

Weather at Llanthony Christmas-tide was very warm and un-Christmas-like, the baby buds came peeping out of their bark cradles waking up by mistake before the Spring morning of the year had come. Then came violent storms of wind and rain sweeping the mountains and rushing through our narrow valley with tremendous power. The roofs of our Church and Monastery were despoiled of many a tile and slate by the ruthless storm of its passage. Owing to the great height of the Church this was a serious matter. Few men would venture their lives on this high building in such a storm and the Church situated on the mountain side. Miles away we had to send to borrow a ladder long enough to reach even the eaves of the roof. But now we are grandly independent. Good reader, we have a ladder of our very own now 65 feet long! It was carried here by four men all the way from Hereford, where it was made. It must have been a pilgrimage of toil indeed getting such a thing up our valley and mountain paths—a thirty mile journey on foot. Few people can realise a position such as ours in the far-away secluded nook of the Black Mountains. The luxury of such an intense solitude is an expensive one and until we have monks enough to undertake the supply of our daily wants, an immense burden of expense rests upon the superior. We have plenty of land but no hands to cultivate it. One of our brothers is quite capable of doing this and teaching others but his choir and house duties consume his whole time and there is not one at present who can be spared for outside manual labour. Then again within the enclosure is a charming mountain torrent which could easily be utilised to turn a mill where we could grind our own corn had we anyone to grind it. But like St Stephen Harding and his little community of monks at Citeaux we must wait until God wills to send us a St Bernard and companions as fresh novices. They had to wait 14 years. We shall have been established here 14 years next July 22nd 1884.

The Monastery garden Here everything is exceedingly backward owing to the cold and wet season . . . strawberries only beginning to ripen. Peas are very backward. Seringa not in blossom yet. The slugs have carried off a great quantity of plants and most of the peas. They arrive in large armies every evening from the ravine at the East of the garden. A voracious pair of ducks from the Priory lent for the purpose by the Rev Mother Cecilia conducted themselves very actively for some days but the Abbot's visitors ate the ducks and then the slugs returned with a

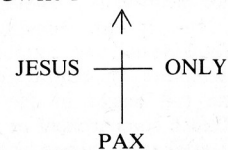
vengeance. There has been a good supply of flowers for the Altars.

The Welsh at the Abbey The old British Tongue stands a sad chance of dying out in our valley, as it has done in Cornwall. Some few families still speak it near us but the young people are not learning it. The Rev Father is trying to prevent this by having a Welsh schoolmaster and retaining the ancient language of the place in special prayers after services. The Angelus for instance and the Hail Mary are now sung in Welsh and also the Devotions after each office to the Blessed Sacrament.

Monastic holiday On July 3rd the Monks and acolytes had their annual treat. They left the Abbey soon after the solemn silence bell had rung at nine a.m. and taking their homely fare with them, with a kettle, mugs etc they climbed the Black Mountains and spent a very enjoyable day among the rocks and waterfalls. The boys bathed in the river, the monks gathered ferns and wandered about conversing with each other or reading. Sext, Nones and Vespers were sung by the riverside. A fire was kindled and their milk boiled and a good supper was eaten with a good sharp appetite. The monastic party returned to the Abbey in good time for Compline by about 8 o'clock without having encountered a single human being in their wanderings among these lovely solitudes. The Rev Father this year was able to accompany the excursion.

Our hay harvest St Swithin was not unmindful of his duty this year, for after a delicious May, June and half of July tremendous downpours flooded the valley on St Swithin's day and the rest of the month. We could not begin our hay-making for so long that at last the Rev Father ordered us to commence the mowing in spite of the rain and trust to God to take care of the hay. Accordingly two monks and a lay helper sallied forth into the Abbot's Meadow. After praying for God's blessing on the work and that He would preserve the Monastery hay for His own service, Brother David began to mow. Five great fields were all mown and the hay safely housed in the barns for the winter, the rain ceasing almost entirely for a fortnight. Diolch i Dduw!

