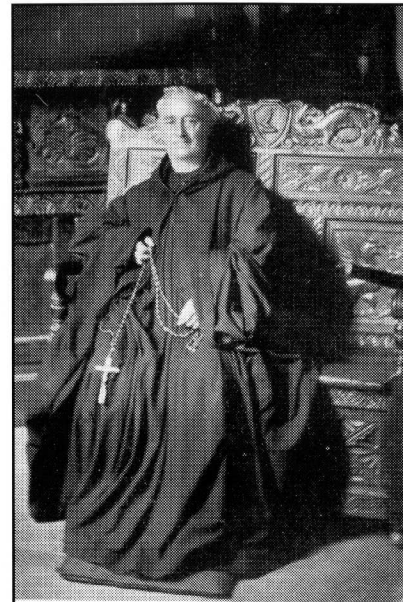


**THE FATHER IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST**

(Charity Commissioners' Registration No. 253225)



*Ignatius of Jesus  
Monk O.S.B.*

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BŶD



JESUS



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Newsletter No. 24

March 1996

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Reflections on the Annual Pilgrimage by the Revd Thomas Dunn,  
Honorary Secretary to the Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust

The Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust Annual Pilgrimage is just one aspect of the work of the Trust. Indeed, the fact that the pilgrimage is described by this title can mislead one into the belief that the event is dedicated to the memory of Fr Ignatius himself. But, in fact, the day on which it has been held for over a hundred years is chosen because it is usually the nearest Saturday to the 30th of August - the anniversary of the Apparitions of Our Lady of Llanthony at Capel-y-ffin in 1880.

Nowadays, the first event of the pilgrimage day is the offering of the Eucharist at St David's at Llanthony, the Celtic foundation traditionally associated with our patron saint. This day, liturgically, is dedicated to St Monica or St Augustine of Hippo or the Beheading of John the Baptist. So already the day is claimed by other holy men and women! The greensward cloisters of the ruined Augustinian Llanthony Priory are central to some already complex strands. Then in the afternoon the border church of St Mary at Capel-y-ffin and the Victorian Llanthony Monastery of Fr Ignatius on the slopes above it add to these themes and compete for our attention and devotion. The two main centres of devotion at Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin tend to split the pilgrimage into two separate events. Some who have braved the valley road to Llanthony are discouraged from tackling the extra four miles of single-track road to Capel-y-ffin in the afternoon of what is usually a busy Bank Holiday weekend.

With these travel problems and so many devotional themes ready to displace the origin of the pilgrimage, it is worth returning to origin of the celebration as instituted by Fr Ignatius and not directed at him personally. I am indebted to Fr Varney, a supporter of the Trust, who sent me a sermon on the origin of the pilgrimage preached by Fr Ignatius at All Saints' Church, Hereford on 5th May 1885.

After describing the vision of the Blessed Sacrament seen at the Abbey on 30th August 1880, he goes on to describe the first of the Apparitions of Our Lady witnessed by some boys who were playing a noisy game of cricket in the Abbot's meadow below the monastery. (The Baroness de Bertouch in her book gives us a complementary account including the names and ages of the children. One boy, Thomas Foord, who was batting when Our Lady appeared, reacted by exclaiming, "If it comes near me I'll hit it" - hardly the language of fervid precocious religiosity or of the rules of cricket !).

Fr Ignatius was not present at this first appearance but he described in his sermon how he had arranged for a lawyer to interrogate the lads. The lawyer concluded that the boys were telling the truth. Ignatius continued.....*"Eight altogether saw the Blessed Virgin; three men (two of whom were local farmers), one woman and four healthy boys !"* In conclusion he said, *"I knew that God had given me a sign; many people were healed..... and now let me tell you what I feel to be the meaning and value of the Apparitions. First, they show the truth and reality of the Faith which Christians have in the supernatural. Then they are of great value to the Church of England because there has been so much of the supernatural in other parts of the Church....The fact of God's granting this to the Church of England proves to my conscience, to my heart and to my understanding that our sacraments are valid and that the Blessed Mother of Jesus would visit us as much as she would visit those in other parts of the Christian Church."*

