

gathering around the Altar in adoring throngs, the incense is ascending in fragrant silvery clouds, all are holding tall waxen tapers, all aglow, to meet the Bridegroom, "lights burning in their hands." The priest bows down over the altar, the words of Jesus are uttered in silent whispers, heard only by the Holy Ghost, Who is waiting for their appointed utterance to descend upon the Elements, to convert them by His Almighty Power into the Body and Blood of God Incarnate, Mary's Son. The silvery chime of altar bells announces the stupendous work of God, and amid the clouds of incense, through which twinkle like stars the numerous altar lights, the Sacred Host is elevated, then the Chalice. The bells are silent, and then a soft, sweet hymn to Jesus floats down from the Nuns' grated choir. The prophecy of Malachi i.11 is fulfilled, 'In every place incense shall be offered to my name and a pure offering.' At the end of the Mass the great bell tolled the Angelus, which was sung in Welsh before the Office of Sext.

At a quarter to three the bells called all the various bands of devout pilgrims together in church again for Solemn Nones and another sermon by the Rev. Father. The church was literally crammed. The Father's text was, 'Your young men shall see visions,' from Joel ii.28. A distinct promise to the Christian Church, to the Church of believers. 'Instead of wondering at such a statement as we make respecting this day's commemoration, Christians can afford to take such a thing as a matter of course, and only one of the many fulfilments of this promise in our text.' People read such promises in the Bible without in the least realising what they are, or expecting their fulfilment. Just in the same way

they read such a promise of Christ as this, 'These signs *shall* follow them that believe; in my name they *shall* cast out devils.' Wherever a *true* believer in Christ speaks in Christ's name, he *does*, he must, 'cast out devils;' it is our Lord's own word that he shall. In the *true* believer there is the 'power to do many wonderful works;' faith only is needed to bring that power into action. Here, in this place, four years ago, 'our young men did see visions;' and although I am not 'a young man' myself, I also was permitted to see the Vision of the Descent of the Blessed Virgin from Heaven with three others. If you believe the promises of the Bible, and that we are credible witnesses, you need have no difficulty whatever in believing the visions which we are met to thank God for. Wordly, sensual, thoughtless persons may not trouble to even listen to our tale; they, as the Apostle says, 'mind earthly things,' but to you, whose 'conversation is in Heaven,' who 'walk with God,' such a testimony as ours may be a great consolation.

In conclusion, the Rev. Father remarked how the promise was to God's people *only*, to Jerusalem, 'your young men.' Ah! how necessary it was nowadays, when the outward, hollow, formal profession of Christianity seemed all that the religious world possessed, how necessary it was that each individual should make his own 'calling and election *sure*;' that he should take his place among the saints, in the Church of the Redeemed, built upon Christ Himself, by a personal acceptance of Jesus, and all that He was as God's gift to him personally. Then when he had taken his place among the people of God he could more easily grasp the promise 'your young men *shall* see visions.'

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NEWSLETTER NO.9 JUNE 1981

LAST year our pilgrimage took place on 30 August, which was the exact centenary of the first of the 'Llanthony Apparitions'. It was by a happy chance that this date should have fallen on a Saturday, when a good number of our friends were able to keep this significant anniversary with due festivity.

Our celebrations began at noon with a solemn Eucharist in the ruined church, whose new altar (a memorial to the late Fr John Windle) was consecrated and used for the first time at this service. The celebrant was the Bishop of Swansea and Brecon (the Right Reverend B. N. Y. Vaughan), who was assisted by an efficient (and all-female) team of servers from All Saints',

Hereford—a church whose connections with Capel-y-ffin stretch back over many decades. In the afternoon we reassembled in the abbey church for Evensong, at which the Bishop presided and preached, and as a final act of commemoration we went in procession (supported, as usual, by our good friends of the Abergavenny Town Band) to the statue of Our Lady of Llanthony and the memorial Calvary. Here Douglas Lyne read to us from Fr Ignatius' own account of the Apparitions, and in the gathering gloom of that somewhat autumnal afternoon it was not hard for us to feel at one with those who had seen visions in just this spot on just such a day just one hundred years before.

This year's pilgrimage will be on Saturday 22 August, and as in former years the day's events will begin with the Eucharist in St David's church, adjacent to the ruins of the medieval Augustinian priory at Llanthony. This service, which will follow one of the forms from the Alternative Service Book of the Church of England, will start at 11.30 am. We hope that as many of you as possible will be able to arrive in time to take part in it; priests present are invited to concelebrate in alb or surplice and white stole. During the lunch interval pilgrims may like to picnic in the priory grounds or to seek refreshment at the Abbey Hotel. There will be time for the energetic to complete the journey to Capel-y-ffin (just under four miles) on foot, although car parking space will be available here in the field by the bridge (by kind permission of Mr Lloyd of Chapel Farm), or (for registered disabled drivers only) at the Monastery itself. At 2.45 pm the traditional procession will leave Capel-y-ffin church for the Monastery, where Evensong will be sung in the ruined church and an address given by Fr Hugh Clarke, Prior of the Carmelite house at Cheltenham. Afterwards, as usual, we look forward to meeting friends old and new over a cup of tea and something to eat.

It will be noticed that we are not, this year, using the new altar for the pilgrimage Eucharist. The chief reason for this is our desire to preserve



The Young Ignatius

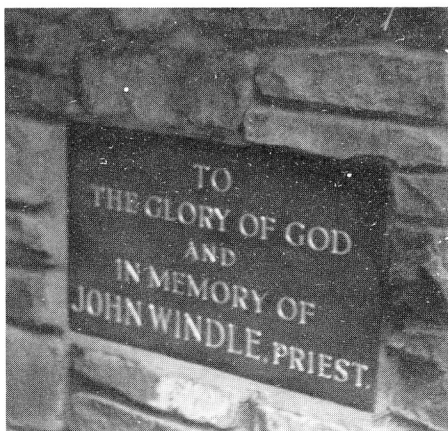
a link with the parish church at Llanthony—a natural stopping-off point on any journey up the valley to Capel-y-ffin; more so when the journey is made as a pilgrimage to commemorate all who have lived Christian community in this valley.