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BYD



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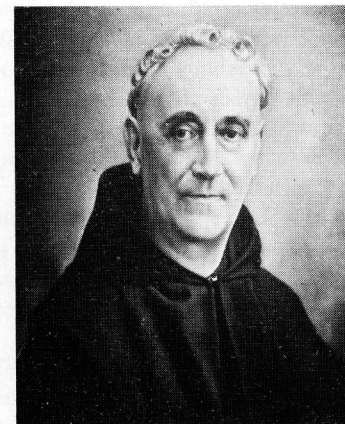
NEWSLETTER NO. 10 JUNE 1982

AT a recent meeting of the Trustees the matter was raised of the shape or form of the annual pilgrimage in memory of Father Ignatius. A set pattern has prevailed since the pilgrimage was revived: procession from Capel-y-ffin church; solemn singing of the Gospel at the Memorial Calvary in the lane up to the Monastery; singing of the antiphon 'Salve, Regina' before the statue of the Blessed Virgin in the monastery forecourt; and solemn Evensong, with sermon, in the roofless abbey church. It has been suggested that perhaps this is a little over-grandiose for a small gathering, such as ours usually is: one to two hundred people; and that perhaps something less formal would be more suitable today, especially as we would like to attract more young people. I remember a pilgrimage day before the war when a simple evangelistic

service was conducted in the Abbot's Meadow by Fr Ignatius's Salvationist nieces, the Misses Ewens. Brother David, Fr Ignatius's adopted son, was present, a dignified figure in cassock and skull-cap. But it was the nieces who were firmly in command of the proceedings, and Brother David took no special part in the service. At our meeting we were unable to come to any definite conclusions as to how the form of service might be suitably revised, and it was agreed to let the matter lie on the table for the time being. But it will come up again for consideration, and it would be a great help to us if we could have the benefit of your advice and suggestions. So please write to us and let us know what you think.

On last year's pilgrimage day the weather was, shall we say, patchy; and the gloomy weather forecasts no doubt contributed to cause a slight reduction in our numbers. However, we must credit nearly a hundred, all told, and the rain held off until towards the end. Fr Hugh Clarke, the outgoing prior of the Carmelites of Whitefriars, Cheltenham, preached an admirable sermon, in which he gave a vivid and comprehensive survey of the whole of Fr Ignatius's remarkable career, with its aspirations, achievements, and failures, and brought his personality alive for us, and stressed his lasting message, in a way that was greatly appreciated.

This year the pilgrimage will be held on Saturday 21st August. At 11.30 am the Eucharist will be celebrated in Llanthony



Church as usual. In the afternoon at 2.45 pm, the procession will leave Capel-y-ffin for the Monastery and Evensong in the ruins of the Abbey Church. The preacher at this service will be the Archdeacon of Brecon, the Venerable O. W. Jones.

Also during 1982 the centenary of the birth of Eric Gill is attracting attention. A symposium on his life and work broadcast on Radio 3 in March was in some ways unsatisfactory, though it was good to hear the memories of his friend Douglas Cleverdon; a more successful occasion was the centenary celebration at Spode House, Hawkesyard Priory, at the end of May, where people associated with the Monastery at Capel-y-ffin both now and in bygone days were strongly represented. Our friends in London may like to know that I have been invited to give the annual Beatrice Warde Memorial Lecture for 1982; subject, 'Eric Gill: the Quest for Order'. These lectures, held under the auspices of the St Bride's Institute of Printing, are open to the general public. (Wednesday October 6, at 6.30 p.m., in the Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, S.W.1.)

