



## Adorers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of Montmartre OSB

Benedictine Monastery, 5 Mackerston Place, Largs KA30 8BY, SCOTLAND, Tel. 01475 687 320

[benedictinemonasterylargs@yahoo.com](mailto:benedictinemonasterylargs@yahoo.com)



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### CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER (2023)

Dear friends and benefactors,

*The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.  
And we saw his glory, glory as of the only Son  
from the Father, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14)*

Christmas is the time for contemplating the crib scene. Through its contemplation awe and wonder enter our minds and hearts and we fall down in adoration. Here is a new born baby. However, this is no ordinary babe. Through faith we see the extraordinary scene and in our contemplation its meaning and message grow in majesty and light. The Immaculate Virgin Mary contemplated the word of scripture as she grew up, and yearned and prayed for the coming of the Messiah to save us.

The Word, 'the brightness of His Father's glory and the figure of His substance' (Heb. 1:3), enraptured by Mary's purity, simplicity, humility and, above all, by her faith, sent the Archangel Gabriel to announce that she had found favour with God and would conceive and bear the Messiah. As she pronounced her Fiat the Word leapt down from heaven with so much love, joy and humility and entered her virginal womb and became Incarnate, hidden for nine months but contemplated and adored by His mother and foster father St Joseph, until His birth in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve, when He became visible to all.

An angel announced the good news to the shepherds watching their sheep that night, and a multitude of the heavenly host burst out in rapturous song: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will (Luke 2:14)! The fruit of contemplation fills us with awe and reverence. The angels, who constantly behold the glory of God in heaven, sing their Hosannas as a result of contemplation. So our contemplation too brings forth adoration and our joy resounds and bursts forth, full of wonder. In the Eucharist we see mere bread but faith and contemplation (hearing and meditation) convince us that this is our God, our Saviour.

The Eternal Word is a Divine canticle forever singing the Father's praise. When the Word became Incarnate this same canticle was sung upon earth in human accents. When the Word ascended into Heaven He bequeathed His mission to His Church and She prolongs this praise in her liturgy, this glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth, as she leans upon her Beloved whose arms uphold her.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

This summer we started the recitation of the Chaplet of St Michael the Archangel on Sundays after None, instead of the Rosary in common. This enhances the special protection in the world of the 9 choirs of angels and their help in advancing us in holiness. St Hildegarde, the 12th century Benedictine mystic and Doctor of the Church, saw the Nine Orders of Angels in vision. The two ranks of Angels and Archangels encompassed the five ranks of Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Dominations and Thrones like a crown, and these encompassed the two ranks of Cherubim and Seraphim like a crown. She was led to understand that this means that the body and soul of man ought to guide the five senses of man, purified by the five wounds of Christ, to the right understanding of interior commands; and that those of the faithful who direct their five bodily senses to heavenly things, knowing that through the five Wounds of the Son of God they are redeemed, arrive at the constant, mindful love of God and of neighbour, when they neglect their own pleasure, and place their hope in eternal things only. (If you wish to order a Chaplet of St Michael the Archangel made by our Sisters please contact us.)

After Holy Mass on the Solemnity of St Benedict, 11th July, a thorough blessing of the monastery and its grounds was made by our chaplain, Father Ferdinand, with most of the community accompanying him. The blessing had an instant effect. That very evening Rev. Mother Prioress received a call from a kind soul wishing to donate her substantial inheritance to the monastery for roof repairs. May the Sacred Heart reward her and her family with abundant Heavenly riches, and all who contributed in any way to this much needed restoration. Work started in earnest on the facade of the monastery in August, complementing the repaired roof over the Retreat Centre. Sound walls are necessary, we have learnt, for roof repairs to be effective.



This autumn we had a bumper crop of plums and apples, varied, beautiful, big but more than we can control. The kitchen Sister has been busy transforming them into jam, cakes, tarts, pies and crumbles which the people love.





In November we paid a visit to our Sisters' graves in the Haylie Brae cemetery in Largs. We inspected the newly inscribed dedication to our dear Mother Placid who died suddenly on Sunday evening of the 4th June, Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity. Her requiem Mass and burial took place in glorious sunshine on the 10th June, eve of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. We sang Vespers of the Office of the Dead in the gathering gloom of twilight remembering also Bishop emeritus Maurice Taylor who died peacefully on the 14th of June. Like Mother Placid he was 97 years old. He reached his Platinum

Jubilee of priestly ordination in 2020 whereas Mother Placid celebrated hers of religious profession in 2022. He was Bishop for 42 years and a true shepherd to us. He supported the transferral of Dumfries Priory to Largs and its subsequent amalgamation with our Congregation. When our chaplain Father Gabriel was unwell he often came to celebrate Holy Mass for us. He wrote a lovely book, published in 2009, entitled 'It's the Eucharist, thank God.' Mother Placid held him in high esteem and was disappointed that he was unable to be the main celebrant at her Platinum Jubilee. Hopefully she was among the saints of God who came to meet him, 'take him by the hand, and lead him safely to the Promised Land. May rest eternal now be theirs, and day that knows no night; Through death's dark valley they have passed to endless life and light.'



