

THE ABBEY CHURCH All our readers interested in the conservation of the Abbey Church and tomb of Father Ignatius will recall the item in last year's Newsletter where we reported on the problems of maintaining the structure in a secure state so that it remains safe for public entry. A structural report together with supporting photographs and an estimate of the cost of repair to stabilise the walls was prepared by Mr Stanley Knill, civil engineer and one of our trustees. The report, the estimate in the sum of £41,000 and an application for grant aid was despatched to CADW, the Welsh Historic Monuments office, last year. A final decision by the Historic Buildings Council has since been deferred until members have had an opportunity to visit and inspect the property. The outcome of this is still awaited.

THE KILVERT SOCIETY The Annual General Meeting of The Kilvert Society is to be held this year in the Great Hall of The Bishop's Palace, Hereford at 7 pm on April 30th. After the business of the meeting there is to be a talk entitled 'Father Ignatius - The Man : Llanthony Valley - The Place : Francis Kilvert - The Meeting'. This will be given by the Honorary Secretary of The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust, The Reverend Thomas Dunn of Llanfihangel Crucorney. The Kilvert Society extends a welcome to readers of this newsletter who may not be members of the Society to attend on this occasion, bearing in mind, of course, that they would not be eligible to vote on matters brought up during the business part of the evening.

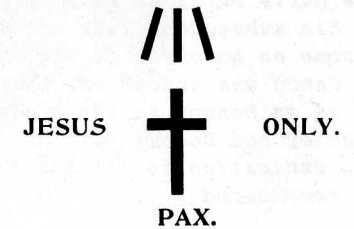
PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME - SATURDAY 28TH AUGUST 1993

- 1130 am The Holy Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony. The celebrant will be the Rt Revd Rowan Williams, Bishop of Monmouth.
- 1200 Roman Catholic Mass in the private chapel at midday The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin.
- 2.30 pm Procession leaves Capel-y-ffin church for The Monastery where the sermon at Evensong will be given by the Bishop of Monmouth. Refreshments will be available after the service by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Knill.

Please note that this date falls on the Late Summer Bank Holiday week-end. Car parking will be available both in the official car park at Llanthony for the morning service at St David's church and also in the field at Capel-y-ffin by kind permission Mr and Mrs Watkins of Chapel Farm. Visitors are asked not to attempt to park their cars at The Monastery itself, please, as this will cause difficulty, congestion and obstruct the pilgrimage arrangements.



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NEWSLETTER NO. 21 - MARCH 1993

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OBITUARY

The Very Reverend Canon Stanley Luff died suddenly at his home in Llandovery on 23rd April last year shortly after his seventieth birthday. He had been a valued supporter of the work of The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust for many years and a Trustee for the past six. His series of scholarly contributions to this newsletter each year will be keenly missed. A Requiem for him was celebrated at St Joseph's Cathedral, Swansea on 30th April 1992 by The Right Reverend Daniel J. Mullins, Bishop of Menevia. During his address the Bishop said.....*Canon Stanley Luff had taught for some years and also engaged in journalism before joining the Benedictine community at Prinknash. Some of his time was spent at Pluscarden, a place he regarded as one of the most beautiful in the world. It was to inspire a number of poems which appeared in a slim volume published some years ago. As those who knew him will testify, Stanley was not a community man. It cannot have surprised many when he applied to be accepted as a student for his home diocese of Southwark. He studied at the Beda College in Rome. While there he developed a parallel study to the College course and became something of an authority on the Christian history and development of that city. He used to act as a guide to pilgrims. The notes that he developed formed the basis of his book which has now been splendidly re-issued as 'The Christian's Guide to Rome'.*

In March 1966 Stanley Luff was ordained priest.....By temperament he was more suited to quiet country areas than to the hurly burly of busy city and town parishes....A good deal of his subsequent life was spent in Llandovery....He was to become an honoured figure in that town. When his appointment as Canon was announced, there were many in Llandovery who saw it as an honour to the place and its people, for by this time Stanley had become part of the local colour of the community. His dedication to the small scattered Catholic community will be remembered.....

