PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME SATURDAY 27TH AUGUST 1994

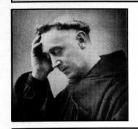
11.30 am The Holy Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony with an address by The Reverend Canon David Walker of Swansea.

Canon Walker is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, also author and contributor to many learned publications, including his 'Medieval Wales' and 'A Guide to the Church in Wales'.

2.30 pm Procession from Capel-y-ffin church to The Monastery with halts for prayer at the Wayside Calvary, the statue of Our Lady and on the church level.

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 of 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.

THE FATHER IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST (Charity Commissioners' Registration No. 253225)



JESUS ONLY.

PAX.

Newsletter No. 22

March 1994

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<u>Pilgrimage 1993</u>. Again, in the customary way, at last year's pilgrimage, the day's devotions began with the Holy Eucharist at the lovely church of St. David's, Llanthony. On this occasion it was with very great pleasure that we welcomed the Right Reverend Rowan Williams, the Bishop of Monmouth, as Celebrant. The sermon, to a full church (which included a coach-load of pilgrims from the Midlands), was preached by the Reverend Thomas Dunn, Vicar of the Parish and Secretary of the Trust.

The pilgrimage to the Monastery at Capel-y-ffin has always found a unifying spiritual significance through its association with Llanthony. Indeed, had Walter Savage Landor agreed to sell the ruin of the great 12th Century Augustinian foundation to Joseph Leycester Lyne in the 1860s, then the new Abbey might well have arisen on the site of the old Priory. Fr Ignatius had remarkable gifts but he was not a practical man with management skills. Neither was he blessed with generous funding support nor sound advice in business matters and architectural design. Indeed, his ambition to build anew at Llanthony might well have ended in a hurried and disastrous amalgam of mediaeval and Victorian building style. So perhaps we should be grateful, at least for aesthetic reasons, that . the integrity and grandeur of the ruin of the old Priory is preserved intact and that the new Abbey did, in the end, arise four miles further up the valley.



The Bishop of Monmouth, The Rt Revd Rowan Williams and the Officiant, The Revd Hugh Allen, together with members of the clergy and other pilgrims, assemble at Capel-y-ffin in the afternoon. The processional banner with Fr Ignatius's watchword - 'JESUS ONLY - PAX' - is a relic of many earlier pilgrimages and was discovered at All Saints Church, Hereford.

The prayers at the Wayside Calvary with its oak canopy inscribed with the words 'PEACE TO THE WAYFARER THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS' may have recalled to some that it was donated by Fr Ignatius's nieces, the sisters Hilda and Irene Ewens, later to become Salvation Army lasses. It was dedicated at the August 1936 pilgrimage and about 1,500 people came on that occasion by bus, car, bicycle, pony-back and on foot.

Following the traditional station at the statue of Our Lady, Solemn Evensong was held last year on The Monastery forecourt because the Abbey Church ruin has become unsafe for public entry. An inspiring sermon was given by the Bishop and the afternoon was blessed with sunshine throughout.



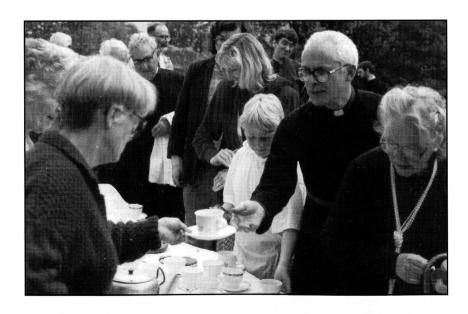
The scene on The Monastery forecourt at Evensong

After the service, everyone gathered on the 'drying green' above the Abbey Church for the usual welcome cup of tea and cake. This has always been a very pleasant way to end the pilgrimage since the late 1970s after the Trust was founded. Commonly, this is the only time people have met since the previous year and conversation flows. For many years the refreshments table has been presided over by Joan Wheeler with willing help from others. While the strains of our traditional final hymn, 'Onward Christian Soldiers', rings out across the valley, cups and saucers have been set out, cake cut into decent slices and simmering water in The Monastery kitchen brought to the boil. Pilgrimages call for sustenance and second helpings of cake and tea are usually available. Joan has always cooked her slab fruit cake in a massive meat tin and some will recall that she wrote a delightful little piece in our 1984 issue called 'Cake for Father Ignatius' which included the recipe. Doreen Pearce, too, from Blaenavon always brought one of her classic sponge cakes which later arrivals were unable to enjoy because it usually disappeared in the first five minutes of serving!

