



**St. Benedict's Priory** The Mount, Cobh, Co Cork Tel./Fax:(021) 4811 354  
Cobhtyburnconvent@gmail.com

## ***Newsletter***

*Christmas 2017*



Dear Friends,

***“God ‘s love for us was revealed when He sent into the world His only Son so that we could have life through Him” (1 Jn 4:9)***

Many of us looking out at our world today might wonder if our human race has failed once and for all? Failed to receive and care for the great gifts of love bestowed on us by our heavenly Father –the gifts of Faith, Life and Creation. Yet we know that God sending His Son is not a historic action of the past, but that it continues day by day, hour by hour. Jesus is continually sent to us, ever coming to us. The opportunity to renew our confidence and trust in Him is always there and he invites us all the time to a deeper relationship with Him. This he does so poignantly at Christmas time when as a baby he welcomes us to the side of the manger, to take our place in the midst of the Holy Family and experience those moments of peace, closeness and unity for which every family longs even without knowing it. As here in Ireland we prepare for the World Meeting of Families to be held in Dublin next August, our thoughts and prayers are with families everywhere who face the challenge of reflecting the love and fecundity, stability and self-giving of God in our world today.

Enclosed with this Newsletter you will find our **Christmas Gift to families**: a copy of the prayer which we say in our Congregation on Christmas Eve, and which we have adapted for you to use in your family homes. You are welcome to use the enclosed form to request more copies of these.

This year we in our community can also take the opportunity to reflect on our family life in its' different aspects: Warm-heartedness and reverence between young and old, self-sacrifice and sharing, caring and compassion, the role of authority and the beauty of passing on the Faith from one generation to the next. What could better express our joyful family life, than the **Golden Jubilee celebration for our Mother M Matthias** last 15<sup>th</sup> August? It was a great testimony of lifelong commitment and response to grace. We were delighted that Abbot Emeritus Christopher Dillon of Glenstal Abbey was able to celebrate the Solemn



↑ The Suscipe



M.Prioress, M.General and M.Matthias with some of our Oblates

Mass for the occasion. Mother renewed her vows, and sang the *Suscipe* very bravely three times, as she had done 50 years earlier on her Profession Day. The liturgy included two hymns written by Mother's mentor, Blessed John Henry Cardinal

Newman: "*Lead Kindly Light*" and "*Praise to the Holiest*". At the end of Mass she was presented with a Papal Blessing. There was a reception afterwards during which she and the guests were entertained by our new-found friend Jimmy Crowley. We had kept this part of the festivities a secret from Mother, and she was suitably surprised and overjoyed! We were particularly glad to have with us from England Mary, Mother Matthias' confirmation sponsor of years gone by, who did the second reading and brought up the gifts with Mother at the Offertory.



In addition to the Golden Jubilee Celebration we had the joy of a visit from our Mother General (Mother Marilla) and Mother M.Xavier who came for the occasion. A few days earlier on the 12<sup>th</sup> August **Mother M Xavier gave two very interesting talks about our Foundress, Servant of God Marie Adele Garnier.** As many

of you know Mother M Xavier has been promoting our Foundress' cause for many years. She spoke at length and in great depth of the spiritual journey which led Mother Marie Adele to the summits of Eucharistic spirituality. About 30 people attended the talks.



Our **monthly days of recollection on the last Saturday of the month guided by the spirituality of Mother Marie Adele will recommence on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2018 with the theme: "Seeking God through Family and Community Life"**. All are welcome and accommodation is available.

The days begin with Holy Mass at 9.00 and comprise of a morning and afternoon session with time for Adoration, a chance to take part in the Divine Office and a relaxed lunch hour with a light meal provided. The days run on a donation only basis. For more information please contact us and do tell others about this opportunity for spiritual refreshment and friendship.



The second event surrounding the Jubilee Day was a repeat of **Tim and Ann McSweeney's presentation** on one of the Admirals who lived in our house in 1906-1908: Admiral King-Hall. This time we did not make it too public, so we Sisters were able to get into the room and see the slides! The hour went by very quickly and it was another treat for our history-loving Jubileean! As we mentioned in our last letter, the Admiralty House was a focal point for commemorating the arrival of the US Navy in Ireland in the final struggles of World War 1. Following our May event we had a number of interesting visitors: Relatives of Admiral Taussig, First Sea Lord, Admiral John R. Jellicoe, and U.S. Navy Admiral William S. Sims, all of whom directed operations during the US naval intervention during WW1. A number of history groups have also visited, and we were also a "place to visit" during National Heritage Week. This has been a special opportunity to welcome people who may not have otherwise come into contact with our community, and many of them appreciated this as a religious as well as an educational experience.

On June 11<sup>th</sup> we received news of the tragic death after a short illness of **Niall Aherne RIP**, who had been the supervisor of the C.E.Scheme which provides so much support to our monastery. Niall was a model Father, manager and friend, though his quiet unassuming manner made him inconspicuous until after he left us. In September a memorial Mass was held here for Niall and attended by about 50 members of the C.E.Scheme and also his bereaved wife and three children who read the bidding prayers beautifully. We continue to pray for the family and still miss Niall's calm, encouraging presence.