Following Canon Luff's death, this tribute was composed by his friend, Byron Harries :-

*Lover of spring, song, saints and simple shrine
to Mary sacred, and sage hermit-bones,
surprise us in thy dying, as in life,
with sudden joy, to tease us out of gloom
and self-regard and torpid vacancy
such as they felt, arriving at the tomb.*

*Weaving friends in garlands round Christ centre, well
thou didst bind them to each other, in thy step
tripping the graceful dance to long-used, piped notes
down Prinknash cloister or Welsh country road.
Marvel, what harmony a joyful spirit works,
tuned to that melody like harp to ancient mode !*

*Dear companion, friend to heaven's universal way
of doing things aright, to creatures all,
to mirth, what victory rush of risen Christ,
sprung from the rock, encompassing with flood
of Moses-water washed thee to the shore,
whose hands had late dispensed His flesh and blood !*

*We must let thee go from here; all friends are owed
their parting moment, at the furthest edge, alone
secured by Mary's prayers. For us, sweet guide,
explore with curious eye that harbour-home's
celestial architecture; by which saint
or angel painted, in which style, its domes*

*Arch the altar-throne, like echoing brass
of trumpet-blazing, wild antiphony;
where cooling fountains hide their source, and which
Cherubim-lined avenue to proceed along
in shared excursion of an afternoon.
Old Rome shall envy thy new-Sion song !*



Canon Stanley Luff, celebrant, at his last pilgrimage to Capel-y-ffin - 1991

PILGRIMAGE 1992 Last year's Pilgrimage began according to custom with an Anglican Eucharist in Llanthony Church (it was in fact the one-time patronal festival of the adjacent Priory, the Beheading of St John the Baptist); at this service the principal celebrant was the Revd Thomas Dunn, and an address was given by the Revd Hugh Allen. As usual there was also a Roman Catholic Mass in The Monastery chapel, celebrated by Dom Simon McGurk of Belmont Abbey.

At Evensong we were highly privileged to have as our visiting preacher the Bishop of Menevia, the Rt Revd Daniel Mullins. Bishop Mullins began his address with a moving tribute to the late Canon Luff, and went on to speak of the monastic counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience as essential virtues for all who try to live the Christian life.

The 1992 Pilgrimage was the twenty-first annual event to be organised by the Trust, and every year our debt of gratitude increases to the many hard-working people without whose contributions it would be a poor affair indeed. For the past two pilgrimages the organist at both the Eucharist and the afternoon service has been Mr Simon Oram of St Matthew's, Newport; and singers from that church and from St Michael's, Llanfihangel Crucorney, have provided an effective and encouraging lead. Last year we had a local company to provide a public address system. The quality was excellent throughout, even when just before the Bishop's sermon, a sudden downpour caused a mass exit from the old church and into the shelter of the Monastery chapel. Here, after a short interval, the service was resumed.

Also of very high quality, amazingly, considering the weather, is the recording this company made of the service, copies of which are available on cassette at £5.50 each, including postage and packing. Very kindly they have agreed to donate part of any profits to the Trust, and we hope many of you (especially those unable to be present) will want to order a copy. Please address your order to *KBMF AUDIO, HILLSIDE COTTAGE, LLANVACHES, GWENT NP6 3AZ*, enclosing £5.50 per cassette and quoting "ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE". Please allow 28 days for delivery.

The heavy rain showed no sign of ceasing after the service and we were particularly grateful to Mr and Mrs Knill and family for offering us the very welcome hospitality and shelter of the private rooms of The Monastery for our usual cup of tea and refreshments.



Pilgrimage at Capel-y-ffin 1992 with the Rt Revd Daniel Mullins, Bishop of Menevia (centre) followed by the celebrant, the Revd Jeremy Dowding.

