



Holy Cross Abbey
Whitland

Go within his gates, giving thanks. Ps 99(100):4

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2023 News

The Lord bless you and keep you (Numbers 6:24)

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In Loving Memory of Sister Stephanie Eileen Mary Roberts OCSO (1931 – 2023)



Sr Stephanie died on Wednesday 6th September 2023 after several severe brain bleeds across 10 months. Friends far and near sent their condolences.

On her sick bed she celebrated her platinum jubilee of profession on 2nd July 2023.

Her funeral Mass and burial were held on 21st September 2023 celebrated by our Chaplain Fr Liam Bradley. Her sister Monica attended and stayed telling us a lot of their family stories.

We are very grateful for the loving care shown by all at Pembroke Haven Care Home and for Judy's daily visits.

Sr Steffie lived a long and very meaningful life, responsible to God, her Sisters, family, friends and herself. She is very much remembered, especially by Sr Elizabeth who had lived together with her for over 70 years. The bible verses 'the Lord bless you and keep you ...' is her favourite Compline scripture reading when she was the Hebdom. We are assured that she continues to be a faithful intercessor. Sr Steffie, pray for us.



Father Gregory

On 15th July 2023 Rev Gregory Beckett was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Mark O'Toole at St Joseph's Cathedral in Swansea.

Fr Greg is a good friend of the community. He celebrated his first Mass with us on 20th July 2023 and gave us God's blessing through his hands. We keep him and his ministry in our prayers.



Thank You Very Much

to all friends, relatives
and carers for your
prayers, services,
support and donations.
We pray for you all and
your families.

Sr Usia's Silver Jubilee

25 years ago Sr Usia made her first profession with her former order the Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit (SSpS). This year on 6th July she celebrated her Silver Jubilee with her lovely Cistercian sisters. The celebration continued on the following week when four of her Polish Provence novitiate group which included two Ukrainian sisters shared our festive lunch followed by sharing hymns and prayers. Their first time in a monastic refectory! Missionaries are assigned all over the world, may God guard them, and we hope that when their next jubilee comes, they are able to gather together once again.

Sr Edith's Ruby Jubilee

After 40 years in the desert the Israelites reached the promised land. Sr Edith's story is slightly different. She has been in the promised land for 40 years when she first made her vows of stability, conversatio morum and obedience. On 6th August 2023, a Sunday and the feast of Transfiguration, we had a Mass for all her intentions, and a mini celebration, as we had a minor outbreak of Covid in the community at that time. The story in the promised land carries on, and may God walk with her and protect her all the way through.

Mother Jo's Earthly Journeys



Part of the duties of an Abbess is travelling. In January she visited the monks at Bolton, an Irish Monastery for a week. Since their guest house is closed, Dom Michael provided her with a furnished room near the library. Meeting with the community, they shared experiences and support. Together, M Chris went to Ireland too and stayed with her good friend Mary O'Callaghan.

In September Mother Jo attended the Regional Meeting held at Tautra Monastery in Norway. The community gave a very warm welcome and hospitality to all participants. During the week, each abbess and abbot in the Region presented a report, updating each other what is going on with their own communities. Tautra is a relatively new monastery, Mother Jo shared



with us what she discovered there, including a pilotless grass trimmer. They also visited Munkeby Monastery, a foundation of our Order. The building is newly erected and equipped, the four monks there are very pleased that they have their own church and monastery.



10 days in November 2023 Mother Jo joined the Course for New Superiors in Rome. It is a very good opportunity for 36 new superiors to learn and explore, from each other and from the 'old' superiors and presenters. The course was very compact, 4 sessions most of the days plus Sunday, 1.5 hours each session. However everyone including M. Jo has enjoyed, valued and appreciated the course.





Formators meeting at Mellifont

In February Sr Edith and Sr Usia attended the

Regional Formators meeting held at Mellifont Abbey in Ireland. There were workshops and presentations of different areas, aiming at enhancing the formation in this modern times. An optimal initial formation benefits both the new comers and the community. We pray for vocations and for wisdom too.

