

PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 26th AUGUST 2000

12 noon

Sung Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony.

1.30pm

Assemble outside St David's Church for Pilgrimage Walk.

3.30 pm

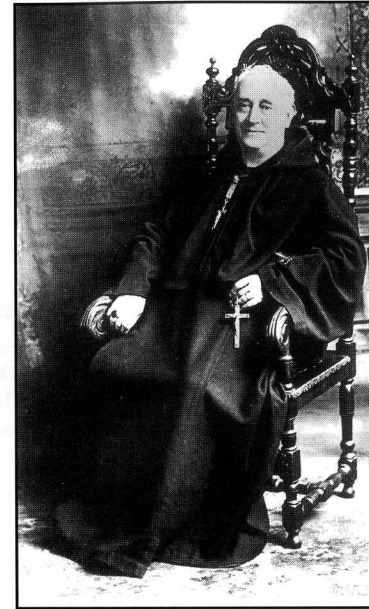
Ecumenical Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary at St Mary's Church, Capel-y-ffin with address by the Ven. Martin Williams, Archdeacon of Margam, followed by the Procession to The Monastery and Abbey Church with stations at the Wayside Calvary and at the Statue of Our Lady of Llanthony. Car parking will be available in the field at Chapel Farm by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Watkins. Visitors are asked not to park at or near The Monastery itself, please, as this will cause difficulty, congestion and obstruct the Pilgrimage.

There will be a Walk Leader for the Pilgrimage Walk. The route will be up the secluded lane on the east side of the valley, not on the main road that carries the valley vehicle traffic. Stout footwear and weatherproof clothing are essential.



THE FATHER IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST

(Charity Commissioners' Registration No. 253225)



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JESUS



ONLY

PAX

Fr. Ignatius OSB 1837 - 1908
(Joseph Leycester Lyne)

Newsletter No. 28

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March 2000

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A Victorian Reverend Rebel With acknowledgements and thanks to Bernard Palmer, author of *Reverend Rebels* and publishers Darton, Longman and Todd we reproduce below an extract from his book. Bernard Palmer OBE was editor of the *Church Times* from 1968 to 1989. He is also the author of *Gadfly for God: A History of the Church Times* and *High and Mitred: Prime Ministers as Bishop-Makers*. Father Ignatius of Llanthony is one of Bernard Palmer's 'Five Victorian Clerics and their Fight Against Authority' among his *Reverend Rebels*. Following a review of the life and times of Ignatius, Bernard Palmer writes :-

'Ignatius has been called the Don Quixote of the Catholic Revival, a figure of both fun and tragedy. His eccentricities are continually tripping him up and robbing him of the dignity his devotion deserves. His career exhibited many inconsistencies, the greatest of which was that which allowed him to combine the profession of a preaching friar with that of a cloistered monk. As an orator he was in a class of his own. An actor once said of him: "Look at his hands! Just look at the emotion in them! What would not some of us actors give to possess hands like those!". And an observer recalls him at the Town Hall at Oxford in 1879 preaching on the snares of the Devil and stopping suddenly, pointing with his arm over the heads of the audience and saying in a low and solemn voice, 'I see him now !' At least half the people in the hall turned round to look. It was a feat of oratory beyond compare. Of theological learning he had little, though he was adept at translating the thought of others into terms which a popular audience could understand. His intense if narrow piety gave his sermons a force which many found irresistible. As a London maid-of-all-work put it: 'Dear Father, I feel I must tell you that it is through you I have heard the Master's voice calling to me!' As the *Church Times* justly affirmed in its obituary of Ignatius: 'He wielded such a power as few have exercised since John Wesley ceased from his labours, and by his power to sway people's emotions he was the means of bringing many to God and the Faith.'