We remember these things now because Joan is retiring from her duties at The Monastery tea table and we are sure you will wish to join with us in thanking her warmly for that very welcome service to us all for over twenty years.



.....Joan on duty at the table.....



.....with a little help in serving.....



....and an agreeable setting for meeting old friends.....

An audio recording of the whole of the Evensong service at The Monastery, including, of course, the sermon by the Bishop of Monmouth, was made by KBMF Audio. Copies of this are available on cassette at £5.50 each, including packing and postage, from :-KBMF AUDIO, HILLSIDE COTTAGE, LLANVACHES, GWENT NP6 3AZ, enclosing cheque or postal order and quoting 'ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE - 1993'. Please allow 28 days for delivery.

The Father Ignatius Archive We had an item in last year's newsletter recording the handing over of the archive for safe custody in perpetuity to the Castle Museum in Abergavenny on 21st October 1992.

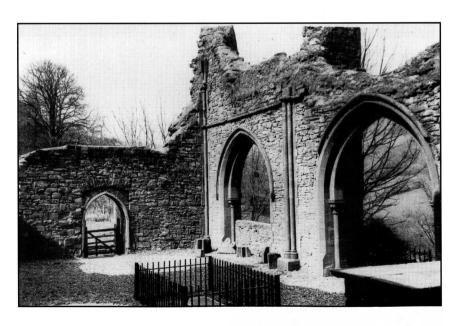


Mr Frank Olding BA Dip Mus ABA

Since then, the curator, Mr Frank Olding, and his staff have prepared an inventory of all the books, documents, photographs and artefacts handed over at that time. This will be invaluable for reference by all interested in the life and times of Fr Ignatius and, in particular, by any future researcher or biographer. We would like to express here our warmest appreciation of the professional expertise the project has involved in sorting, cataloguing, recording and storage.

The Abbey Church The continuing problem of maintaining the church and tomb of Fr Ignatius has been a hardy annual worry since the Trust was founded in 1967. During the past year there have been further signs of increasing instability in the structure. This led to our having to put up warning notices prohibiting entry in the interests of public safety. Readers will recall that we had already submitted an application to CADW, the Welsh Historic Monuments Office, for grant aid towards the very considerable sum needed to make the Abbey Church safe for public entry. A decision by the Welsh Historic Buildings Council reached us in due course to say that the Council were again unable to approve grant aid. An earlier application by the Trust to CADW through the Brecon Beacons National Park in 1988 also failed. This latest setback puts our Trustees in a renewed quandary since approval of a grant by CADW towards the total cost is normally a necessary prerequisite before approval for further financial help is likely to be forthcoming from other charitable sources.

During the past twenty-five years we have been able to cope with minor repair works on the structure, thanks to small grants from the Welsh Church Acts fund; through the generosity of our regular supporters; and through a great deal of practical help from voluntary workers. The problem of what we can do about the future of the Abbey Church and tomb of Fr Ignatius will therefore once again be an urgent item on the agenda at the Spring meeting of our Trustees this year.



The Abbey Church at Capel-y-ffin - 1992

The Kilvert Society On 30th April last year, The Revd Thomas Dunn of Llanfihangel Crucorney and Hon Secretary of The Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust was invited to speak after the Society's Annual General Meeting in the Great Hall of The Bishop's Place, Hereford. We are glad to be able to reproduce here the text of his talk for the benefit of our readers:-

Father Ignatius - The Man
Llanthony Valley - The Place
Francis Kilvert - The Meeting
1837 - 1908

