first refugio at Triacastella, our hearts sinking during the two-hour journey at the realization that the next time we saw these places again it would be on foot.

Next day we were on the road before sunrise with 26 kilometres to clock up. After breakfast and prayers we headed out. Our route followed a river valley and initially was not too challenging, though this would change. It followed a series of dirt tracks and country lanes. We passed through several derelict or semi-derelict hamlets and villages in which a dilapidated church stood at the centre of ruined

houses. Farming techniques were those of a bygone age with ancient cowbyres and wooden cattle stalls and farmers using sickles and scythes in the field.

After about two hours we caught sight of the monastery of San Bento at Samos, before making our descent into the town where we invaded the first shop we encountered in our desperate search for sugar and carbohydrates. We visited the monastery but despite pulling every 'we are Benedictines too' card failed to gain access to either the church or the cloister.

At around midday, Junior Cert exam results started pinging on our mobiles and we took a break to process these and to ring home. By and large people were very happy with how things had gone and that helped keep spirits up and we walked the final kilometres into Sarria in the heat.

Next morning came around too quickly and after breakfast and prayers we set off from Sarria to travel the 26 kilometres to Portomarin. Sadly, we picked up our first blister casualty who had to sit out this leg of the walk. The landscape was in many ways similar to what we'd encountered the day before, including beautiful forestry with low hanging shady trees and a variety of flora and fauna. We made good progress in the cool of the morning passing through several hamlets and villages en route.

After lunch we walked along the broad valley of the River Mino and in the early afternoon the town of Portomarin came into sight. The town itself was built in 1962 to replace a village that had been flooded when the River Mino was dammed and it is approached by a huge modern bridge and a flight of steep steps. Our refugio, the Pons Minae, was a modern building situated right beside the bridge.

After supper we went shopping for the next day's supplies and then did a tour of the town. Even though it was built in 1962 it has a magnificent twelfth-century Romanesque church that was transported from the original flooded village. It belonged to the Knights Hospitaller and looked like a cross between a castle and a chapel, which we learned was a feature of the their churches. We learned who and what the military orders of the Knights Hospitaller and Knights Templar were, how they emerged in the 12th century as Europe faced pressure from the forces of Islam and how their lifestyle combined that of monks and soldiers.

The next day began with a stretch and limbering session with Cathal Reid. This was a great idea and we felt the benefit of it immediately, although the casualty rate had now risen to three. After prayers and announcements we sang Happy Birthday for Charlie and Ben and headed out of Portomarin on the next leg of the journey. The early part of the journey was mostly uphill and along

a main roadway but eventually we veered off and began following country paths and laneways again.

The Galician countryside is very striking and with its stone walls and green hedgerows parts of it are reminiscent of Ireland.

We hit Palas del Rey at around 4.00 in the afternoon and immediately freshened up and started doing laundry. Later in the evening some of the group attempted unsuccessfully to use the municipal swimming pool while some others attended the pilgrims' Mass in the town's beautiful Romanesque church.

Unforeseen circumstances meant that we got off to a later start next morning, which was a pity, as at 29 kilometres, the day's hike was going to be our longest and we had really wanted to avoid the heat.

After two hours or so we took a break at a wayside café. The garden surrounding it was full of images of St James and other religious figures and it provided a useful occasion on which to learn more about him and about the pilgrimage. St James' connection with Spain is largely legendary and contains elements that are incredible. Basically, the story began to circulate in the ninth century that he was the first person to preach the Gospel in Galicia. He had a vision of the Virgin Mary who told him to go back to Jerusalem to meet a martyr's death. This apparition occurred on top of a pillar and the image of Santa Maria

Pilar is a common one in Spanish religious art just as the name Pilar is a very common one for Galician and Spanish women. After his execution by decapitation the legend continues, his disciples took his body to the Mediterranean where they placed his stone coffin in the water. Miraculously, it floated and sailed across the sea, through the straits of Gibraltar and came ashore in Galicia where it remained hidden for 800 years. During the voyage, shellfish became attached to the sarcophagus, which is why the scallop shell is his symbol. Eventually, a hermit dreamed that his body was buried in a place lit by a large number of stars. This 'field of stars' was Compostela and the discovery of his relics began the pilgrimage that millions of people have undertaken since and in which we now join. For this reason St James is normally depicted as a pilgrim.