Fr Charles Hopkins, founder of the Order of St. Paul at Alton and a friend of Ignatius, commented percipiently after his death: "The most prominent peculiarity about Father Ignatius was the way in which he embraced the spirit and form.....of two seemingly opposite extremes - Protestantism and Catholicism.....The seeming peculiarity was, I am sure, the result of a dual love - a love for souls...and a love for...the beauty of worship expressed in the ritual of the old historic Church.'

The power to convert souls was his great achievement. Yet, in what he would have regarded as the mainspring of his career, his attempt at reviving Benedictinism within the Church of England, he was seemingly a total failure. That he failed was not wholly his own fault. He lacked proper guidance in the pursuit of his vocation; and he failed to attract support or sympathy from members of the hierarchy, with some of whom he found himself in active conflict.

But he lacked that spirit of obedience which should be the first duty of a monk. He would not even obey the letter of his own Benedictine Rule, interpreting it as he chose and adding to it as the fancy took him. The offices in the chapel at Llanthony were an eclectic jumble said partly in English, partly in Welsh, partly in Latin. The number of his monks never rose above a pathetic handful who often turned out to be rogues or misfits. As the *Church Times* observed in its obituary: 'In those long years of energetic striving nothing tangible, nothing established, remains, save the forlorn shell of a monastery in the Black Mountains.'

Yet was his life such a total failure ? C.P.S. Clarke in *The Oxford Movement and After*, concedes that Ignatius might be condemned for having put the monastic revival on the level of a comic opera. Yet, he adds, other communities 'of the strictest orthodoxy and unimpeachable correctness....may nevertheless owe their very existence to the publicity which he gave to the religious life as a possible vocation for men.' Donald Attwater, who makes no attempt in his biography to paper over the cracks in Ignatius's character, makes the same point when he maintains that the 'real and permanent achievement' of his life was as a religious. 'Every monk, friar and clerk regular in England to-day owes gratitude to him for all he did to familiarize the people of England and Wales with the forgotten, misjudged or vilified idea of monasticism...He gave England the vision of a good, loving man who was nevertheless a monk. The path of all monks has been easier for the life and sacrifice of Ignatius.' Another writer, Desmond Morse-Boycott, who was almost as colourful a character as Ignatius himself, was prepared to go further and award him a positive halo. In *Lead Kindly Light* he dubbed him 'a fool like St Francis, a revivalist like Moody, a lover of souls like General Booth, an ascetic like St. Anthony the hermit, an orator as golden as Lacordaire, but withal a poor theologian and as simple as a child, of whom his church was unworthy. Alas! She is awkward in her handling of saints, and her saints cannot breathe in "Establishment".'



The Parish Church of S Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, London. The Revd Jonathan Kester SSC of S Mary Magdalene has sent us a copy of his parish magazine with a picture of his church (see Page 6) together with recollections of Edward Stuart its first priest and some of Fr Ignatius' associations with the place:- 'Attending the church of S Mary Magdalene was a sensitive responsive lad, Joseph Leycester Lyne, with aspirations to the priesthood. With his Scottish links, Stuart encouraged him to study at the college of Glen Almond and possibly paid the fees. Eventually Bishop Philpotts made him a deacon under Father Prynne of St Peter's Plymouth.....Bishop Philpotts stipulated that Lyne should not be allowed to preach for three years as his style was rather exuberant and open to criticism in those days.'



Ignatius - Evangelist Monk. In the fullness of time, on 19th May 1890, Fr Ignatius preached at the Church of S. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square. The following extracts from that sermon offer a characteristic example of the dramatic flavour of his style in the pulpit :-

“In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.” - S. John xiv.2.

We are keeping the feast of the Ascension of Jesus Christ into Heaven. Our hearts are very glad to see Him, crowned at last the King of Glory, Who was so short a time ago crowned the King of Shame. The world crowned Him with thorns, and the world will always crown Him with thorns, and the world will always crown His Church with thorns.