Father Ignatius - The Man Before I read Fr Ignatius's 'Autobiography', the three biographies, and also the 'Kilvert's Diary' entries about him, I had a confusing picture of this fascinating and enigmatic man. In his lifetime, he restored the monastic life for men in the Church of England. He was a man of the past in that he had to go back in history to pick up the severed threads of the monastic tradition in England which had suffered such damage at the Reformation. He was a man of his time in his innovative approach to Evangelism. He was a man of the future in his advocacy of the Zionist cause for the restoration of the State of Israel. His fidelity to this cause resulted in his being denied one of the few opportunities to receive priest's orders from the Church of England. And as if these facets of Ignatius's life were not enough to make it difficult to appraise such a complex personality, we have a welter of evidence by those who knew him. He was a visionary; and, according to Gladstone, one of the most gifted orators of his time; a man of profound spiritual insight; a healer; a man of intense prayer, even though he had to find his own path; a self-acknowledged poor judge of character; a fearless reprover of the Anglican establishment's modernistic and rationalistic reductionalist proponents. He was an enthusiast who often burnt himself into a state of mental and physical exhaustion, supporting a wide range of causes. He was a neo-British Israelite who identified the Welsh as being one of the lost tribes of Israel. He anticipated the Plaid Cymru campaign for the Welsh language and culture. He wrote a wide range of tracts including one with the title 'Ten reasons for believing the Earth is flat'. Several times his life was threatened by plots to kill him. He was subject to mob violence. He could draw large crowds; cause fashionable ladies to strip themselves of their iewellery as the collection plates passed before them. He was granted audience with the Pope and, also, the American President (the former admitted to already having, prior to his audience, a photograph of Fr Ignatius). He was banned by most English Bishops from preaching in their dioceses, only later to be invited by the same Anglican divines to lead missions. He was praised by Cardinal Wiseman and vilified by 'The Times'.

He was hoodwinked by tricksters, ready to exploit his generosity. But despite several nervous collapses, he launched himself into further exhausting new enterprises. He was a spectacular success by the standards of his day but, equally, a spectacular failure.



Father Ignatius (1907- the year before he died)

Such a vibrant, colourful, controversial character has attracted and eluded the grasp of his later biographers and almost all contemporary observers. They have allowed themselves to become mesmerised by his failures, absurdities and eccentricities. They have singularly failed to discover the real Fr Ignatius in their efforts to find, in him, a Benedict, Bruno or Bernard. Much of our view of holiness these days is infected by 'supermarket' standards, looking only for perfect products, without blemish, rejecting anything that does not meet this criterion.

Our key to understanding Fr Ignatius has thankfully been given to us by a chance remark he made to the diarist Kilvert at their first meeting. As they toured the early building work at the monastery, Fr Ignatius remarked, "A monk must either be a philosopher or a holy fool!". We know from Ignatius's own comments on his theological education that he found the philosophical disciplines incomprehensible. But this diary entry of Kilvert's has given us the key to understanding Ignatius as a 'holy fool'.

To be a 'holy fool' is to be in a rich Christian tradition that, from our own times, can be traced back in Catholicism and Orthodoxy to St Paul who, when confronted with the powerful rationalistic philosophers and systems of his day, rejoiced to become 'a fool for Christ's sake'. Our Lord also reminds us that 'the Father has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from the wise and revealed them to babes' (Matt 11:25). And again, stepping out of our own post-rationalistic/scientific culture, we are reminded of this revolutionary way of the Kingdom in the Greek proverb, 'If you want to know the truth, ask a child or a fool'.

We hear from Ignatius's own lips how he was 'out of phase' with the mores of much of Victorian theological thought in the Church of England at that time and also with his later biographers. Referring to his own development at theological college, he comments, 'but as far as head was concerned, I knew nothing of Jesus Christ as my salvation and righteousness. I had no peace with God, nor had I believed His great and precious promises. I left college as ignorant of Jesus as when I entered it. Neither Dr Hannah nor Prof Bright could give me the "knowledge of salvation for the remission of sins"'. - (so far, Ignatius has couched his language in the classical Protestant/ Evangelical mode - he then proceeds with a dramatic switch to the Catholic / Orthodox style.) - 'The Holy Ghost alone could do this for me, taking the things of Jesus and showing them to me.' This mode-switching in theological expression presented problems for his biographers as they hunted for a neat and tidy way to pigeon-hole Ignatius.

The late Canon Stanley Luff, in his studies of the life of Fr Ignatius, wrote :- 'Fr Ignatius belonged to an age that followed the Reformation and Enlightenment and tried to pick up the threads where they had been broken - like someone trying to mend a tear'. His biographers, contemporaries and we ourselves belong to the same post-Reformation and Enlightenment age and, unless we too 'try to mend the tear', we will be baffled and dismissive of anything about Ignatius that does not fit into our limited view of things.