Our hostel in Aruza was very basic but we were too tired to have any complaints. It being Saturday, we were rounded up with varying degrees of enthusiasm to attend the Vigil Mass for Sunday. The church was packed, mostly with older people and there was an excellent choir who sang in harmony without any musical accompaniment. Mostly the hymns were in Spanish but a few were in a very strange language and only the choir seemed to know them. We found out afterwards that this was Gallego, the ancient Celtic language of Galicia that sounded a bit like Donegal Irish.

On Sunday the hike took us to Pedrouzo, only 20 kilometres away and we left early in the morning with the intention of getting there by lunch. Breakfast was much better than the day before and we left better fortified and in high spirits at the prospect of the journey's end.

We reached our destination at lunch and once again discovered that the municipal pool was closed. The hostel itself was a modern building and we spent the afternoon catching up on sleep or playing cards until suppertime.

The prospect of the journey's end put a spring in our step next morning and after a very good breakfast we set off on the last leg of the journey. The number of pilgrims was now a flood and the international mix was very evident, again all in good form and urging each other on for the last leg of the journey.

Eventually we reached Monte Gozo, the hill overlooking Santiago that is known as the Mount of Joy as it is from here that pilgrims catch the first glimpse of their goal: the Cathedral at Compostella and the shrine of St James. The last five kilometres took us through the suburbs of the city and then through the winding streets of the old town with its magnificent medieval and Baroque buildings. We approached the Cathedral on its north side and paused to allow us to regroup and to send out scouting parties to see what we'd do next. We were standing beside an arched passageway and entertained

throughout by a young man playing the Galician bagpipes, not dissimilar to the Irish uilleann pipes and with a similar distinctive sound.



On entering the square we were overwhelmed by the sheer scale and beauty of the Cathedral and the surrounding buildings. Opposite it is the Town Hall while the University of Salamanca and the 1492 pilgrims' hospice flank it on either side.

There are two elements to visiting the shrine. First you go up a short flight of stairs behind the High Altar and rest your hands on the large reliquary bust or statue of St James that forms the centrepiece of the altar. This symbolises the handing over to him of whatever care, concern or intention that the pilgrim has carried to Compostella. Descending, one then enters the crypt underneath the altar area and visits the saint's tomb, where his relics are displayed in a silver shrine. Whatever about the historical accuracy of this, it is impossible not to be moved by the thought that one's prayers are being joined to those of countless millions who have made this same journey over the

last millennium and more. This is holy ground.

Our main goal was to attend the pilgrim Mass in honour of St James at noon. As this is very popular with pilgrims we'd been advised to get there early to ensure a seat, it was just as well as the Cathedral was packed. The Glenstal Abbey School group was announced among the English-speaking pilgrims at the start of Mass but most of us missed it. At the end of Mass we had the thrill of seeing the Botafumeiro in action. This is a huge thurible or incense burner that hangs from the roof of the Cathedral



and if a pilgrim group requests, it is used to burn incense in honour of God and St James. A team of eight men operate it and when it's in full flight it swings in an arc of 68 metres trailing clouds of incense and flames in its wake. In the Middle Ages it was used to mask the smell of the pilgrims, many of whom had been walking and sleeping in the same set of clothes for several months. It certainly was effective as a deodorizer and we are thinking about getting one for the dorm.

Clothing of Br Justin

On the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 14th, the monastic community had the joy of receiving a new novice into the community.



Tom Robinson (24 and from North Yorkshire), who chose the name Br Justin at his clothing, was accepted into the novitiate by Abbot Brendan during the Office of Vespers.

The novitiate is a yearlong period of discernment when a candidate for monastic life lives with the monastic community as a novice, taking part in community life, learning about the monastic tradition and the life of this community and discerning with the community if he is called to this way of life. In the novitiate Br Justin will have classes from members of the community to assist him in his monastic journey.

As Br Justin begins his novitiate year we wish him every blessing and our prayerful support and encouragement. May God who has begun this good work bring it to fulfilment.

Glenstal Liturgical Conference

We were delighted to hold the second Glenstal Liturgical Conference from November 9th–11th. The conference was well attended and this year the theme was “In Search of the Holy”.