Among the papers left to the Trust by Canon Stanley Luff was a draft of the talk he gave at the symposium we held at Belmont Abbey in July 1991. This has been edited to completion by the Revd Hugh Allen and it is entirely appropriate that we should now publish it below in this issue.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF FATHER IGNATIUS by Canon Stanley Luff. There should be no obvious problem in discussing the spirituality of an acknowledged saint who has left behind him a corpus of writings on spiritual matters, such as St Francis de Sales or St John of the Cross, or a spiritual autobiography such as that of St Thérèse of Lisieux. It is rather an exercise than a problem if one has to cull spiritual references from more general writings -- as for instance from the letters and prayers of St Thomas More. Sometimes we infer a spirituality with a quality of its own from a very distinct style of life, such as that of the humble eighteenth century Curé of Ars, or more tenuously from that of an almost contemporary tramp pilgrim, St Benedict Joseph Labre. Then there are writers who have not attained the formal distinction of sainthood (at least not yet) but who have left writings which many find helpful -- I suggest such names as John Henry Newman or Abbot Columba Marmion. One needs to be on one's guard. That a man writes about spirituality is no guarantee that he lives it. I once went maybe as far as anyone will go in writing on the Spirituality of Francis Kilvert, to be mortified by a letter from an Anglican sister who told me that it was not spirituality at all !

Perhaps it is not so surprising that I am ready at least to discuss the spirituality of Fr Ignatius, aware that as a subject he presents various shades of difficulty. One is that he did not live, like the saints and writers mentioned above, in an age and a setting to which he clearly belonged, and of which he can be called representative. Neither would be exact. Yet it was characteristic of Victorian religion that following as it did the ages of reformation and enlightenment its revival of devotion should try to pick up the threads where they had been broken, like someone mending a tear. This is why Fr Ignatius' monasticism looked like a pastiche of mediaevalism, though I suggest that those who managed to live it, and in some cases saw reason to criticise it, did not feel it to be wholly artificial or false. To many of his critics, Anglican bishops included, it was not just that his style was mediaeval and so wrong for today, but simply that it was monasticism. In the century since Llanthony Tertia was founded monastic life has become more acceptable not only as a life-style but as an expression of the Church, proving Ignatius right, at least in principle. As a spiritual man and a teacher he was both out of context and yet important to his time, which is almost the same as saying that he was prophetic.

It is also a difficulty that as a monk and a superior of monks Ignatius was not that successful, either in keeping a community together, or in setting it an example, or in legislating reasonably for its regular life. The amount of time he was absent was scandalous, and even when he was at home he was often not to be seen. This is partly due to his frail health and nervous constitution for which his Victorian doctors -- and certainly his mother -- seem to have prescribed bottles of wine and hearty meals; and partly due to the necessity of travelling round to raise funds to build his abbey and support his monks. Ignatius did not do this reluctantly: he really discovered in his public speaking a new vocation. Bishops, by barring him their pulpits and thus leading him to hire public halls, diverted him into a more liberal style of popular oratory and opened up his ecumenical appeal. It even helped him to attack the religious establishment and those among its doctors whom he deemed to be heretics. The necessity of taking home the laden money bags must have persuaded Ignatius that he was not jeopardising the community, although in time he came to admit that he was not the ideal abbot. Calling people to Jesus, directing the Anglican Church to its proper origins and denouncing heretics eventually took precedence over begging for his monks' and nuns' bread and butter. The public speaking that he had taken up from necessity -- it had been at the suggestion of the Reverend George Drury of Claydon, Suffolk, where his first community was housed in the vicarage -- he could not bring himself to lay aside.

Worship at Llanthony Abbey was ritualistic -- sometimes to a degree that sounds absurd. He believed in outward forms, in liturgy as sacred things and sacred actions as well as sacred words. This is what Jesus taught -- certain signs that in God's dispensation are normally required to contain and convey, as well as to express, certain inward graces and spiritual realities.