Fr Ignatius shows an openness and recognition of his own spiritual 'dimension of being' as a person. The particular graces, visions, healings, 'conversions' and transfigurations that followed on from the awakening of this important, if neglected, aspect of 'being' a person was bound to cause conflict with those who denied it. When judged simply by postscientific and rationalistic criteria, phenomena like 'The Miracle of the Holy Rhubarb Leaf' were soon ridiculed by bantering sarcasm. How salutary, then, to find in the teachings of a younger contemporary of Ignatius, Staretz Silouan (1866-1938), who was a monk of Mount Athos, the words:-'God's supreme wisdom and truth are the opposite of human wisdom and truth... But the man who is not afraid to become a fool has found true life and true happiness'. So the Russian Orthodox monk of Mount Athos joins with the Anglican curate of Clyro in giving us the key to 'understanding' Fr Ignatius.

Joseph Leycester Lyne was brought up in a home where the Christianity was safe, staid, correct and very Anglican. And yet, even at this early stage of his life, the youth who was to be 'Father Ignatius' was already feeling the 'pull' that was soon to conflict with his conventional religious childhood. Certainly, as a boy, he was very religious and, as he himself recalls, 'had a great love of the Lord Jesus Christ, because I had some vague idea that he died for us men

and our salvation; but how or in what manner His death affected or benefited me, I knew not...My own parents were most particular, in a moderate way, respecting our moral and religious training, but the idea of any separation from the world or renunciation of its vanities, for Christ's sake, did not enter into any part of our religious teaching.' Then he adds:- 'The theatre or the dance were quite in harmony with our form of Christianity in the Church of England.'

There were two main features in the life and formation of Fr Ignatius that are not unconnected. The first was his fear of Hell and the second was his mid-life 'transfiguration' or 'conversion'. Now, to deal with first - his fear of Hell - this is so untypical of our own age that it hardly ever features in our proclamation and understanding of the Gospel. Despite the existential hell which is the lot of so many in our world, 'Hell' is now 'off the menu' in the contemporary church.

As a child, Ignatius, in the rough and tumble of family play, was pushed by one of his brothers into the forbidden area of the hearth rug. 'Now you are sure to go to Hell, Leycester!' he was told impressively, 'You have broken the fifth Commandment and disobeyed your father and your mother so you know you will go there!'

The Baroness de Bertouch, his first biographer, continues, 'The poor little fellow was in an agony of apprehension and there is no knowing to what lengths his terror might have whirled him, had not his elder sister taken compassion on his distress and dispelled it with words of comfort and reason.' This great fear of Hell, not uncommon among the great lovers of God, greatly dominated him for the first thirty years of his life. The dominance of this fear was revealed in an answer given by Ignatius to the question, 'What induced you to become a monk?' - 'I became a monk in the first instance as a means of saving my soul from Hell. This was before my conversion. After it, I remained a monk as an act of gratitude to the Lord Jesus for revealing Himself to me as my personal Saviour'.

We move now to that second formative influence - his 'conversion'. This occurred when he was thirty, already a committed Christian, a professed monk, an Abbot, and in Holy Orders. This occurred in August 1866 at a beach on the Isle of Wight. In his autobiography Fr Ignatius tells us that he was there in poor health following the disastrous break-up of the first community that he founded. 'I was there, broken down entirely and in shattered health - from a worldly point of view a ruined young man. As I strove to offer my life as an act of penitence and expiation, the more hopeless became my sense of ruin and abandonment. I went to Matins at Chale Church but found no comfort...in the afternoon I went to Church again, but my condition became so acute, it actually terrified me. What to do, I knew not. I could scarcely bear the strain of

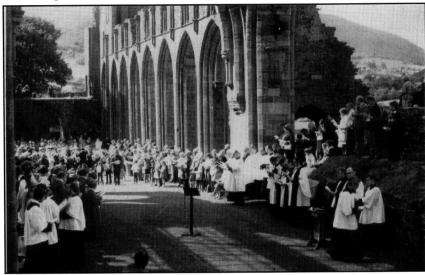
my own existence and, to torture me still more, it seemed that every morbid horror (i.e. his fear of Hell), which had haunted my soul from childhood to this present hour, now awoke within me and combined like giants to stretch me on the rack'. Going to the private chapel in the house where he was staying, his eyes chanced to fall upon an open hymn book and the following stanza:-

'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I his - or am I not?'