At the pilgrimage of 1995 we returned to the original purpose that Fr Ignatius had in mind. The Liturgy in the morning at Llanthony was of Our Lady and the homily centred on her rôle in the divine drama of redemption through Our Lord Jesus Christ. A large board was prepared so that pilgrims could add their intercessions for the prayers at Our Lady's shrine on the forecourt of The Monastery. The afternoon began with Evensong at St Mary's, Capel-y-ffin led by Father Jeremy C. Dowding SSC and included an inspiring sermon by the Revd J.D. Monger, Advocatus Fratrum in Anglia of the Moravian Church in which, while recalling the contribution that Fr Ignatius himself made to Christian life, he acknowledged the grace given to this valley through the Apparitions of Our Lady of Llanthony. We are fortunate to be able to include Bro. Monger's address in full below :-

'He being dead, yet speaketh.' Hebrews 11 verse 4

My acquaintance with the life and work of Father Ignatius began nearly sixty years ago. I was taken as a boy to a local Keswick Convention, a week of meetings addressed by Evangelical clergy of the mainstream denominations. The hymnbook used was called 'Hymns of Consecration and Faith', and one hymn in particular made a lasting impression on this boy of ten years:

*Let me come closer to Thee, Jesus,  
Oh, closer day by day:  
Let me lean harder on Thee, Jesus,  
Yes, harder all the way.*

In that edition of the hymnbook, it was attributed to a Father Ignatius, and came from 'Llanthony Hymns'. The only Llanthony I knew in those days was a place near Gloucester Docks with an old medieval gateway - indeed, all that then remained of Llanthony Secunda, as I was to learn later.

Years passed and in 1957 I moved to Monmouth. Here I met a good friend, the Revd John Windle of blessed memory, Rector of Welsh Newton just outside the town. Here the threads of the past came together. Fr Windle was a great student of Ignatius. I read Arthur Calder-Marshall's book, 'The Enthusiast', and later came on my first visit to Capel-y-ffin. Here the words of the hymn of my boyhood days came alive:

*Let me show forth Thy beauty, Jesus,  
Like sunshine on the hills;  
Oh, let my lips pour forth Thy sweetness  
In joyous sparkling rills.*

*Thirsting and hungering for Thee, Jesus,  
With blessed hunger here,  
Longing for home on Zion's mountain,  
No thirst, no hunger there.*

How true are the words of this text, 'He being dead, yet speaketh.'

**IGNATIUS SPEAKS OF THE PAST.** There is a sense in which he lived in the past. He drew his inspiration from medieval monasticism. True, he held a rather romantic view of that monasticism, but he was irresistibly attracted by its ideals of regular and ordered worship, architecture and study. It was his vocation to revive its contribution to the Church of his day. This was his motivation. Ignatius takes us into the immediate past. Who can read the story of this remarkable man without feeling any response whatsoever? It is a very human story. It contains many mistakes and misfortunes - some of his own making and others because of the times in which he lived. It is a story that can excite or exasperate but it is never boring. It is a record of devotion to an ideal, of courage and endurance. It lifts the spirit and still has its appeal. It bears telling again and again.

In Bernard Palmer's book 'Reverend Rebels' it is Father Ignatius who is the subject of the last chapter of forty pages. Dr Palmer writes, 'Paradoxically, his (*Ignatius's*) memory is outwardly more revered to-day than is that of his more staid and successful contemporaries. Neither Richard Meux Benson, founder of the Cowley Fathers, nor Charles Gore, founder of the Community of the Resurrection, enjoys an annual commemoration on the scale of the gathering each August at Ignatius's tomb at Llanthony in the Black Mountains of South Wales. He may have appeared to be a charlatan to many of his contemporaries, but his memory lives on - and grows greener as time softens the edges of his eccentricities and his supporters recall the more attractive features of his personality.'

