

# Holy Cross Abbey, Whitland 2022 News

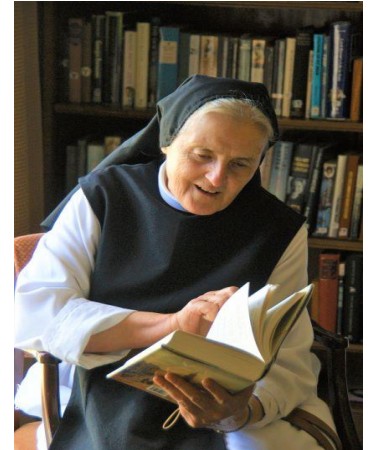
## A time for tears, a time for laughter (Eccl 3:4)



Archbishop George Stack & Mother Jo



Sr Stephanie



Sr Jean RIP

### Mother Jo Our New Abbess

On 12<sup>th</sup> January 2022 the feast of St Aelred, presided by our Father Immediate Dom Joseph Delargy, Mother Jo was elected Abbess. The Election was solemn and smooth.

The Abbatial Blessing took place on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2022, celebrated by Archbishop George Stack just before his retirement. The Abbatial Blessing Mass followed by the buffet lunch expressed the very presence of God who is the source of all happiness, strength, harmony, friendship and peace. Many religious and friends far and wide came and celebrated with us, our little house was filled with greetings and joy. We are sincerely grateful to everyone who helped us to make all these possible.

Mother Jo has been in the Office for over 10 months, however she has not been much in the 'physical' office, since this year General Chapter was in two parts, which were held in February and September respectively in Assisi. There was also a meeting of the Region of Isles in May at Brownhill Monastery.



During part one of the General Chapter, Dom Bernardus was elected Abbot General as Dom Eamon retired. The General Chapter part two also included an invitation to a Papal Audience with Pope Francis.

Thank you Mother Jo for her love and care for the community. May God strengthen, protect, guide and inspire her, and bless her abundantly in the challenging leadership at this time.

### Sr Stephanie

is unwell in hospital having had a severe stroke on 21<sup>st</sup> November. We wish her every blessing at this new stage of her life.

### A Very Big Thank You

To all friends, relatives and carers for your prayers, support, help and donations.

You are all in our prayers.

## In Loving Memory of Sister Jean Byrne OCSO (1939 – 2022)

Sr Jean died peacefully at the Abbey on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Below is an extract of the Eulogy by Mother Jo at the funeral Mass celebrated by Fr Liam Bradley on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022:

Jean was the second child of thirteen and the eldest girl. Jean's love for her family and joy in being a Byrne was ever present. There are over a hundred family members and Jean was proud of all of them. The Byrnes for Jean were the best. Certainly, you are a very close, loving, and generous family and it is a delight to have Agnes, Vincent, Margaret and Janie with us today.

Jean's love for Jesus came to her at a young age. The call to religious life was alive and Jean looked for a house of Nuns, and found Stapehill in Dorset. It is always hard to understand when someone is called to a religious vocation. For her family and friends it did not make sense for someone as outgoing and full of 'blather' as Jean to enter an enclosed community who valued silence! Despite all the difficulties Jean persevered,



Jean enjoyed telling stories of her climbing the roofs of Stapehill to carry out repairs. Jean was always energetic, strong, generous, practical, and inventive. Jean had a big heart and she gave her heart to Jesus whom she called 'my beloved.' She also had a real gift for friendship, she would make good friends very easily and would share her faith with them in a way that was helpful.

All Jean's life she has had poor health more often than not, she had chronic pain and used humour to cope with it. At the end of August as Chris was getting ready to go on holiday to Ireland and Jo was preparing for General Chapter Jean was saying she would still be here when we returned. But this time her body just was not able to match her strong spirit.

Her last illness was a time of grace for Jean, for the sisters, carers, medical and nursing staff who were all involved. It was a job well done and Jean got her wish of a good death surrounded by her community which she loved. We rejoice in a life well lived. We miss that sparkle and cheeky humour that was Jean. Her ability to laugh at herself and with others. Our memories of Jean will be with us always. May she rest in peace, with the Lord she has loved and served.

## First Holy Communion students visiting us

On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 we welcomed altogether 31 students and 4 teachers from St Francis School Milford Haven and Mary Immaculate School Haverfordwest to experience our life of prayer and work. The weather was not permitting, outdoor activities were cancelled, however it did not lessen their enthusiasm! They saw how we made and packed altar breads, and listened to Fr Liam Bradley and Sisters about religious life. They joined our midday prayer, enjoyed their picnic lunch and went back to school with happy memories. Some of them thanked us with lovely words and drawings after the visit. May God bless them all.

## New Bishop Mark O'Toole

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022 Bishop Mark was installed as the Bishop of the Diocese of Menevia at St Joseph's Cathedral in Swansea.

