

The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust

THE MONASTERY · CAPEL-Y-FFŶN · ABERGAVENNY

INTERIM NEWS LETTER

May 1969

Two years ago our Trust was formed, and registered with the Charity Commissioners, for the purpose of maintaining in perpetuity the tomb of Father Ignatius of Llanthony, together with the ruined church in whose choir it lies. The church is to be made available for occasional open-air services, and may be used for this purpose, by any denomination or ecumenical gathering. The Trust will also maintain the statue of the Blessed Virgin originally set up by Fr. Ignatius and now in the forecourt of the monastery, and the wayside Calvary that is a memorial to Fr. Ignatius. In addition, the Trust is in process of forming a Father Ignatius Collection of books, manuscripts, photographs, and other records of his life and work.

At the time of the Trust's formation we made a public appeal to all who revere the memory of Fr. Ignatius for financial help to enable us to restore his tomb from the state of dilapidation into which it had fallen, and to make the ruined church a safe and usable structure.

This appeal, which was signed by the Bishops of Llandaff and of Swansea and Brecon, Lord and Lady Dynevor, Mr. John Betjeman, Mr. Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, Mr. Donald Attwater, and Mr. Arthur Calder-Marshall, brought in the sum of £160.

Of this, £73 has so far been spent on general maintenance of the church and on the solicitors' fees in connection with the setting up, of the Trust. Some retiling has been done on the Founder's tomb; this has not yet been paid for.

A new gate has been placed at the entrance to the church; the following work still requires to be done: the retiling of the tomb must be completed, and we intend to place a small low railing round it. The various railings in the church require priming and painting, and the railings between the arches on the gospel side need refitting. There are numerous small trees and saplings to be removed from the upper church walls, and for purposes of safety many loose stones from the upper structure need to be removed. A number of cracks in the walls require grouting; and, again for purposes of safety, the tops of the roofless walls urgently need concreting, while the altar steps need retiling and restoning. The floor of the church will be laid with white stone chippings.

All this work ought to be done as soon as possible, to prevent further dilapidation and decay, which is especially likely to occur during the winter.

Our local builder, whose work is excellent and whose costs are reasonable, estimates that the total sum involved for all this work will be slightly under £500.

We hope you will do what you can to help us. We shall be most grateful, and every donation will be individually acknowledged. Donations should be sent to 'The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust' c/o Barclays Bank, Abergavenny, Mon.

When the Trust was set up there were three Trustees: Mr. W. I. Davies, resident at The Monastery; the Reverend F. H. Mountney, vicar of All Saints', Hereford; and Father Brocard Sewell, of the Carmelite Order. We have recently co-opted a fourth Trustee, the Reverend John Windle, who is himself the surviving trustee for the wayside Calvary which was erected as a memorial to Fr. Ignatius by his nieces, the late Misses Ewens, in 1939. The Calvary can now be integrated with the property administered by the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust, which will ensure its effective maintenance.

Recently Mr. Douglas Lyne, a relative of Fr. Ignatius, (whose family name was Lyne), has been appointed Archivist to the Trust. During the last year or so his researches into the life of Fr. Ignatius, made in London, Norwich, and elsewhere, have resulted in the discovery and acquisition of a remarkable quantity of "Ignatiana", which Mr. Lyne is generously assigning to the Trust for preservation. These include two substantial unpublished accounts of Fr. Ignatius by contemporaries, a complete set of his periodical *The Monastic Times*, the allegedly "miraculous" crucifix that was formerly in the church, copies of many of the books and pamphlets written by Ignatius, and a large quantity of photographs of the monastery and of former brethren taken towards the end of the last century.

In due course all these items, together with others previously donated - among them a crozier and cope formerly the property of the Abbot-Founder - will be placed on exhibition in a room in the monastery which will be accessible to members of the public who may be interested.

On October 21st of last year there occurred the sixtieth anniversary of the death of Fr. Ignatius. The event showed that interest in Ignatius and his work is still very much alive. Indeed, there is every sign that it is growing rather than diminishing. This typically Victorian figure is still able, it seems, to enlist supporters under his banner, with its Christo-centric motto: "Jesus Only". He was a pioneer of Christian Ecumenism, which may account for some of his popularity at the present time.

The centenary of his death was observed by a High Mass of Requiem at the church of St. John, Maddermarket, Norwich, at which a sermon was preached by the Revd. F. H. Mountney, one of our Trustees. A Low Mass of Requiem was celebrated in the monastery chapel at Capel-y-ffin.

At Norwich a Father Ignatius Exhibition was held in the basement foyer of the Central Public Library, by permission of the City Librarian. The organiser of this very successful exhibition was Mr. Frank Sayer, Librarian of the Colmand and Rye Libraries of Local History at Norwich. Among those who loaned items for the exhibition were The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust, Mr. Douglas Lyne, the Most Revd. Geoffrey Paget King, and Mr. Tom Maschler.

During recent months Mr. David Collison has been making a film about Father Ignatius which will be shown on B.B.C. 2 in the programme "CHRONICLE" on May 24th 1969. The film's narrator is Mr. Arthur Calder-Marshall, author of the most recent biography of Fr. Ignatius.

We are now beginning to consider how we can best observe the forthcoming centenary of the foundation of the monastery here at Capel-y-ffin; but we think it may perhaps be best to defer this until later when we hope we may have received sufficient donations to enable us to complete the repairs to the church and to the founder's tomb.

We hope for your continued support and interest.

Yours sincerely,
for THE TRUSTEES,

W. I. Davies, Secretary.

PS. Mr. Douglas Lyne will be lecturing on Father Ignatius at the Aylesford Review Whitsun Weekend (May 23-26 1969) at Spode House, Hawkesyard Priory, Rugeley, Staffordshire. Particulars may be had from The Warden of Spode House.