**IGNATIUS SPEAKS TO THE PRESENT.** St Paul expressed concern in his letter to the Church at Corinth lest they should lose the simplicity that is in Christ. It is a recurring danger in the life of the Church. We make things so complicated and from time to time need to be brought back to some basic truths. Ignatius taught the pre-eminence of our Lord Jesus Christ (in line with St Paul in Colossians 1 v 18). 'JESUS ONLY' means PAX - PEACE. How much do we relate to the Person, Work and Spirit of Jesus in the Church of to-day? Given that the Church's one Foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord, Ignatius speaks to us to-day concerning the nature of the Church. For many people to-day, the Church is so monochromatic - even a dull grey area. St Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians chap 3 vv 8-10 describes his preaching as making known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God. The Greek word can be translated as the 'many-coloured' wisdom of God. Ignatius was a colourful figure. He strove to bring together both Catholic and Evangelical, showing them to be not conflicting but complementary strands of worship in the Church of God.

Ignatius was an Evangelical. There was his memorable conversion experience alone on the beach on the Isle of Wight. As he said Compline by the light of the setting sun, he saw the Holy Family, Mary placing the Babe into the arms of Simeon and then towards Ignatius saying, "Jesus is for you as much as for Simeon." Ignatius said, "In that breathless moment the conversion of my soul to JESUS was accomplished. Like Simeon, I too could now depart in peace for mine eyes had seen His salvation." Even such a matter-of-fact writer as Calder-Marshall had to acknowledge that 'the experience effected a genuine alteration in Ignatius's spirit and attitude to life.'

Ignatius began a round of evangelistic missions with the motivation of a John Wesley, an Ira Sankey, a D.L. Moody or a Billy Graham. True, the missions produced much-needed income for his beloved Monastery, but they were not just money-making efforts. The lives of people were changed. They found God. When the Wayside Calvary here at Capel-y-ffin was dedicated in 1936 - twenty-eight years after the death of Ignatius - one man had cycled from Yorkshire to join the 1,500 pilgrims for the occasion. He had been converted at one of the missions. I learned this from Fr John Windle who officiated at the service on that day. But although an Evangelical, Ignatius was also a Catholic. Here it is so important to define our words to prevent misunderstanding. Like the word 'love' the word 'catholic' has been so debased in the currency of language. The original Greek word *katholikos* is a lovely word, inclusive not exclusive. It means 'universal' - 'general' - 'comprehensive'. It embraces and unites. What have we done with it? We have prefixed it with localised terms and party labels. We have looked at it with tunnel vision. People have fought one another over it in a supposedly Christian spirit and the words from the Cross take on a new significance, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Ignatius saw the value of sacramental worship. It was for him the 'outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace.' He believed in the Holy Mysteries; the infinity of the spiritual dimension; the love of God which surpasses knowledge and the peace of God which passes all understanding. He did his best to express this in liturgy and worship. Granted that it was rather a 'pick 'n' mix' assortment - part Latin, part Welsh - but the Bible came first plus all the liturgical treasures that he knew and that appealed to him. It was all grist to the mill without any inhibitions, fear of any man or, indeed, bishop.

Worship was giving glory to God with body, mind and spirit and not one without the other:-

Not body only, with no inner reality or experience.

Not mind only, rational, correct but with no feeling or charity.

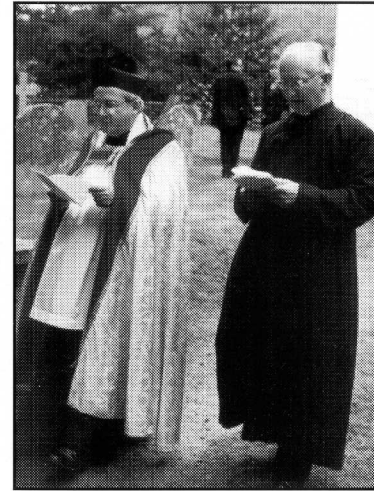
Not spirit only, without tangible expression or freezing four out of the five God-given senses.

Ignatius speaks to those whose ears are not closed by prejudice or preconditioned by past impressions. He says, "Yes, you can be an Evangelical Catholic or a Catholic Evangelical!"