He rushed out of the chapel crying aloud a bitter, "No!". His path led down to a beach where, in a calmer frame of mind, he said the Office of Compline, finishing with that customary prayer to Our Lady, The Salve Regina. At the conclusion of this prayer came his grace-filled experience - 'that revelation came like a light from Heaven.... I was transported in spirit to the Holy Land. In my body I stood upon the sands in a little English bay, but in my spirit, I walked in God's city, Jerusalem....in an instant the (English) sunset was blotted out, the shadow of the rocks blurred and both sky and ocean seemed to combine in a soft and limitless space of mist which enveloped my whole being and drew me irresistibly, I knew not and cared not, whither. My only physical sensation was one of complete obliteration. 'In his 'out of body' experience he was in Jerusalem at the time of the presentation of Our Lord at the Temple. He followed Our Blessed Lady and S. Joseph as they carried the child Jesus to the meeting with Simeon and Anna. 'I stood almost at the woman's side and looked upon her child. His face was the face of Jesus. I knew that I was in the supreme presence' and after observing the Virgin place the child Jesus in Simeon's arms - 'I, in an agony of bitter soul-hunger, sprang forward stretching wide my empty arms -"Give Him to me - even to me also !" I cried aloud, and at my cry the Mother of Mercy had compassion on me, she turned and smiled as she said, "Jesus is for you as much as for Simeon", and with that she received the Holy Child once more from the aged Israelite, and coming to me, gently laid Him deliberately on my own breast ... and here, Ignatius heard an inner voice saying, "None shall pluck thee out of my hand"....'in that breathless moment of heavenly, yet, in a sense, also incarnate communion, the conversion of my soul to Jesus was accomplished. Like Simeon, I too, could now ' Depart in peace for mine eyes had indeed seen His salvation.' But it was only a glimpse - a flash! The next instant the vision had faded and I was pacing as before on the dull grey sands.'

Though Fr Ignatius was again to see Our Lady appearing to him and others, including Llanthony Valley children, this experience on the beach at the Isle of Wight, rather than the Capel-y-ffin appearings, was undoubtedly the most formative event of his life.

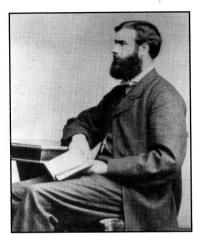
Llanthony Valley - The Place This valley has attracted Christians since early times. Even to-day, I meet visitors who feel instinctively that it is a holy place. Early Christian tradition links St David to a monastic cell at Llanthony. Certainly, at that time a Celtic monastic community came into being. There are more chapels and churches here then anywhere else in the Brecon Beacons. Some are built on the sites of monastic cells. Many are near springs or wells and conform to the linear pattern of Celtic monastic cells where one would be within easy walking distance of the next. Later, tradition also tells us that William de Lacey, hunting from the Court at Ewyas Harold, stumbled upon the ruined stone cell/church of St David at Llanthony. This ruined shrine moved him to renounce the world; to seek solitude and set in train the building of the mediaeval Augustinian Priory there.



Llanthony Priory - 8th Centenary celebration, 1975

Fr. Ignatius later, having failed to acquire Llanthony, began building his new monastery at Capel-y-ffin, a task involving great privation and hardship for the new Abbot and his few monks.

Francis Kilvert - The Meeting It was at this period that Kilvert visited Ignatius and his monks to inspect the venture. And it was on this occasion that the diarist recorded the telling 'holy fool' remark by Ignatius. This, for us, (if not for the main-stream of biographers), gives us some understanding of this complex and baffling personality. Kilvert's assessment of Ignatius was recorded thus :- 'He struck me as being a man of gentle, simple, kind manners, excitable and entirely possessed of that one idea' - namely, of reestablishing monastic life for men in the Church of England.



The Revd Robert Francis Kilvert (1840-79) (Photograph by kind permission of the Kilvert Society)

Kilvert, on that first meeting, laid a foundation stone at the request of the Abbot. Though Ignatius admitted to others that he was a poor judge of character, Kilvert patently was not. He assessed that Ignatius was a man of child-like simplicity fired by the unheard of aspiration to restore monastic life in the Church of England. Kilvert saw that Ignatius was gullible and he knew from local gossip that Ignatius was ripe for exploitation. Kilvert, unlike many local clergy and the Bishops, formed a favourable impression of Ignatius but, like most of his contemporaries, could not reconcile himself to the emergence once again of habited monks in monasteries. It was Fr Ignatius's commitment to monasticism that was always to be the main obstacle. It's sad that so many of the later Kilvert diaries were destroyed and that Kilvert did not live long enough to record a reaction to the Apparitions of Our Lady at Capel-y-ffin. These began on 30th August 1880; were witnessed by a small gathering including local children and have been widely reported from time to time ever since.