Our Christmas Fair was almost cancelled this year as it was scheduled for the 2nd of December but the Tea Room roof was still under reconstruction. Nevertheless the indefatigable Tea Room Helpers rallied around and in the end the Fair did take place in St Mary's, Star of the Sea, Parish Hall. We are very grateful to Mons. Canon McGee and the parish for the use of their beautiful hall. By all accounts, it was a great success. For those who would have liked to have come but did not receive due notice we are sorry but hope to see you next year in a leak free Tea Room.





## Oblate News

Death often comes in threes and so it happened. On the 5th August Betty Bisset, one of our first Oblates in Largs, was given the last rites in her hospice care home. She rallied for the feast of the Transfiguration on the 6th. At 2pm on the 7th Betty slipped away peacefully to her eternal reward. She was known to be full of the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and had a gift of healing. She loved the Bible and often read a reading at Sunday Mass. She and her husband Ron were both born on 20th June 1936. They married on 20 June 1963, confusing bureaucracy ever since. Thankfully they did not both die on the same day, underlining the Lord's teaching: "And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven." (Mark 12.27) We are thankful because Ron continues his witness to the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ by his weekly hour of Adoration and by reading at Holy Mass on Sundays, all aglow with the Holy Spirit.



## Night Adoration

On the 1st of September the Men's All-Night Adoration group recommenced. The First Friday Holy Mass is at 7.30pm followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for men and women until midnight, continuing for men only until the First Saturday Mass at 6.00 am to which all are welcome. In order to rekindle the fire of love in the hearts of the faithful, Jesus introduced the First Fridays through revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque. Jesus asks us through her to receive Holy Communion on each First Friday in honour of and in reparation to His Sacred Heart. He made the following promise attached to this pious exercise:

*I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays of nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their Sacraments. My Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.*

The First Saturdays devotion comes to us as a result of Our Lady's apparitions to the Servant of God, Lucia dos Santos, and her cousins at Fatima in 1917. In the secret of Fatima, given on July 13, 1917, we read:

*You have seen hell where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace.*

The Womens All-Night Adorations continue to take place on Fridays of the 2nd week, 3rd week and 4th week (hosted by the Polish group with Holy Mass at 5.00am on the Saturday) of each month. Please contact Rev. Mother Prioress if you wish to participate in any of these.

### **Tea Room/Hospitality**

The Strawberry Tea was held on the 15th July and we are very grateful for the funds that were raised. Some books about Bonnie Prince Charlie were donated for it and it was sad to read of the Prince's tragic end, especially as St Claude La Colombiere was his grandmother (Mary of Modena)'s chaplain; and his great grandmother, Queen Henrietta Maria, prayed under the

Tyburn gallows. The Prince's brother, Henry Benedict Stuart, however, became a priest and Cardinal not long after the 1745 uprising. He distinguished himself in maintaining high standards in sacred music at his Cathedral of Frascati not far from Castel Gandolfo. Thus the Stuart line ended nobly, as a Prince of the true King, Christ. He Himself came instead in 1901, meek and lowly of heart, with a small retinue of frail but faithful, consecrated women, and is enthroned to this day on the praises of Israel, near to Buckingham Palace, very close to the site of the Tyburn gallows.



On the 2nd of September a Barbecue for the Tea Room Helpers, past and present, was held in the garden. The weather was glorious, many families came and a beautiful atmosphere of joy and peace prevailed. Martin and Adam cooked an excellent array of food underneath the arches. We paid a special tribute to Christine McArthur for her more than 30 years of service to the monastery. Recently turned 90 she still makes the best marmalade for the fair. May the Sacred Heart reward them all as only He knows how.

On the 19th of September a weekend Retreat in honour of Saint Padre Pio began. People from all over Britain attended.

Mons. Henry Docherty, now in his 90s, used to visit Padre Pio when he was a youthful seminarian in Rome. He brought us relics to venerate including a bandage from the wound stigma of Padre Pio's side. Monsignor led us in the irresistible novena prayer to the Sacred Heart which Padre Pio prayed every day for those who asked his prayers. On the 20th, the anniversary of the day that Padre Pio's stigmata became visible, a Capuchin Friar Minor from Malta, Father Hayden, who lives in Italy, gave a good and rousing conference on Lectio Divina. His hermit Mission is to resurrect the church and he certainly gave us a good impetus.