The speakers at the conference this year included Carol Harrison (Christ Church, Oxford), who spoke on Music and the Conversion of the Affections in Augustine's *Confessions*; Jonathan Tiernan (Director of ACE – Ireland, Notre Dame); John O’Keeffe (Maynooth); Patrick Hederman (Glenstal); Oswald McBride (St Benet’s Hall, Oxford) and Jessie Rogers (Maynooth). Papers were also given by Columba McCann (Glenstal), Johanna Wiese (Dinklage), Henry O’Shea (Glenstal), Luke Macnamara (Glenstal) and Martin Browne (Glenstal). On Friday evening a piano and violin concert was given by Jarek Kurek (violin) and Cyprian Love (piano) which was greatly appreciated.

This year during the conference the very first Glenstal Liturgical Conference Award was presented to Fr Patrick Jones for a life of dedicated service to the study, promotion and pastoral celebration of the liturgy in Ireland. Fr Jones had for many years been the director of the National Centre for Liturgy.



The participants at the conference also shared in the celebration of the Divine Office and the daily Eucharist with the monastic community. This lived experience of the liturgy is an important feature of the Liturgical Conference at Glenstal.

Kilimanjaro Expedition

Kilimanjaro (5,896m) is not only Africa's highest point, it is the highest free standing mountain in the world. A huge crater known as Kibo, over 2km wide, with several distinct cones, the highest being Uhuru Peak, make up the mountain. The name Kilimanjaro is believed to come from Swahili; *Kilima* meaning 'hill or little mountain' and *Njaro* meaning 'white or shining'.



This was the destination of our intrepid group of explorers from Glenstal Abbey, who spent from June 9th to 22nd making their way to the summit.



School News

Since our last edition of the Chronicle there have been a number of remarkable successes in the school. Some of these are listed here.



In July 2018 Lucas Bachmann (2nd from left) was part of the Irish team at 59th International Mathematical Olympiad in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where he won Ireland's 10th-ever Bronze medal in the competition since Ireland's first participation in 1988. Five hundred and ninety four contestants from one hundred and seven countries competed in this year's event.



One of our former students, Arthur Lanigan O'Keefe has sensationally

secured a gold medal at the World Cup in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The 26-year-old Kilkenny native, who came eighth at the 2016 Rio Olympics, enjoyed an excellent start and was in first place after the fencing and swimming events. He retained his lead after the horse riding and held his nerve during the final event, the laser-run, to claim a memorable victory. In triumphing, Lanigan-O'Keeffe finished ahead of South Korea's Woongate Jun (silver) and France's Pierre Dejardin (bronze).



Joe Gilbride and John Fisher were invited to participate in the National Maths and Science Olympiad, as they were high achievers in both Maths and Science in the Junior Certificate Examinations of 2018.

The National Maths and Science Olympiad competitions select the students who will qualify to represent Ireland in the International Junior Science Olympiad in Botswana and the European Union Science Olympiad in Portugal. This is a very big honour for the school.



Joe Gilbride, pictured here with Fr Simon, went on to win the gold medal at the Irish Junior Science Olympiad. Joe will represent Ireland in Botswana in December at the International Junior Science Olympiad.

We also wish to congratulate some of our former students;



William McAleese, Arthur Moore, David Kelly and Zac Thompson, who won Entrance Scholarships to UCD.



**TRINITY
COLLEGE
DUBLIN**

Darren Halpenny and George Downing, who won Exhibitions to Trinity College Dublin. Ronan Quinn and George Downing, who won Sports Scholarships to TCD.

Finally, well done to Colm Hogan (Rugby Captain, TCD) and Conor Kearns (Rugby Captain, Oxford) who captained their respective sides on Saturday, 10 November, when the two teams met.



Visit of the Magi; Jacqueline Gilson 1951

My beloved, let us offer thanksgiving to God the Father, through his Son, in the Holy Spirit. In the great mercy with which he loved us, he had pity on us, and 'in giving life to Christ, gave life to us too, when we were dead through sin', so that in him we might be a new creation, a new work of his hands.

Let us then be quit of the old self and the habits that went with it. Sharers now in the birth of Christ, let us break with the deeds of the flesh.

O Christian, be aware of your nobility - it is God's own nature that you share: do not then, by an ignoble life, fall back into your former baseness. Think of the Head, think of the Body of which you are a member. Recall that you have been rescued from the power of darkness, and have been transferred to the light of God, the kingdom of God.

Through the sacrament of baptism you have been made a temple of the Holy Spirit; do not, by evil deeds, drive so great an indweller away from you, submitting yourself once more to the slavery of the devil. For you were bought at the price of Christ's blood.

(from a Sermon by Leo the Great, 5th century)