Eric Gill and Joseph Leycester Lyne (Fr Ignatius) were two very different personalities. Ignatius's love of the neo-Gothic and of the rococo was very far from Eric Gill's taste; but Ignatius's fiery evangelism and his delight in rousing, and even sentimental, hymnody, were things that Gill, with his childhood memories of the services in the Brighton chapel of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, could sympathise with and appreciate. A stronger link between them would have been their common attachment to St Benedict and the Benedictine tradition. Eric Gill acquired the property at Capel-y-ffin from the Benedictines of Caldey Island, who had received it from Fr Asaph Harris, Fr Ignatius's legatee. Gill was a Tertiary of the Dominican Order, as were some of those who came with him from

Ditchling to Capel in 1924. Writing to his friend Desmond Chute on September 14 of that year Gill says: 'After all, there is no antagonism, quite the contrary, between St Dominic and St Benedict. Fr Austin B[arker] agreed with me when I put it to him that the mission of St Dominic might be described as having for earthly objective the bringing back of the world, collectively & individually, to St Benedict.'

So let us now praise famous men. Father Ignatius of Llanthony and Eric Gill—how much we owe to them! Eric Gill's centenary will lend a special note to our pilgrimage this year. I hope that many of you will be able to be present to thank God for these two great confessors. And if every intending pilgrim could bring with them a friend, we should be assured of a good turnout.

This year the pilgrimage procession will be filmed by a Welsh television company, Nant Films of Caernarfon. The company is making a short film of the life and times of Father Ignatius for the new Welsh Fourth Channel which will probably reach television screens towards the end of 1982. This will be a Welsh language feature but, very probably, an English version will follow for use by other channels.

Another notable anniversary this year is the golden jubilee of the removal of the high altar and reredos (which Fr Ignatius purchased from a Munich firm for £2300) from the old Abbey church here to the newly-built parish church of SS Julius & Aaron (or St Julian) in Newport. The late Alfred Field bought this imposing Gothic Revival artefact from Eric Gill and presented it to the parish; the forty tons of stone-work were taken down piece by piece and reassembled by volunteer workers. It was rededicated by Bishop Timothy Rees of Llandaff on 23 September 1932.

On the same date this year there will be an evening Sung Mass at St Julian's details of which will be advertised in the 'Church

Times' in due course. The Trustees hope to be represented at this service and it would be good if others with an interest in Fr Ignatius and his monastery could join them on that occasion.

We, your Trustees, thank you all for your generosity, past, present, and future. Our programme of gradual structural repair and maintenance of the abbey church, and of its founder's tomb, goes on quietly; as does our care for the growing archive of 'Ignatiana'. Few days in the year do not bring at least one visitor to this

hallowed site; in the summer the stream of visitors, both the curious and the devout, is constant. There are signs that the abbey church will be increasingly used during future summers, in accordance with the terms of our Trust, and we welcome these indications that the work begun by Fr Ignatius goes on, though in ways that he could not have foreseen.

for the Trustees
BROCARD SEWELL,
O. Carm.



LIFE AT THE MONASTERY—ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Extracts from the 'Church of England Catholic and Monastic Times' 1883 and 1884 issues published by Father Ignatius OSB from Llanthony Monastery at Capel-y-ffin.

The Reredos at Llanthony . . . The symbolic number of three divides nearly everything. The altar stands on its three returned grades and the front is divided into three compartments by marble shafts. Behind it are three gradines for the support of metal work, candles and floral decorations. The reredos consists of three spires—two flanking and one central—connected by canopied sculpture. The central spire is within inches of the full height of the beautifully groined roof, each compartment or spandrel of which is so remarkably concave as to render it

almost a unique specimen. The central spire contains three leading features—the tabernacle, the expository or throne and the ciborium or lantern canopy. Few can have had any conception of the complete design who saw only the portion first erected. Now that the work is complete it may be described as imposing and magnificent, the details being exquisite as to delicacy; but at the same time it must be borne in mind that the Church is to be 210 feet in length and that the dimensions were from the first arranged so that the whole should be viewed from 100 feet or thereabout by the general public.

. . . The whole of the reredos was cut and packed in Munich, the work being carried out by Messrs Mayer from Mr H. F. Webber's design.