In this system of signs there is an intrinsic weakness that at times leads to real corruption: the outward form can be so exalted that the reality can be lost. Historically, reactions to this tendency have been Cistercian simplicity within the Church and, outside it, the Quakers' rejection of all forms and ceremonies. Ignatius understood the danger and was armed against it. His Protestant-minded father reproached him that the signs (that is: Llanthony ritual) stood between him and the "Jesus Only" he professed. Ignatius would never agree: the signs were God's appointed instruments of communication with man.

On one occasion Ignatius spoke on the text "I am the living bread" from Our Lord's sermon that follows the multiplication of the loaves (St John chapter 6). It is a classic Gospel text for maintaining the reality of Christ's sacramental presence, a text so baffling when first presented that it nearly lost Peter to Christ. Ignatius had the fullest Catholic faith in the Eucharistic Presence, yet preaching on this text he hardly touched on the Eucharist itself. The reason is that he was concerned not with the sacramental shape of Christ's channel of grace (its outward sign) but with its inward reality -- just like St John, who in his narrative of the Last Supper omits Our Lord's words and acts of institution in favour of his long prayer about what Holy Communion means and effects. So Ignatius' talk on that text emphasises its sequel: "He who comes to me shall never be hungry."

To that talk Ignatius appended a trenchant interrogation:

Are you so satisfied that you do not hunger after righteousness because Christ is your righteousness?

Are you so satisfied that Christ is the pardon for sin that you do not hunger after pardon of sin -- because you have it?

Are you so satisfied that you do not want eternal life because you have it? Jesus Christ is your life, and you are satisfied with him and live.

One would like to hope that all Christians who live by a sacramental system live by the reality of its sacraments (the inward grace); that they are not baulked by the externals, turning the outward signs into false fronts no longer capable of conveying the divine gift of inward grace. The sacramental system not only has this inbuilt weakness but it is in a sense a necessary part of the machinery. A sacrament possesses the spiritual effect -- divine life, or grace -- made accessible to the most ordinary or even defective human being on the sole condition of a right intention. But the reality which Jesus ordained to pass through the sacraments as a norm cannot limit God. He is free to bestow the same grace on good people outside the context of the Church, outside the context of well-ordered sacraments. This explains Ignatius's concern: Do you possess the reality? For the moment never mind about the sign. Never mind even whether you are in the visible and bodily Church or whether God has chosen to engrace you freely. All that matters is that you have responded to him. (From this derives the rather cheap pun for which he seems to be responsible, "Christianity before Churchianity". Though this resulted in the charge that he was indifferent to a man's denomination he certainly was not.)

This is what Ignatius said in his Westminster Town Hall oration on the Bread of Life:

I know a great many who would come to Christ only they are not asked to do so. They are asked to go to church and to the Sacraments instead; they are asked to be baptized, to go to Confirmation or to Confession -- all sorts of things they are asked to do. But Sacraments are utterly useless until -- mark the word until -- they have come to Christ; for the Holy Communion, and other ordinances, cannot operate upon a man until he has received Christ as his life.

Insofar as Ignatius ever tried to advertise a spirituality he did it through his motto (for want of a better word): 'Jesus Only'. At Llanthony this was put on banners, on stationery, on publications, on doors -- even on bedspreads. Its adoption seems to date from his mystical experience on the shore below Blackgang Chine, Isle of Wight, in 1866. After the collapse of the Norwich priory Ignatius also collapsed -- predictably -- and this time the collapse was as spiritual as it was nervous: he found himself doubting whether he loved God at all. At the end of a solitary and anguished Sunday he fled for relief to the beach and began to recite Compline. The Canticum of Compline is the Nunc Dimittis, the song attributed to Holy Simeon when Mary and Joseph brought the Infant for his ritual presentation in the Temple. Monastic communities usually end the day with the Salve Regina. Ignatius came to the words "After this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus." As he concluded that phrase he found himself transported back in time to the Temple at Jerusalem and in the presence of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. He saw Simeon advance and Mary place the Babe in his arms. Ignatius cried aloud, "Give him to me, even to me also," at which Mary turned and smiled and said, "Jesus is for you, as much as for Simeon," and laid the Baby on Ignatius' own breast.