On the 23rd Fr Laurent Bahati celebrated Holy Mass in honour of Padre Pio's feast. That evening the Asian cafe had an end of season buffet dinner expertly cooked by Fanda and Beverley. Those who came thoroughly enjoyed it.

We farewelled Mary MacMillan on the 24th of October, in a quiet way as requested. For several years now she has cheered many guests with her lively stories in the Holy Manna Retreat Centre which she kept spick and span. A daily Mass goer she also did more than an hour's watch of Adoration daily, thereby helping to keep grace flowing over the whole world from the

from the Blessed Sacrament exposed. With increasing age and failing health she decided it was time to return to her family. We are very grateful for all the good she did for us and hope and pray that she keeps up Benedictine Spirituality and Eucharistic Adoration to a perfect end.



A Eucharistic Retreat : Revive Scotland began on the 27th of October. It was well attended by all ages but by mostly the youth who came to deepen their knowledge and love of the Eucharist. The relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis was exposed for veneration and the LITE (Life In The Eucharist) team from the Blessed Sacrament Fathers' parish of St Colmcille in Glasgow put on a beautiful exhibition of Blessed Carlo's life and works in the Tea Room. Fr Robert Taylor, from the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh, gave an excellent homily

as did Fr Pio, a Franciscan from Dundee who spoke at length on Our Lady and the Eucharist. We were very grateful to have help with the catering for so many from Anne, a Master chef.

## **ROOFING/BUILDING PROJECT**

We mentioned in our last newsletter that we had to urgently re-roof the conservatory roof above the chapel and fix the front facade of the monastery, a project which was to cost about £55,000. We had raised half the sum and the builders had agreed to carry out the urgent repairs and allow us to pay the remaining half in 2024. But thanks to the kind benefaction of the woman who gave us her inheritance and the our benefactors, we have been able to pay the complete sum and the work has recently been completed. Also, several back and side walls have been rendered and the flat roofs of the Tearoom and Chapel are now in progress. We have spent a little over £100,000 since August. We have funds to pay for the completion of the chapel and tearoom flat roofs but need to raise funds for an outstanding £24,000 charged for the rendering that has been done and an additional £19,000 for three enclosure roofs, making it a total of £43,000. Once these roofs are finished we will move on to another stage.



Work on the monastery facade began in earnest on the 2nd August. On the 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, the atmosphere inside the monastery turned a marvellous blue. It transpired that a blue plastic film had been put on all the windows to protect them. This beautiful effect on her feast seemed to assure us of Our Lady's help and protection. Roofing work continued and in October the storms Ciaran and Babet put all the work to the test. It stood, thanks be to God! Now it is a great joy for everyone that the guests' kitchen, bedrooms and the Chapel no longer leak when it rains. We highly commend the FRBS (First Roofing and Building) for their dedication, skill, hard work, efficiency, respect, and attention to detail – see the lovely crosses above each lintel.



## CONGREGATION NEWS

On the 2nd July Sr Aurelie became Sr Marguerite Marie at St Loup sur Aujon. She is our first novice from France for many decades. May God grant her the grace and happiness of final perseverance in our Congregation.

On the 16th July we celebrated with great joy Rev. Mother Xavier's 90th birthday.

On the feast of St Ninian, 16 September, many people came to celebrate at the Mother House in London, the Silver Jubilee of their Prioress, Rev. Mother Ines.

On the 8th of October Rev. Mother Philippa Mary celebrated her Silver Jubilee with all our Sisters in New Zealand at Ngakuru. We give thanks to God for upholding them, according to His promise, for they LIVE. Their hope in Him has not been in vain.

We thank all our beloved benefactors, friends and helpers for the support you give us in enabling the enthronement and adoration of the Sacred Heart to continue here. Holy Mass will be offered for you all on Christmas day. If you would like to donate towards our roofing and restoration project please visit our website at:

<https://www.tyburnconvent.org.uk/largsmonasterydonations>

If you would like to pay by check please make it payable to The Benedictine Monastery.

The awful atrocities that triggered the war in the Holy Land on the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary serve to turn us to pray the rosary more deeply, intensely and frequently. It is the chain that binds Satan. She, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, is our life, our sweetness and our hope.

With loving prayers, blessed hope and deep peace this Christmas season in the Sacred Heart Jesus, the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and the Chaste Heart of Joseph.

Mother Prioress and Community.