Just contemplate for a moment the revelation that Christ gives us about Heaven: “In My Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you.” This world is a very little place, is it not ? If you have ever glanced at a few pages of a book of astronomy, you will know that this little world is only a speck of dust on the boundless plains of space, among the countless suns that form the Milky Way that streaks the sky at night, all of which have their planetary systems. Our little world is only a tiny out-of-the-way planet in a separate solar system. In fact, this world is so small that it is a wonder it does not escape God’s notice altogether.

Some people say that our Christian Religion is perfect nonsense - the imagination only of very conceited persons. Do you think that if there is a God and He rules the universe He cares two straws for this out-of-the-way, trumpery little world of ours ? I want to make us all realise that, from a human point of view, this Christian religion is a very absurd religion. If you once take in the thought of the magnitude, the immeasurable immensity of space, if you contemplate the firmament spangled with worlds, and then come down to our little tiny earth, can you believe that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for it? “Nonsense!” says the world, “we can’t believe it and we won’t believe it. You want to tell us that Almighty God came down into this tiny planet in order to put us right ? It is an absurdity; the very thought is monstrous.....”

NO ! It is not contrary to reason that God will make himself known to us and make us realise that he does care for us.

Do you think it very unnatural that, if God loves us, He will bring Himself into touch with humanity and will lift up humanity into touch with Himself ? God created us with a free will and our free will was the origin of all the evil that has come into the world. But God’s love is mightier than the power of evil.....I can never believe that Heaven is meant only for the little handful of Christians that live in this world. We know that there are many mansions, many eternal homes for the creatures He has made.



He will gather them at the great harvest time. In His house are many mansions. Our blessed Lord draws away the curtain from Heaven. As I am speaking now, countless hosts are gathering in the many mansions in one glad brotherhood of liberty, praise and song.

Then He says: “I go to prepare a place for you.’ He looks each one of us in the face and says, ‘I go to prepare a place for you.’ God the Father cannot prepare a place for us. He has not suffered and therefore He cannot sympathise with us. It is not the Father; it is the Son, Who has gone to prepare a place for us. He was tempted as we are; He took our infirmities; He bore our griefs; He knows our sorrows; and it is this Jesus, our compassionate Friend, our Elder Brother, who has gone to prepare a place for us. I feel at home in Heaven already. Jesus is there; the Babe that wept on Mary’s breast is there; He who lived a life of poverty and shame and rejection - Who has carried my infirmities and sickness - is there. It is my Jesus ; it is your Jesus, for God has given Him to us; He is God’s gift to the weary, restless, sinful world. It is the Man of Sorrows acquainted with grief; it is the long despised and rejected of men that is there. So then He will know how to prepare a place for you and me.

Dear people, life is very short. All this churchful of people will soon have passed away into only just a little handful of dust. Very soon our place shall know us no more. But Jesus knows of this; Jesus is engaged before the Father’s throne, interceding for us and preparing our place. Art Thou preparing a place for me, Jesus ? Dost Thou know my tastes, my loves, my longings, my cravings, my hopes, my expectations ? Dost Thou know them all ? “Yes”, He says, “I know my sheep.” And He is preparing a place for me.....” “I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee,” says our Lord, and, “I am with you always.” “All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me” - “I will in no wise cast them out.” Coming to Jesus means simply trusting in Him, accepting Him.....He is all in all to me - pardon of sin, reconciliation with God, my Robe of Righteousness, Eternal Life, Everlasting Salvation, Peace with God.....Jesus is preparing my place, I can trust myself to Him; I am safe in the arms of Jesus. Do you want to have , in your eternal home, those whom you have loved on earth ? Trust them to Jesus. Bring them to Jesus by the single announcement of the message of His love and leave the rest to Him, and then, as those you love pass away one by one and old age steals over your soul, then remember He is preparing your place and all whom He has taken away will be there to make that place a home for you. Jesus, in the highest Heaven, look into Thy Mother Mary’s face now. Thou hast loved Thy Mother; as a child Thou didst nestle between her breasts. I want my mother there. “I go to prepare a place for you”. Shall I have that darling wife, that dear child ? “I go to prepare a place for you.” If we have trusted Him, our bitterest tears shall shine like gems in a king’s crown. Jesus wept !.....

