

Our Lady's Church, Llandoverly. Light refreshments will be available after the service, and we look forward to welcoming all our friends, old and new.

for the Trustees,  
HUGH ALLEN.

## CAKE FOR FATHER IGNATIUS

by Joan Wheeler

In the summer of 1972, I spent a few days with my friends, Wilf and Helen Davies, at The Monastery, finding them busy getting ready for the centenary pilgrimage to the ruined abbey church and tomb of Fr Ignatius. I was most pleased to be asked to help with various jobs but, most of all, to make cake for the tea which was to follow the event. The ingredients came from a memory of my father making cake from a recipe on a flour packet. So, with some trepidation, I set to and made as much as possible with occasional sampling checks much appreciated by Helen's children. I found that the best method was to make a large cake cooked in a big meat tin and then cut up.

Since that memorable first year, I have been commissioned to make cake for the pilgrimage each year, together with others who rally round annually and help with the event. With many memories I recall past pilgrimages with their colour and pageantry; the Abergavenny Town Band leading the procession from the little church at Capel-y-ffin, where the clergy entered, later to emerge resplendent in the vestments of their office; the service in the ruined church where a deep feeling of great sincerity was felt and the final stirring hymn 'Onward Christian Soldiers' which told us that it was time to get on quickly with brewing the tea. I remember the great event at Llanthony Priory which celebrated the eighth

centenary of its founding, the lovely sunshine, the crowds and the colour in the nave of that magnificent ruin. I remember too a number of rather wet walks from Capel-y-ffin to The Monastery with prudent pilgrims who had brought umbrellas and the heart-warming singing to the band which made you not mind about getting wet. There was also the pig that got loose in the churchyard just before the start of the procession! I remember the conversation I had with my father a few weeks before he died. I said that I had to come back to Wales to make cake for the pilgrimage tea and he said that he recalled hearing Father Ignatius preach to a packed hall in London—'a very sincere man with a great power of moving oratory'. I remember one occasion when the last hymn was not our traditional 'Onward Christian Soldiers' and then a helter skelter to get the tea going because we had missed our usual cue for brewing up; and the ever-lasting kindness of our hosts, Helen and Wilf Davies and their family who make us all so welcome.

And so to the cake recipe:-

1½ lbs flour. 1 lb granulated sugar.  
1 lb margarine. 1½ lbs currants and sultanas.  
8 eggs. 1 teaspoon salt. 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Mix well the margarine, sugar and vanilla essence and beat in the eggs one by one.

Fold in flour and salt; add currants and sultanas.

Put in a well-greased meat tin and cook in a medium oven - 35/45 mins.

Cut up into nice-sized pieces.

*Young soldiers clearing rubble from the church interior after the wall collapse on a snowy morning in February 1984.*



## THE FATHER IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST

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Charity Commissioners'  
Registration Number 253225

The Monastery  
Capel-y-ffin  
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### NEWSLETTER NO. 12 JUNE 1984

OUR readers will, we hope, be aware that this is Christian Heritage Year. The year May 1984 to May 1985 has been thus designated to give the nation an opportunity to celebrate the influence of Christianity on the British way of life, and the organisers (who have the patronage of a number of eminent churchmen and others prominent in public life) hope that every local community will make the celebration its own.

Christian Heritage Year is concerned not so much with the dead artefacts of Christian history as with the people who made that history; a largely anonymous multitude, it is true; but from them we have received not only Christian sanctuaries and objects of devotion, but Christian faith and values and a culture which still pays lip service, at least, to the stable, the cross and the empty tomb. This celebration ought to give us a proper



*Left to right: Mr Malcolm Gould MC, The Venerable Owain Jones, Archdeacon of Brecon and Canon Ivor Davies after Evensong in the Abbey Church on 20th August 1983.*

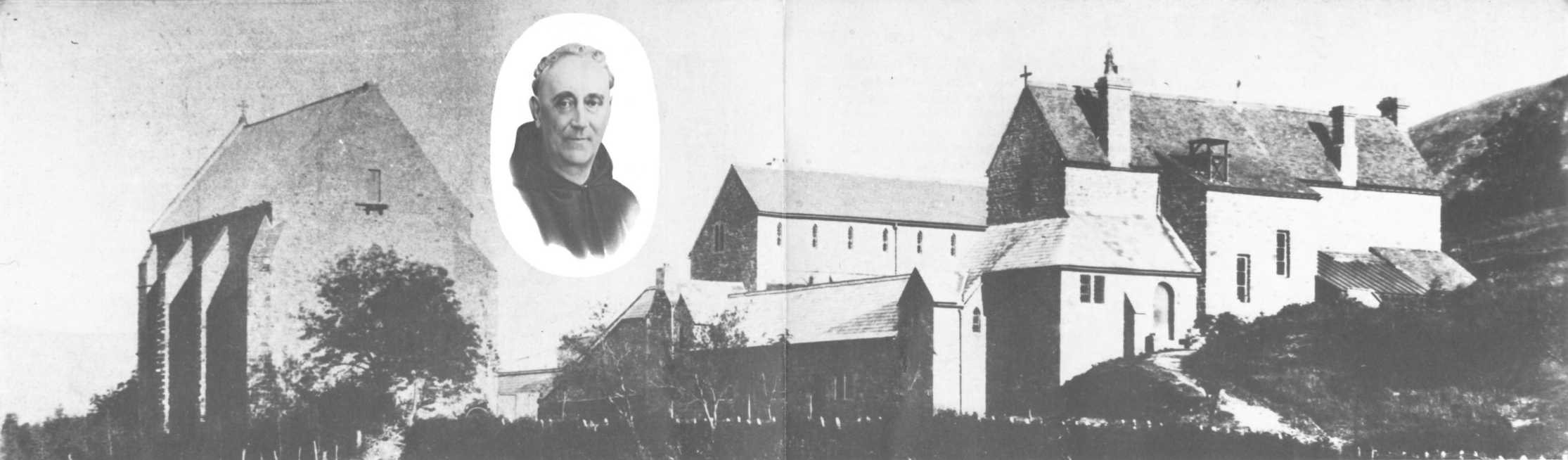
sense of our debt to our fathers in the faith - and inspire us to promote and pass on this inheritance to those who will follow us.