**IGNATIUS SPEAKS FOR THE FUTURE.** Ignatius had his problems. We have ours to-day. The pressures of materialism; the secularisation of society; misunderstanding; misrepresentation and indifference both outside and inside the Church. We read the story of Ignatius and his monastery. We visit the mountains and valley he knew so well and 'he being dead yet speaks....'. He tells us not to be disobedient to the heavenly vision, to trust and obey. Jesus is for you as well as for others. He comes to us still in Word, Spirit and Sacrament. He tells us not to limit the truth of God to the measures of the human mind; to seek Him and experience Him at all times and in all places with all Christian people of good will. This is the true catholicity. Ignatius told Francis Kilvert on one occasion that he got on well with Low Church people and, best of all, with Dissenters. A prophet not without honour - he was a good Catholic! He tells us not to disparage preaching, in or out of season. Pray without ceasing! 'Multiply our graces, / chiefly love and fear. / and, dear Lord, the chiefest / grace to persevere.' In a few moments we will follow a path that Ignatius walked in all seasons and all weathers to three special places - a Wayside Calvary where we see the love of God in Jesus - Death defeated by Death - Surrender leading to Life and Salvation. Then we see the place where His Blessed Mother appeared in the Abbot's Meadow. It is an incomplete theology that ignores the Mother of Our Lord and her vital chosen part in God's redeeming plan; she who said, "Be it unto me according to Thy Word." She is no stranger to suffering who knew what it was for a 'sword to pierce through her own soul.'

The third place is the ruined church where a man who believed he was called to revive the monastic ideal in the Church of his day lies buried within its crumbling walls. To the superficial observer, making too speedy a judgement, he failed. The scene is sad, even pathetic. The same is true of the Wayside Calvary. Yet did he completely fail? Ignatius was a man of his own generation, yet living a generation too early for the realisation of his vision. He prepared a way for others to follow. He sowed the seed that enabled others to find their vocation. To-day, some religious communities are passing through difficult times financially and through lack of vocations. For too long we have been living on a spiritual ebb tide. But that tide can turn again, as Latourette reminded us in his history of Christianity. Meanwhile, the Cross, the Field and the Shrine at Capel-y-ffin point to life after death. We are here today because, though Ignatius died, through his faith he speaks to us still.

\* \* \* \* \*



*Fr Jeremy Dowding SSC (left) and the Revd Dennis Monger leave St Mary's Church at Capel-y-ffin to begin the procession to The Monastery.*



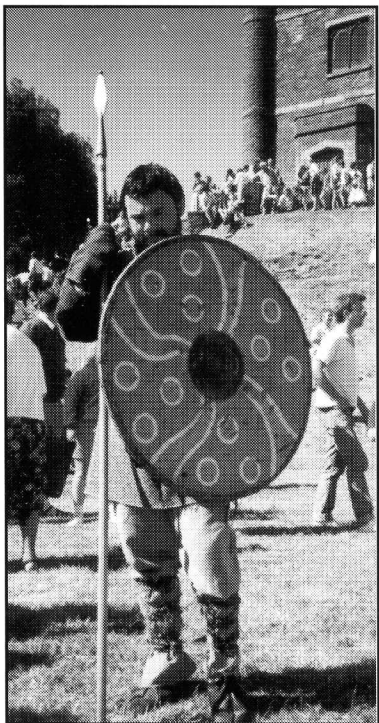
*The procession moves on from the Wayside Calvary to assemble for prayers at the statue of Our Lady and final blessing on The Monastery forecourt.*

**The Moravian Church.** About the middle of the ninth century both Bohemia and Moravia (now part of the Czech Republic) were converted to Christianity through the work of two Greek Orthodox missionaries, Cyril and Methodius. In the following centuries Bohemia and Moravia came under the jurisdiction of Rome. By 1467 however it became clear that Rome had no intention of any examination or reformation of its practices so the Moravian Brethren withdrew with their own Ministry,

retaining the three-fold order of deacon, presbyter and bishop. When Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the Castle Church door in Wittenburg in 1517, the Unitas Fratrum (Moravian Church) already numbered some 200,000 with over 400 congregations with its own hymn book, liturgy and catechism.