In God's sight we are all sinners, there is no difference between us. The best moralist who ever lived is considered a sinner just like the vilest scapegrace in the streets of London. Christ came to save all the world. Anyone who will lay hold of Christ, in Him receives the atonement for his sins. A man in Christ is a new creature.....Jesus Christ is present in our midst and is pleading with the weary, tired, restless ones of earth, with the rationalist, the materialist, the humanitarian, the atheist. By the power of His Holy Spirit. Jesus says, "Whosoever will, may come." Who will come home tonight, simply trusting in Jesus? Your life will be very happy afterwards if you go home tonight with Jesus, for it is not mere excitement which will pass away in a week. Jesus says, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." And if Satan tempts you to doubt, you can answer him: "I know Him in whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He will keep that which I have committed to Him against that day". S. Augustine says, "Take my heart, Lord, I cannot keep it for Thee." Say it now; and then go home and comfort yourselves with the words, "Kept by the power of God."

"In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you." Jesus is speaking to you individually, poor, restless, frightened, doubting sinners. Only take Him at His word and peace will flow into your soul. People think they are all right if they go to church and take the sacrament; but the sacrament is for believers, not for unbelievers.....Directly you believe, you take your place in the Church of the redeemed. You cannot be a member of the Church unless you believe Christ's promises. Then, for God's sake, for the Love of Jesus, trust Him and take Him at His word.....

God bless you! Go home with Jesus: He will sanctify all your troubles, all your trials and temptations. Clap your hands! Make a cheerful noise before the God of Jacob. Jesus is the Author and Finisher, the Omega as well as the Alpha. Go home with Jesus, knowing that all things shall work together for your good, and that not one particle shall fail of all the exceeding great and precious promises by which we become partakers of His Divine Nature.

Late News As we were going to press we learned of the death on Sunday 2 April of Fr Brocard Sewell of the Order of Carmelites, a founder member of the Father Ignatius memorial Trust. An appreciation of Fr Brocard will appear in next year's Newsletter. R.I.P.



Retirements The Autumn Meeting saw the retirement as Trustees of Mr Wilfred Davies and Mrs Joan Wheeler, and the resignation of Fr Thomas Dunn as Hon. Chairman/Secretary and of Mr Will Jackson as Hon. Treasurer.

When Wilf Davies with his wife Helen (a grand-daughter of Eric Gill) and their children came to live at the Monastery (where Helen had been brought up) in the mid 1960s they coincided with a revival of interest in Fr Ignatius and his monastic experiment, some of it no doubt generated by Arthur Calder-Marshall's life of Ignatius published in 1962. This in turn led to an increase in the number of visitors and pilgrims, and to the idea — very much Wilf's brainchild — of forming a charitable trust to restore and care for Fr Ignatius' tomb and the ruins of his abbey church.

Within a year of the Trust's formation the church had been cleared of tons of rubble and its surviving walls made safe; soon afterwards the tomb was retiled and re-railed and the first public act of worship held. That these things happened, and that they were paid for, and that the Trust's growing list of supporters was informed of them, was almost entirely due to Wilf's hard work, much of it carried out at typewriter and telephone when he came in from his "day job" as Head Warden of the National Park.

In 1985 (soon after his retirement) Wilf and Helen moved into Abergavenny, but for some years he continued to serve as Secretary, then as Editor of the Newsletter. Now he has decided the time has come to step down from the Trust, and his fellow Trustees would like to record their thanks for all he has brought to the business of the Trust over more than three decades — not least the warmth of his friendship.



In August 1972 the Davies' guests included Joan Piercey, daughter of Eddie Nuttgens the stained glass artist and an old family friend. It was the month of the first Fr Ignatius Trust-organised Pilgrimage, and Joan found herself being volunteered to man the tea urn, and for the next dozen years or more she continued to organise the Pilgrimage refreshments.