In Ignatius' life, especially in the early years, there is a good deal of the supernatural, and some of it is not entirely convincing, except as report of subjective experience. When I first read this account I dismissed it as, in all probability, hallucination. We have in the Archives of the Trust a manual of biblical reflections by Robert Hawker (Vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth, and grandfather to the better known priest and poet Robert Stephen Hawker of Morwenstow); it is called "The Poor Man's Daily Portion", and towards the end of Ignatius' life it was in daily use and frequently annotated with the date and sometimes the place, and occasionally a comment. Against a March reading which refers to the

Presentation with this thought, "They clasped by faith Jesus in their arms," Ignatius has written in the margin: "This I did in August 1866 at Blackgang Chine, Isle of Wight." He had had over thirty years to admit to himself that it was sheer imagination -- if that is what it was.

I must admit to being influenced by a conversation I had with Dom Asaph Harris, Ignatius' last surviving monk, shortly before he died. I asked him, "Father Asaph, all those supernatural happenings we read about in Father Ignatius' life. Were they true?" He looked reflectively at his boots for a moment, then looked up at me very simply and replied, "Well, I saw them." This cannot refer to any of the alleged wonders recorded by the Baroness de Bertouch, because Asaph was a child when they happened and not yet at Llanthony; he was a young man at the time of Ignatius' death. His testimony refers to things unrecorded.

Ignatius said of that moment on the shore, "I was a new man." Arthur Calder-Marshall, healthily sceptical, is sufficiently impressed to assert: "It is clear the experience...effected a genuine alteration in his spirit and his attitude to life. It changed the emphasis...from fear of eternal damnation to the love of Jesus.... From now onwards his slogan was Jesus Only." Donald Attwater comments, "The conversion may have been subjective; its results were objective enough."

Ignatius was something of a dilettante with regard to the externals of monasticism. He has been criticized similarly for his religious practice -- taking bits from Catholicism, Anglicanism and various nonconformist schools of thought. In particular his religious experience has been assimilated to the Calvinist assurance of election, of being predestined to salvation. As an Anglican, he was bluntly accused of heresy. He certainly does speak of others as well as of himself as if this were the case. He spoke to the Baroness de Bertouch of that day on the Isle of Wight not as a day of election but as the day of his Conversion. Not of course from unbelief to faith, nor from sin to serious undertaking, but from -- to pick out his own words -- "morbid fears and doubts" to the "possession of a personal Saviour." The Baroness had a great flair for exotic language but it would be surprising if she never stumbled on the mot juste: she called it his "transfiguration". The difference of before and after was to him not that of damned or saved, but this: before, he had tried to love God; after, he was assured of God's love for him. This is precisely the burden of the First Letter of St John: "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us...; we love, because he first loved us." What in Ignatius can be taken for an apparent shade of Calvinism was, I submit, rather his rescue from the heresy of Pelagius.

Was Ignatius humble? Humility is hardly an optional virtue for a monk. All the discipline in St Benedict's Rule is spiritually motivated, but the two specifically spiritual chapters are on Obedience and Humility. There are incidents in the Ignatius story which suggest that the humble option did not always come easily to him. He could display a measure of wrath suggesting nervous disorder. His critics suggest there was something amiss with his temperamental constitution, and till later in life this seems to be true. It also happened with him, as with other religious superiors, that he could be so fixed on his own designs, which he also conceived to be God's holy will, that he could hardly tell the difference when imposing them on others. (One wonders whether, when God chooses ministers for pioneer work, he has to accept their bursts of pride as occupational risks.) There are texts which suggest that Ignatius was not unaware of his weakness. Some occur in the correspondence which John Spence (Brother Cuthbert) so fortunately copied into his record of his year's novitiate. It arises in the reply by Ignatius to a letter from Cuthbert in which he had complained about Fr Philip, a disciple from Norwich days so favoured that he had been chosen to accompany Ignatius on his notorious trip to Rome. Ignatius wrote:

After all these years it is not very likely that I should be ignorant of Father Philip's failings -- I know them only too well. Sometimes I have been quite inclined to rebel myself against our dearest Lord's providence in giving such an one to me, because I have fancied that he must be a hindrance to my most holy work. But faith tells me that Father Philip is not, but that he acts as a kind of sieve for sifting off the chaff. Our blessed Lord Jesus does not will that Father Philip should be as he is, but He permits it for our good. I can truly say this, for I am sure that Father Philip has been a means of grace to me, and has by trying me so much helped me to conquer self, self-love and self-will to a considerable extent.

In Ignatius' humility we find a traditional self-deprecation, which can sound so silly, but I think he meant it quite honestly. In "Mission Sermons & Orations" there is a Letter to the Reader in which he writes: "The following pages are from a literary point of view entirely unworthy of perusal." (I think that is far from objective and true. Would he have accepted that appraisal from someone else?) He continues with closer self-criticism: "Wholly extempore addresses read but poorly. The tone, manner and action of the speaker may add some interest to his words which, apart from these, are worse than meagre and poor."

There is an anecdote in which Ignatius reveals that he knew perhaps too well just what his personality added. A hearer at some "oration" reports that Ignatius interrupted his discourse to tell the audience they probably thought they had been listening to him for about ten minutes. When they consulted their watches it proved to be about an hour. Ignatius records that Catholics and Dissenters had told him of his effect on them, though he knew he was "an earthen vessel, frail and feeble, vile dust." He had to put up with some adolescent cheek from Cuthbert the Novice: from his recorded replies we can see that while he was naturally hurt he took it with patience, even with a touch of humour.

Self-disparagement is balanced by an oft-quoted verse from Malachi which captured Ignatius by its beauty. It can be found in the Authorised Version but is lost in modern translations: "They shall be mine...in that day when I make up my jewels." He was much attracted too by the parable of the merchant man in search of fine pearls. He used it in mission sermons, but I find it also in a letter to his cousin the Reverend Arundell Lyne, Vicar of Hentland in Herefordshire, dated 19 January 1906. (This letter is, with other correspondence, a recent donation to the Trust.) In the parable the merchant sells all he has to buy one pearl of great price. Nearly everyone interprets this to mean that the kingdom of heaven is such that we should be prepared to make any sacrifice to attain it. Not so Ignatius, who has no hesitation in being his own exegete. To him it is Christ who is the merchant man, and we ungrateful mortals who are of "great price" to the Lord who sheds his divinity to come to buy us:

It is so blessed to realise how Our Lord JESUS must care for us, after buying us at such a "Great Price". "Pearls of Great Price" we are indeed to the Heavenly Merchantman, Who sold all that He had to "purchase us to Himself".

Ignatius' thinking, and consequently his speaking, were saturated in Scripture. This quality seems to have been a natural endowment, unless we should call it a grace. He said of himself, "I had no trouble in learning my Bible and Prayer Book backwards." At Trinity College, Glenalmond, Dr Bright said that he had never known a student who knew his Bible so well. His sermons -- delivered invariably, it would seem, extempore -- reveal a mind to which the Bible was as mere language is to other men. In the published versions there are pages with well-spread print, less than three hundred words to the page, with upwards of four scriptural quotations to the page. He thought Scripture. Moreover his application of sacred texts is easy, beautiful, relevant, sound and often highly original.