The Moravian Church in England was recognised by Act of Parliament in 1749 and there were soon congregations at Bristol, Kingswood, Tytherton and Brockweir. When the Brockweir church was about to close in 1961, Bro. J.D. Monger was given temporary pastoral oversight. In 1975 he was consecrated a Presbyter in the Moravian Church by Bishop E.W. Porter in recognition of his fourteen years' service with the Brockweir Church and Congregation. During his thirty years at Brockweir, Bro. Monger shared for ten years in an ecumenical team ministry at St Michael's, Mitchel Troy under Canon Norman Price. He is also an Associate of the Society of the Sacred Cross at Ty Mawr Convent, Monmouth. In 1982 he moved from Monmouth to Ewyas Harold to take on the pastorate of the Baptist Church there and at Pandy. Now retired, Bro Monger remains a well-loved and respected figure in Monmouthshire and Herefordshire and throughout the hills and vales of the Black Mountains where he continues to respond to calls to officiate at services.

**New Trustees.** We announce with pleasure the appointment of two additional Trustees :-



**Mr Frank Olding BA(Wales), Dip Mus,AMA.** is a native of Abertillery, educated at Nantyglo Comprehensive School and University College Cardiff (where he captained the second cricket XI) and graduated in 1984 with honours in Archaeology and Welsh. He also holds a post-graduate diploma in Museum Studies; is an associate member of the Museums Association and a member of the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust. He has been curator of the Abergavenny Museum since 1989.

The museum is located in Abergavenny Castle, which happened to be the scene of a Dark Ages pageant a few years ago. At that event Frank found himself propelled to the fore and is seen here ready for action as a peasant warrior. His help with the work of the Trust has been very considerable. All our Ignatius archives have been catalogued at the museum and lodged for their safe custody in perpetuity.



**Miss Deborah Lyne** The daughter of Douglas Lyne, our Trust Archivist for the past twenty-five years, Miss Lyne is Head of Appeals for United Response, a major charity that provides community-based care for people with disabilities. Before that she worked for the charitable housing association Carr-Comm. With ten years' experience of charitable fund-raising behind her, Miss Lyne brings with her an expertise that will prove invaluable in our efforts to raise the substantial sum that we need for the work on the Abbey Church. Early family holidays in the Black Mountains and, later, joining us on annual pilgrimages with her father, have already given Deborah a very special relationship with the work of the Trust.

**The Abbey Church** At last our plans to begin real progress on the project for repair and maintenance work on the Abbey Church are taking shape :-

- (a) Our application to dismantle the unstable upper walls and reduce them to a safe height was approved by the Brecon Beacons National Park Planning Committee early last year.
- (b) A detailed professional report on the proposed structural work on the Abbey Church, together with plans of its existing and proposed elevations, was drawn up and submitted to the Brecon Beacons National Park for scrutiny and approval late last year. Permission to proceed with the work programme has now been received.
- (c) A photographic survey of the Abbey Church has been carried out for lodging with the County Sites and Monuments Record operated by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust at Welshpool.
- (d) The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments in Wales at Aberystwyth has been kept informed of the proposal.
- (e) An Appeal leaflet (copy enclosed) has been printed to help raise the funds required for the project and it is intended that this should be addressed primarily to the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This Newsletter comes to you with our thanks for your loyal interest in the work of the Trust since it was formed thirty years ago. We shall need the continuing support of all our friends if we are to succeed in our aim of making the Abbey Church a living memorial to the life and work of its founder, Father Ignatius of Jesus.



**PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME**  
**SATURDAY 24TH AUGUST 1996**

11.30am A Family Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony.

3pm Solemn Evensong at St Mary's Church, Capel-y-ffin and sermon by The Revd Roger Williams (Vicar of St Julian's Newport Gwent) followed by the Procession to the Abbey Church at The Monastery with stations at the Wayside Calvary and at the statue of Our Lady of Llanthony.

Please note that this date falls on the Late Summer Bank Holiday weekend. 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 & Mrs Watkins of Chapel Farm. Visitors are asked not to park at or near The Monastery itself, please, as this will cause difficulty, congestion and obstruct the pilgrimage arrangements.



**SUBSCRIPTION FORM**

To :- Hon Secretary  
The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust  
The Vicarage  
Llanfihangel Crucorney  
Abergavenny NP7 8DH

Please put my name on the mailing list for the next Father Ignatius Memorial Trust Newsletter.

I enclose a donation of.....\* to cover the cost of printing and mailing and to help with the work of the Trust.

*\*Please leave this section blank if you make regular donations by Banker's order and/or Deed of Covenant.*

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Date.....

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