Bishop Mark celebrated his first Mass with us on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and stayed to meet the community afterwards. We keep him and his ministry in our prayers.





## Community Retreat by Dom Steele

We are glad to have Dom Steele from Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia preaching a community retreat at the end of September. He focused on the challenging early chapters of the Rule of St Benedict, obedience & humility, Benedict's humanity. Nevertheless, after all the hardship, he highlighted the most important is the love of God and our neighbours. With God's help we can put this into practice. Sr Elizabeth enjoyed having another Aussie here!

## Tymawr Sisters visiting us

Mother Katharine, Sr Janet, Sr Joanna, Sr Victoria and Mary from Tymawr Convent, the Society of the Sacred Cross, enjoyed a peaceful and fruitful day with us on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2022. They joined our prayers, meals, work and chat, a very amiable exchange of experience of monastic life. They have invited us to visit them next year when they celebrate their 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.



## Welcome

We welcome Sr Isabelle from Soleilmont Abbey in Belgium who is staying with us since May 2022 as a guest. We are delighted to have her with us. She and Sr Edith last met in 1990.



We often hear from Sr Veronika who returned to her monastery Maria Frieden last year. We congratulate M. Gracia and all the Sisters on their move to Kall-Steinfeld, Germany.

## Thank you Rev Dr David Williams



Rev Dr David Williams has helped us in cataloguing our library since 2016. He came several times a year, to input one by one the details of each book into a computer programme, and when he was back home, he prepared hardcopies of catalogue and made labels again one by one. It was really a hard and time-consuming work and he persevered. Post covid lock downs, the travelling became more difficult to, and as two thirds of the library has been done, he decided to leave us to complete the catalogue. Indeed he made excellent progress and we are very grateful. We pray for his well-being and for everyone in the College of St Barnabas.

## Farewell and Welcome



Farewell to Dave Horton our gardener who worked with us for 16 years was in need of a change. We thank you Dave and wish you all the best. May God bless you and your Mom Pat.

We welcome Neil Moyes who joined us in May as our part-time gardener. We look forward to the 'fruit' of his expertise and zeal. We welcome Kevin Simpson who joined us in March as our part-time volunteer Accountant and we welcomed back Suzanne to help with the infirmary and cleaning duties.

We wish you, your communities and families a fruitful and healthy 2023

## Junior Course at Roscrea



Organized by Sr Sarah, the Secretary of the Region of Isles, we were thankful to have 3 online courses across Scripture and Spirituality. The first Junior Course after 3 years of Covid concern was held in early October this year. The original host was Mellifont Abbey in Ireland, however the monks there got Covid. Thank God they were not seriously ill, and Dom Malachy of Roscrea generously picked up as host at the last minute, so that we did not have to wait for another year! Sr Usia and Sr Elsie attended the Course, the presenter was Dr Margaret Daly-Denton who talked about some key themes in St John's Gospel link to ecology. Thank you for all their hard, efficient and valuable work which made the course flow so smoothly.

## Sr Edith at Mellifont

Sr Edith went to Mellifont Abbey in Ireland for about 3 weeks in June. Besides a good rest and visit, she came back with some very happy memories. Thank you Dom Rufus and community.

## Sr Elsie at Arnhem

A very good monastic



experience for her to live with the Arnhem community in Netherlands for 8 full days in late October this year. Thank you so much to Mother Pascale and all the Sisters for their very warm hospitality, care, gifts, delicious food, and lots of patience, as Elsie has no Dutch at all! Loof de Heer!

## M. Christine visiting Irish Communities

As part of her rest after the retirement as the abbess, M. Christine stayed in Ireland with her friend Mary O' Callaghan for five weeks during August - September. During the stay, they were warmly welcome by all six Irish Abbeys of the Order. There was also time to visit old friends and make new friends in Ireland. Certainly this was an Irish tour in a quite extraordinary way. Was it a rest, a grand tour, or a pilgrimage? She enjoyed it all very much, so all of the above.

## Obituaries

Michael Hill died just before Christmas 2021. The Hill family has been friend of the community for many years. Michael has a good sense of humour. He described the external stairway to Guest Flat St Mary's as 'a stage of playing Romeo and Juliet'!

John Monaghan used to come for Mass every day in the days when Fr's Richard & John were chaplains. His health declined these years and he died in May 2022.

May they rest in peace.

## Thank you

To Fr Liam Bradley, our Chaplain, whose expertise has greatly enhanced our liturgical renewal, especially for the Abbatial Blessing and Sr Jean's funeral this year.

To Fr Owen McGreal.

To our part-time team: Clem, Sue & Peter, Suzanne, Neil, and Kevin for all their hard work, friendship, and support.



## Christmas & Greeting Cards for Sale

Please visit our website:

[www.hcawhitland.co.uk/shop](http://www.hcawhitland.co.uk/shop)

Thank you for your support.