Meanwhile Joan had moved from Hertfordshire to Abergavenny, where she met and married Harry Wheeler, and became more involved with the affairs of the Trust. In recent years Harry has had problems with his health and it has been difficult for her to get to meetings or to the Pilgrimage, but pilgrims from the 70s and 80s will have fond memories of Joan's wonderful teas (often served in pouring rain!), and of the special fruit-cake (baked in a large meat-tin) which brought comfort and cheer to many a wilting worshipper. Many thanks, Joan, and every good wish for the future.

The Abbey Church - Progress Report. Regular readers will recall that our first application to the Heritage Lottery fund for grant aid to make the Abbey Church safe for public entry was not approved by their trustees. The proposal, using a local contractor, would have left the remaining walls about ten feet high. That solution would have enabled our trustees, together with friends who have the expertise, to administer the scheme and at no cost to the Trust. The especial significance was that the monetary value of the voluntary work would count as part of our own financial contribution towards the cost of the project.

In rejecting that proposal the Heritage Lottery Fund trustees agreed that our application fully recognised the religious and historic significance of the place. But they pointed out that by truncating the walls, the gaunt ruin of the Abbey Church, still so significant a feature of the landscape, would be lost. In concluding their comments the Heritage Lottery Fund report suggested that we seek the recommendations of a recognised conservation engineer and submit a fresh 'stand-alone' application for grant aid.

In pursuance of this, an architect, David Harvey, in partnership with a structural engineer experienced in the conservation of listed buildings, Jeremy Drinkwater, were jointly appointed by the Trust to make a detailed survey of the structure and propose a scheme of total stabilisation suitable for a further application.

The survey and analysis of the structural failures were completed this year. A proposed scheme of stabilisation has been prepared and is now ready for inclusion in a new application for grant aid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (which now has its Welsh regional office in Cardiff). The scheme mainly consists of using stainless steel tie bolts and bronze dovetails to hold the loosened parts together, followed by pointing the masonry. There would be some re-building where deterioration is too severe but, apart from the inside of the East wall, the church would look much as it has in the past. Because of the considerable movement of the East wall, it is proposed to concrete fill-in the recess of the internal arch, keeping the splayed window, and to cover the area with rendering.

The cost of this work would now be much more than originally estimated and could mean that we would have to find 25% and not 10% of the total. But if we register for VAT, our trustees would not have to take account of it in the costings and, as a consequence, our application could well come within the 10% contribution bracket. We will trust that these endeavours will this time meet with success together with your own kind and encouraging support and approval.



The Monastery Refectory (circa 1900)

This photograph is remarkable for featuring the early electric lighting system. It was hydro-electric powered from the hill above and a derelict Pelton wheel to drive the generator was discovered in the basement many years later. The installation of this was probably inspired by Fr Asaph Harris, the only member of the community known to have some technical and engineering skills. After the death of Fr Ignatius in 1908, Fr Asaph was in due course confirmed in the legal ownership of the monastery and lands. By this time he had become a monk at Caldey, the monastery off the Pembrokeshire coast. The old refectory was later used by Eric Gill and family as their kitchen, dining room and living room from 1924 to 1928.

Trustees The following appointments and changes were approved at the Trustees' Autumn meeting with effect from 29th March 2000:-

Hon Chairman The Reverend Hugh Allen, Rector of Coychurch, Bridgend.

Hon Editor of Mrs Elizabeth Hacket Pain, Church Warden,
 Newsletter & St David's, Llanthony.
 Acting Hon Sec.

Members Mr Andrew Knill, Planning Department,
 Monmouthshire County Council.
 The Revd Roger Shambrook SSC

Resignations on retirement. Mrs Joan Wheeler and Mr Wilfred Davies (*Founder Member*) with thanks from members for long and faithful service to the aims of the Trust.