At Glenalmond Ignatius had been keen to show he was no academic all-rounder. At anything but Scripture and Divinity he was content to be, in his own words, "a perfect ass". At exam times he threw fits (subconsciously, I hope) whenever life became too much for him. The space vacated by other interests was filled with Scripture. This Scriptural wealth matured in his mind to provide, it seems, an abundance of wisdom to apply to the problems of others. Calder-Marshall makes at least one reference to this in concluding his chapter on "The Madness of Lyne père" with this verdict:

Father Ignatius was no alienist. But his Christian charity led him to behave during the eight years of persecution with the most unusual dignity. He bore the first five years of attack in silence. When he did venture to reply, he made his points with filial restraint and a truly Christian pity for his unfortunate father.

It is probably true to observe, however -- with regret -- that this wisdom sometimes failed him when dealing with monastic subjects. But because of the immersion of his mind in Scripture we find him, at times, surprisingly rich in intuitive theology. His sermons (not in fact revivalist, although not lacking the element of enthusiasm) repay careful study. Here and there, among the appeals to be converted and to come to Jesus, are gems of theological clarity and neat applications of history. With these latter he was adept at confounding Anglican bishops, themselves no doubt decorated with the degrees he never aspired to. He was not above administering a neat retort to Pope Pius IX either. The Pope handled Ignatius' habit, reminding him that it was not the cowl that made the monk. "No, Holy Father," Ignatius replied; "it is the life." But it was on precisely that point that his monastic experiment failed.

One of the most radical assertions that divide Catholic and Protestant is the Catholic insistence that the Mass is a Sacrifice. To Protestants this offends because it can appear to deny the uniqueness, the total efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Cross, which fulfilled all the prophetic or "type" sacrifices of the Old Law. It must be perfect, because it is the act of incarnate God. Catholics do not deny this, but our teaching that the Mass is an unbloody "re-presentation" of Calvary sounds to argumentative ears like an equivocation. How easily Ignatius handles this:

Of the Blessed Sacrament the Catholic believes that it is the very body of Christ, Living and Risen, that was offered "once for all" as a perfect Sacrifice on Calvary: in the Mass we believe that we present the Finished Sacrifice of the Gospel, the Living Christ, to the Father in our Lord's own appointed way. We do not repeat, we do not add to it.

Ignatius's use of Scripture is not the close knowledge of Old Testament history, nor the assembling of texts to bolster an argument, nor a chapter and verse legerdemain in quotation. He reads the Old Testament as the Christian is meant to read it: a prophetic history and literature fulfilled in Christ. As the Divine Companion on the road to Emmaus, who explained to the saddened disciples "all those things in Scripture that referred to himself", so Ignatius can give his talks Old Testament titles, but in all that follows he is concerned with "Jesus Only".

Since Ignatius attached so much value to the very existence of monasticism within a church claiming to be Catholic, one must ask whether his spirituality was monastic, and, in particular, Benedictine. But one has to qualify this by enquiring whether there really is a monastic spirituality as such. The early monks sought to perfect in their observance the spirituality of the Church without the particular tonality or colour imparted by anyone's peculiar genius as -- much later in Church history -- one would think of Franciscan, Ignatian, Teresian or Salesian spiritualities. The simple Church spirituality of monks would inevitably be conditioned by the cultivation of solitude and the fulness of liturgy beyond the possibilities of ordinary laymen, but only as presenting us with a picture of Christian life carried to a high degree -- a degree that does of course represent a response made to the summons to leave all things and to follow the Master. (This elevated "ordinariness" may be illustrated by referring to a monk of Pluscarden who tried to offer a copy of St Benedict's Rule to a master from Gordonstoun, to be told that all Gordonstoun prefects were equipped with copies of the Rule.)