In conclusion, we may ask why such an heroic and costly (to Ignatius) venture failed ?

- 1. Lack of support from the Church of England and Welsh bishops. They did nothing to help him that lay within their responsibility. Fr Ignatius and his community were 'excommunicated' in all ways, except by formal act.
- 2. Fr Ignatius and his community suffered from a lack of reference to a living tradition of monasticism in this country.
- 3. Fr Ignatius's main cause of establishing monastic life in the Church of England proved to be the main reason for his rejection.

These factors forced Ignatius to divert his energies and time to intense and distant preaching tours to raise desperately needed funds. So demanding was this need, and so successful was he in using his gift of oratory, that he compromised his own position as Abbot of a Benedictine community. Though he lived out his sole vision of 'Jesus Only', he was unable to follow Jesus from within the monastic tradition of St Benedict. In his later years, his monastery became simply a place for an exhausted preacher to return to for recuperation and muchneeded rest instead of the living place it should have been, where he, as Abbot, could lead his community in exploring their response to the monastic call of Jesus.

The Trust and the Charity Commissioners Our regular readers and supporters will know that The Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust has been an authorised charity registered with the Charity Commissioners since its inception in 1967. Our day-to-day accounts have always been maintained in the proper manner by our Hon Treasurer. All accounting books and records together with a balance sheet have been regularly presented for inspection and check by the Trustees every year and any queries dealt with at our half-yearly meetings. However, the recent Charities Act (1992) has now laid new and more stringent rules of procedure upon both the Charity Commissioners and Trustees of all registered Charities. Larger Charities are required now to employ a professional auditor. Smaller Charities, like ourselves, are required to secure the services of an Independent Examiner with ability and experience in accountancy matters and someone in no way involved in the day-to-day management of the affairs of the Charity or its interests. We are very fortunate therefore to have obtained the services of Mr Adrian Bruton who has very kindly offered to act as Honorary Independent Examiner as required by the 1992 Act. Mr Bruton is Abergavenny-born and was educated at King Henry VIII Grammar School. He has spent thirty years or so in Local Government Financial Management, and is currently an Assistant Director of Finance with a Local Authority.

Annual Pilgrimage 1994 Details of this year's Pilgrimage to Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin are given on Page 16. Please note that this year the main address will be given at the morning Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony, and that the afternoon function at Capel-y-ffin will take a rather simpler form than in the past; also, on this occasion there will not be a Roman Catholic Mass, although it is possible that this may be restored in future years.

Over the years the service at Llanthony has grown in support and importance - many pilgrims seem to come to celebrate the religious heritage of the valley as a whole rather than just the 'Ignatian' part of it at Capel-y-ffin - and with the ruin of Fr Ignatius's abbey church now in too dangerous a state for us to take the responsibility for admitting the public it seems right to make this change. At the moment it applies just to this year's event, after which we shall be reviewing the situation and making plans for the 1995 and subsequent pilgrimages. One advantage of this arrangement will be a less chancy reception for the efforts of our visiting preachers: an address is usually better appreciated indoors than in the open air, especially when it rains.

We are very fortunate to have as our preacher this year the Revd Canon David Walker, sometime Chancellor of Brecon Cathedral and Senior Lecturer at University College, Swansea. Dr Walker is an authority on monasticism both mediaeval and modern and has numerous publications of ecclesiastical and historical interest to his credit.

The afternoon procession from Capel-y-ffin to The Monastery will be more of an informal walk than a procession as such, and will include prayers and readings en route (the Rosary has been suggested) and at the Wayside Calvary (which commemorates the apparitions of Our Lady in 1880), the statue of Our Lady, and on the level in front of the church: these devotions will take the place of the service formerly held in the Abbey ruins. Afterwards, pilgrims will be welcome to enjoy their own picnic tea on the Monastery forecourt or in the car-parking field at Chapel Farm: as has already been noted there will no longer be an organised tea-party at The Monastery.

Hugh Allen Many of our readers together with old friends and colleagues will wish to join with us in offering our good wishes to Hugh Allen on his reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church. Hugh has been a steadfast and valued supporter and organiser of the work of the Trust as a priest in the Churches of England and in Wales for many years and, although he has now moved, for the time being, to his family home in the West Country, we are delighted to know that we can look forward to his continuing help and support as one of our Trustees.