

# Holy Cross Abbey, Whitland 2016 News

## Greetings from the Whitland Community

It has been a busy year in our Welsh valley and as ever time seems to have sped by.

We started the year by celebrating 25 years of Cistercian community living in Whitland. It was a local celebration with Fr Liam concelebrating Mass with priest friends, followed by a buffet. We produced three themed posters of photos which are displayed in the entrance to the church, 'From Motel to Monastery, the building works, which were completed in 2013, photos of all the sisters who have lived at Whitland, and photos of how we live now, it shows a truly an epic journey.

On the 1st July we celebrated the Ordination of Fr Michael Hart



We give thanks for Fr Michael's ministry as our part-time Chaplain. We are most grateful to all those priests who have been supporting us since Fr John's fall in March 2015, many of whom continue to come to say Mass and when we don't have a priest we have a communion service. This has been a time of great grace for us as a Community.

On the feast of the Sacred Heart we had the joy



of Sr Elsie's clothing and so we have three novices who make a varied, valuable and valued contribution to the life of the Community. Deo gratias.

In January we heard of the deaths of two friends of the Community – Fr Anthony Sudlow and Tony Sellwood. Tony had worked here for many years, retiring in 2009 and our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Sandra. Gorfwysed mewn hedd. Fr Anthony's friendship goes back to visits to Stapehill with his wife, Marie, who died some years ago, and was the niece of Sr Monica. After her death Fr Anthony trained for the priesthood at the Beda and following his ordination was working at the Cathedral at Salford.

In February we celebrated the Chinese New Year, this year being the year of the monkey. We are

becoming quite adept with chopsticks: it was great fun.

It is our joy to welcome back Emeritus Bishop Daniel Mullins, as our new neighbour who comes to Mass with us each Sunday.



7<sup>th</sup> February we celebrated Vespers with Bethel Chapel and their minister Rev Guto Llewellyn



3<sup>rd</sup> May we welcomed children from Mary Immaculate Catholic School Haverfordwest who were making their first holy communion to see how altar breads are made. They enjoyed each stage of the process, tasting the different varieties of altar breads and puzzling how many breads are cut from a large bread. After all their hard work we all had drinks and biscuits

In May with great pleasure we welcomed again our dear friend, Kathleen O'Gorman for her annual week of Holy Scripture. This year Kathleen divided her sessions into work with the Novitiate on Luke/Acts and with the remainder of the Community on the Letter of James. It was an enriching experience.



This year we have been richly blessed with regular visits from Rev. Dr David Williams, an old friend. He is helping us to catalogue our Library – a monumental task, but slowly, slowly thanks to David's advice and assistance it is happening: a big thank you to him.

It has been a busy years with Guests and it has been good to welcome parish groups and visitors from further afield as when we welcomed Bro Simon of Lantao for a fortnight's visit in August.



The Year of Mercy saw a community pilgrimage to St Mary's Carmarthen for a very grace filled visit.

We have had a number of sisters with ill health this year, and thank fully they are recovering, but it has made it a hard year. Our work with altar breads, garden produce and the hens all contribute to our financial stability which is a great blessing. We give a big thank you to our part-time staff: Jan & Suzanne in the Abbey Bakery, Julian & Dave in the grounds/gardens, Luke in the woodland, and Eleanor our volunteer gardener

Wishing you all a gentle Advent, a merry Christmas and all good things in 2017.