Ignatius hardly ever quoted from the Rule; it does not seem to have fertilised his mind as Scripture did. The very failure of Llanthony to become a flourishing community is not unreasonably attributed to the fact that in some glaring respects Ignatius did not particularly keep the Rule himself, and so did not teach it by example either. It is true that monasteries live by Observances, which are their application and even elaboration of the Rule, and it is that sort of thing that for Ignatius became Rule. He accumulated Observances, and it was with passion that he imposed them on others. This is the negative view of life at Llanthony from which it is hard to escape. Undoubtedly the monastery was for him a place where he could mould others to live by his precious axiom "Jesus Only". I am admitting that his spirituality was not characteristically monastic; at the same time he would have been unable to develop the positive elements of his personal vocation without this monastic setting of his own making. Our consideration of his spirituality helps us to realise that it is foolish to cultivate the memory of Ignatius for what he achieved. He appeals to

us today for the same reason that he appealed then, to men and women on both sides of the Atlantic. Not because he was a monk, though that helped -- it was how he flew his colours -- but because he saw through and beyond the diversities, the dissidences, the nonconformities and even the orthodoxies of religion to that one necessity he calls "Jesus Only". St Benedict had of course tried to make the same point when he set out as the test of a vocation "whether a man be truly seeking God".

In this paper I have opted, on balance, for a positive interpretation of Ignatius: that he had a spirituality both true and in some respects unique. But I did not know Ignatius, so my interpretation is at best second-hand. Among his followers three at least persevered in the religious life as they found it more securely anchored in the Roman Catholic Church. The last monk in line, Superior at Llanthony after Ignatius' death in 1908, was Asaph Mary Harris, who was received into the Catholic Church as a member of the Caldey community in 1913 and died at Pluscarden Abbey in 1959. I knew him there, and I know he retained to the very end a great respect for Ignatius and a belief that he was a vessel of supernatural power. There was another, who has been called "the best that ever went to Llanthony" and became a Jesuit in India, but I do not even know his name. A third, who became Dom Cyprian Alston at Downside Abbey, entered at Llanthony about 1888 and stayed seven years. He wrote an article in Pax, the Caldey Abbey periodical, for Christmas 1913. He makes two significant observations about Fr Ignatius -- one could have hoped for more. The first is that Ignatius had "reasons" for not sharing, as an abbot should, in the life of the community; but Fr Cyprian adds, of these reasons, "whether adequate or not I will not venture to judge." The second is useful as a conclusion to this paper:

I cannot too strongly emphasise the fact that I believe Father Ignatius to have been absolutely sincere in all that he said or did. He cared nothing for public opinion, but at the same time he was, unfortunately, utterly unable to discern character. As a man, no one more naturally commanded love and respect than he, his personal attractions and warmth of heart drawing all alike to him; indeed the fascination of his unique personality was almost a kind of spiritual hypnotism, attracting people to himself.

To this I would add that what he wanted to do was to attract them to "Jesus Only".

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THE FR IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST ARCHIVE The Autumn Meeting of Trustees was held at The Castle Museum, Abergavenny on 21st October 1992 and marked the handing over of the Trust Archive to the Curator of the Museum by formal deed of gift for safe custody in perpetuity. The occasion was marked by an exhibition relating to the life and times of Father Ignatius and the history of The Monastery at Capel-y-ffin. Seen above during the ceremony are (L to R) :- Wilfred Davies : The Revd Thomas Dunn (Hon Secretary) : Councillor Terence Cleary (Mayor of Monmouth) and Douglas Lyne (Archivist).



CHANGE OF HON SECRETARY Also at the Autumn Meeting, Wilfred Davies, a founder member of the Trust and Hon Secretary for the past 25 years, retired on handing over to the Revd Thomas Dunn. The Revd Canon Ivor Ll Davies, Chairman, is seen above with Mr Davies, thanking him and handing over a book token from trustees in recognition of his service to the Trust since its inception in 1967. NB. Would all our correspondents please note the change of Hon Sec address given both on Page 1 of this Newsletter and on the enclosed subscription form.