In this valley we are particularly fortunate in the richness and diversity of our Christian heritage, and at our annual pilgrimage to Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin we try to express something of what we owe to the singular company of faithful witnesses who have trod these acres before us. Eight hundred years ago Giraldu Cambrensis summed up its suitability as a place to lead a life of religion by describing it as 'a place truly fitted for contemplation', and it seems to have had a consistent attraction for men and women impelled to 'seek first the kingdom of God', however differently they have put this vocation into practice.

Giraldu's description referred specifically to the situation of the then newly-founded Augustinian priory at Llanthony, whose uncorrupted name (Llanddewi-nant-Honddu) is a reminder of the tradition that no less a faithful witness than St David passed some years there as a solitary. Celtic spirituality and the Augustinian rule were each in their own way reassertions of the primitive simplicity of the Gospel, and a clear century before the Dissolution a new and more radical attempt to recapture first principles was brought to the district, where it took root and still flourishes.

This new strain, represented today by the Baptist church at Capel-y-ffin, came to this neighbourhood in the following way:

The easternmost valley of the Black Mountains, adjoining Ewyas, is that of Olchon. Sir John Oldcastle, some times called Lord Cobham, leader of the Lollards during the reign of Henry V, after his escape from the



*The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin circa 1890. The foundation stone of The Monastery was laid in 1870 and that of the church, on the left, in 1872.*

Tower and the abortive rising of 1414 was in hiding here for three years, while he organized the disturbances which eventually led to his re-capture and hanging in 1417. The diocese of Hereford was one of the centres of Lollardy, and without doubt Sir John's enormous influence extended the short distance over the mountain ridge to the then Welsh-speaking inhabitants of Ewyas. Indeed, it is possible that Bwlch y'r Efengyl (Gospel Pass), which opens the northern end of Ewyas, gets its name from the Lollard preachers.

(Donald Attwater, *The Baptist Cause at Capel-y-ffin, 1948*)

No direct connection can be established between this episode and the foundation of the Olchon and Capel-y-ffin Baptist 'causes' in the mid-seventeenth century, but, as Attwater goes on to observe, 'there is no need to question that the influence of Oldcastle had persisted and that dissent was "in the air" of the neighbourhood'.

It would be tempting, but perhaps a little fantastic, to see in Father Ignatius a synth-

esis of these earlier traditions. What he certainly did have in common with them was the pioneering spirit, and, even if the mode of its expression was coloured (and highly coloured), by the prevailing romanticism of his age (and his own romantic temperament), a fervent zeal for the Gospel. He came to the Vale of Ewyas intent on 'building up the waste places' of mediaeval monasticism, and if his only tangible legacy to this valley was yet another set of partially ruined Gothic buildings, it was a legacy of which good use was to be made by Eric Gill and his associates within a few years of Ignatius' death.

Gill came to the Monastery with his family and other Dominican tertiaries in 1924. He had withdrawn, after various difficulties, from the lay community he had founded at Ditchling three years earlier, and although the life at Capel was not envisaged as a continuation of what had been attempted in Sussex it contained the same basic ingredients of creative work and common prayer. For this an unostentatious but practical (and very beautiful) chapel was created in the former north cloister.

After sixty years, this chapel is still in occasional use. A local Roman Catholic

priest celebrates Mass on some Sundays in the summer, and Christian groups who occasionally come to the Monastery for retreats and conferences hold their services there. It is also a focal point for others who spend periods of solitary contemplation in the valley.

Last year the special preacher at the pilgrimage Evensong was the Reverend Doctor John I. Morgans, Provincial Moderator of the United Reformed Church in Wales. Two groups of URC ministers have been among recent visitors staying at The Monastery; others have included a large party of senior Benedictine nuns who spent an hour at The Monastery in the course of an excursion from their annual conference at Belmont Abbey.

Since last summer two matters have arisen which we report to you with some regret. First of all, we learned at the beginning of this year that Wilfred and Helen Davies plan to move from the Monastery, and that its future is, for the present, uncertain. Without their help the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust would not have come into being, and without their continued support and hard work the pilgrimage would have been a poor affair indeed. We are happy

that they will be living not far away, and that Wilf will be continuing to act as Secretary and Treasurer of the Trust.

The other matter is one that will come as no surprise to regular readers of this newsletter. Once again the rigours of our mountain winter have brought to the ground many tons of masonry from the south-west corner of the ruined church, and we are faced with the need to disburse some £2,000 to make fast the surviving stonework. A detachment of 120 young soldiers from the Prince of Wales depot near Crickhowell has cleared the debris, free of charge, but, as before, we appeal to all who read this newsletter to act now by contributing whatever they can afford to maintaining this particular piece of Christian heritage as a safe and worthy memorial to all who have sought God's kingdom here before us.

This year's pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 18 August. As in past years the Eucharist will be celebrated at St David's Church, Llanthony, at 11.30am, and the afternoon part of the proceedings will begin at 2.30pm, when the procession will leave Capel-y-ffin church for the Monastery. Here Evensong will be sung, and a sermon preached by the Reverend Stanley Luff of