We have had several events this second half of 2017 which you might like to hear about: **On July 1<sup>st</sup> we celebrated the Feast of St. Oliver Plunkett** whose relic is here thanks to the kindness of the Bishop of Cloyne. With his permission the relic was brought up from the shrine where it is usually kept and placed in the sanctuary throughout the day. In the evening Bishop William Crean celebrated Mass which concluded with individual veneration of the relic, while our Novice Sr. M John Baptist, who is from the Saint's own County of Meath, led us in the Litany of the Irish Saints. It was a prayerful and meaningful celebration at this time when Ireland is so much in need of prayer and courageous witness. Bishop William Crean preached movingly about the origins of his own devotion to St. Oliver and spoke of the challenges facing Christians today.

On 16<sup>th</sup> October we all experienced the violence of **hurricane Orphelia**. We hope and pray that those of you who were hard hit by the storm are recovering and receiving the help you need. Here in Cobh many people's homes were badly damaged, but we thank God that the Old Admiralty House stood the test and its sturdy shell, having already survived a manmade fire in 1923, remained intact, though there was a fair bit of storm damage to the garden.



Now we want to announce that the coming year is going to be one of great jubilation and celebration: **It is 25 years since St. Benedict's Priory arrived in Cobh on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1993**. Last year we outlined the history of St. Benedict's from its beginnings one hundred years ago in Royston. All that remains now is to express our heartfelt gratitude to God, to the Irish people, the Bishop and Diocese of Cloyne and the People of Cobh for the wonderful collaboration that

has brought our monastery to its Irish Silver Jubilee. Of course we never miss the opportunity for a celebration, and we remember through photos and written accounts that on 31<sup>st</sup> July, 25 years ago, 300 Priests, Religious and Laity gathered on the lawn in front of our newly acquired convent for the Solemn Inauguration of St. Benedict's Priory, Cobh. The Mass was celebrated from the veranda by Bishop Magee who had initiated and facilitated our arrival as part of his efforts to establish centres of Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese. Details of a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass of Thanksgiving to be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2018 will be in our next Newsletter. Please put the date in your new diaries!



This past year we have continued to work towards making the necessary changes and repairs to the interior of our house so that we can continue to reside in this beautiful monastery. **We still have a long way to go before we can purchase the badly needed new boiler.** With your help we have been able to complete a certain amount of repair work and to deal with some of the hazardous mould and mildew problems, but work such as **insulation** has yet to be done. Making use of our natural resources, (especially following the tree-felling storm) **we would like to install a couple of wood-burning stoves** to provide a cheap supplement to oil heating. If we can achieve these things not only will our house be more habitable but its running costs will be more manageable as well. **We are also hoping to raise the funds for the**



**installation of a stair lift up to the retreat house,** so that our friends who are no longer able to do the stairs can still enjoy a peaceful few days at the Priory. Moreover and regrettably, due to a number of incidents in our grounds in recent years it has become necessary to equip ourselves with costly **CCTV cameras** in order to maintain our security.

**So we turn to you again for whatever support you can give, grateful that you have kept us going all these years.** May we suggest a few ways of helping us with our fundraising, so that others may also get involved?

- 1) If you feel able to hold a **coffee morning**, we can provide you with some posters to display in your area with space for you to advertise the date, time and venue.
- 2) If you have **internet and social media contacts** please could you spread the word about our appeal through [www.tyburnconvent.org.uk/stbenedicts prioryrenovation](http://www.tyburnconvent.org.uk/stbenedicts prioryrenovation)
- 3) Let your Parish Community or Church Groups know about **our Retreat House** and other facilities-you can ask us for literature.

4) You can make a donation in the ways detailed on the enclosed slip.

May God Bless you for all your generosity and good will towards us. In return we keep our benefactors in our prayers daily. We can also continue to inscribe intentions in the Book of Gratitude which was opened last year as our way of thanking those who contribute to our urgent building fund appeal.

**We thank all those who supported our very successful Grand Draw and Christmas Fayre** last Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December. We noticed there were more children at the fayre this year, and this kept Santa Claus extremely busy! We are sorry you could not all win the first prize in the draw, but you may be heartened to know that it went to a 12 year old child with special needs, who has been saving up to buy a computer to help him progress with his education. God blessed his day trip to Cobh last summer when he came up to the Priory and filled in his ticket, and he is overjoyed!

**Our next fundraising event is a coffee morning and mini-auction on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 from 10.00am. All Welcome!**

Finally, we have kept the best news until last – we have the joy of inviting you to the **Monastic Profession of Sr.M.Helen of the Holy Face (Oputa)**. Having left homeland and family 6 years ago she will make her perpetual vows on **10<sup>th</sup> March 2018** during Holy Mass. The time is to be confirmed so please contact us next year if you are able to join us. Please keep Sister in your prayers.



We wish you all every Joy and Blessing this Christmas.

The Tyburn Nuns at St. Benedict's Priory