This is not to say that the new altar is not being put to good use; already the Eucharist has been celebrated there by two visiting groups, and we hope that as the work gets around it will be used more and more in this way. Permission should be obtained from the Secretary to the Trust (telephone Crucorney 379) at least a week before the desired date; vessels, linen etc. can be provided by arrangement.

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of a new trustee. He is Canon Ivor Davies, Vicar of Hay-on-Wye with Llanigon, whose extensive parish includes the chapel of Capel-y-ffin. To regular pilgrims Canon Davies needs no introduction; since the Trust was born and the pilgrimage reborn he has been an unflinching source of help and encouragement to the Trustees, and we are delighted that he is now to join their number.

It is with some relief that we are able to report that the walls of the abbey church have survived another winter without serious mishap. However, some work is planned to prevent further decay to the upper parts of the structure; this will cost about £1000. Applications to the Welsh Church Acts Committee and the Brecon Beacons National Park Committee have resulted in promises of grants totalling £350, to be paid when the work is completed. We warmly

At the new Altar, Pilgrimage 1980. L-r Canon Ivor Davies; Bishop Vaughan; Revd. F. H. Mountney; Revd. Hugh Broad



The memorial plaque to Father John Windle

appreciate these offers, which, with other cash in hand, will help us to raise this sum. As you know, the preservation of Fr Ignatius' tomb and the ruined church which enshrines it depends entirely on your generosity, and we appeal to you yet again to contribute to this work. We need such contingency funds for periodic maintenance on the structure so that we can keep it in perpetuity as a unique place of public worship. Please fill in the enclosed yellow form, which will ensure that your name is on the current mailing list for issues of this newsletter. All contributions, large and small, will be most

welcome. Please also accept this letter as an expression of our thanks for your generosity in the past, and bear with us if the high cost of postage prevents us acknowledging every donation personally.

If last year saw the centenary of the Apparitions, this year, 1981, marks the centenary of the annual August pilgrimage. True, there have been many years when no organised pilgrimage has been made, but not a year has passed without its stream of individual pilgrims, among whom some, at least, have come on or around 30 August to remember the events of that day in 1880. Once again, we look forward

to welcoming all who can be with us on 22 August to Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin; meanwhile (and *not* as a foretaste of things to come) we end this letter with an abridged account of one of the earliest pilgrimages, from the *Church of England Catholic and Monastic Times*. This was the Monastery newspaper inaugurated by Father Ignatius toward the end of the nineteenth century.

for the Trustees
HUGH ALLEN
Master of Ceremonies

Pilgrimage of Our Lady of Llanthony—August 30 1884

VERY HEAVY showers of rain during the night and early morning washed our roads and meadows with sufficient persistency to daunt any sturdy pilgrim. Indeed, at all times the difficulty of the way deters many from penetrating our solitudes. But this day the roads must have been really impassable to any person with only an ordinary amount of courage. On the eve of the Festival, the pilgrims began to arrive who had previously secured their quarters at the various farmsteads scattered at intervals on the mountain sides. Vespers and Compline and the preliminary address by the Rev. Father were over by 8 pm. Just about nine, two pilgrim priests, who had bespoke beds at the Monastery, arrived at the porch door, tired and way-worn, having lost their road and wandered on the mountain out of the way. However the doors were soon opened, and a hearty monastic welcome awaited them, and they were shown into a bright, cheerful room, where their beds were prepared for them, and where they had their supper, after the Superior had prayed with them in Church, read the Gospel appointed, and washed their feet. Other guests were already ensconced in their quarters in the guests' rooms.

The Abbot is still very delicate in health, and the great strain required of him next day precluded his attendance at Matins at midnight. The service was accordingly not solemnly rendered, and pilgrims were not admitted. The Monks, Nuns, Abbey Priest, and Children of the Choir were all in their places soon after midnight, and the bells of the Abbey, which had filled the midnight air of the valley for some twenty minutes, ceased. The lighted windows of the church on the lonely mountain side stood out solemnly in the darkness.

About 6 am the great bell of the church tolled the Angelus. Prime, and the first Mass, said at the Lady Altar by one of the pilgrim priests, followed.

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The Altars and shrines are all aglow with tapers, shrubs, and flowers. Pilgrims from the towns and villages within a radius of twenty miles and more, from Manchester, Birmingham, London, Oxford, Ross, Cardiff, Hereford, &c., &c., had gathered in this un-get-at-able solitude to thank God for the Apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary in this place four years ago. Dissenters, Roman Catholics, Church people, High and Low, made up this crowd of veritable pilgrims to this Church of England Monastic Shrine in this very knowing nineteenth century. The Procession for the High Mass of the old Sarum Church of England Rite, enters the Church from the Cloisters at 11 a.m., chanting the *Ave Maria* in Latin. After the Adoration to the Blessed Sacrament, the Shrine of the Apparition was solemnly censed, the dense crowd with difficulty making way for the procession.

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As the climax of the solemnity drew near, the organ lulled its triumphant strains, *Hosanna in Excelsis* died away, a supreme silence reigned in the crowded church. Jesus was coming in His Sacrament of Love to be offered as our continual victim, His *finished* sacrifice "once for all" is about to be presented to the Father in His own appointed way. He is coming to be adored by His own people in His Sacramental Presence. He is coming laden with blessings for all. Angels are