Community Retreat

Mother Marie from Glencairn Abbey in Ireland kindly accepted to be our preacher this year, the topic she picked is holiness. In her talks she provided a lot of sayings from different people, religious or lay, and then concluded with her own experience and opinion. She brought the 'holiness' down to earth which seems more attainable by all. However practice is always a more challenging matter. May God give us all the graces we need.

Junior Course at MSB

This year the Junior Course was conducted in mid-July at Mount St Bernard Abbey. The subject is St Aelred and his writings presented by Dom Elias Dietz, Abbot of Gethsemani Abbey in USA. His intense knowledge of the early Cistercian Fathers and his concrete experience as a modern abbot inspired and helped Sr Elsie and all other attendants. During the week they visited the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, at which St Aelred was the abbot between 1147 and 1167. Though a ruin for almost 500 years, the spirit of prayer and tranquillity remains rich and touching. We are very grateful to Dom Elias and Sr Sarah the organizer, and also the community of MSB who shared their Office and their Tynt Meadow brewery with everyone. Cheers!



Visitation

According to our Constitution Visitation has to be carried out every 2 years. We are very privileged to have Mother Pascale and Mother Julian from Arnhem Abbey in Netherlands as visitors this year, usually there is only one visitor. As a practice, they met each one of us, listening carefully our joys and concerns, after briefing us with their observations, they met those who would like to discuss with them the second time, and then finally they presented a report which is officially called Visitation Card. In the midst of these very serious procedures, there was a non-serious Covid outbreak in the community. Thanks be to God that the visitors were not affected, and safely flew back home as scheduled. We are very thankful for their assessments and suggestions, and look forward to improvements in order to make our monastic life more fruitful.

Our Altar Servers

Our two youngest Sunday Mass regulars, Aldo and Donnie Breedyk, wished to



participate in a different way at Mass. They asked to become altar servers. The community was delighted and agreed. Being an altar server in his 'younger' days for many years, Fr Liam agreed to teach them their duties. They are very smart and have picked them up very quickly. We are all pleased with their services and so are they.

Fr Liam's 10th Anniversary of Ordination

On 11th April, Easter Tuesday of this year, Fr Liam celebrated his 10th anniversary of priesthood at the Abbey Church. That morning our Church was packed with his family members and friends, old and young and very young, who all gained an encounter with his 'workplace', at the same time, gave praise and thanks to the Lord.

Come and See Weekends

Because of the pandemic Come and See Weekends were suspended. This year three Weekends were planned and two took place, altogether 5 courageous women attended. They prayed, dined, worked and shared with us, and very much treasured this unique experience. God has given each one of us a special journey, may he bless them all.



Friendship with Tymawr Community

On 19th April M Jo, M Chris, Sr Usia and Sr Isabelle visited the Tymawr Convent, the Society of the Sacred Cross, who had prepared a very welcoming programme for the day.

We also attended their 100th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service at St Woolos Cathedral Newport on 20th May. Congratulations.



On 7th August, Mother Katharine, Sr Janet and Sr Elizabeth spent a day with us on prayer and laughter. Our friendship goes on.



Polytunnels Repaired

In 2021 during a storm the cover of one of our polytunnels was severely damaged. The others were not in good condition either. This year in 2 phases, they were all re-covered and recovered. Neil our gardener successfully grew some new vegetables like celery, corn, squash, aubergine and etc. They are very delicious.

We wish you, your communities and families a healthy and peaceful 2024

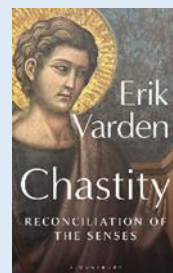
Another 'Come and See'



On 16th October a horse suddenly appeared along our pathway. It was reported missing by our neighbour. Probably our monastery was highly recommended by this truthful horse, since 2 days later about a dozen cows turned up on the grass outside our cells. They marched across our land, but fortunately they just passed by the cemetery and did not step on the grave stones. It took some time for our neighbouring farmers to take them all back home. Life is full of excitement.

New Book Recommendation

Dom Erik Varden was the abbot of Mount St Bernard Abbey, is now the bishop-prelate of Trondheim, Norway. This year he published a new book 'Chastity', unfolding this profound topic but applicable to all.



Thank you

To Fr Liam Bradley, our Chaplain, for his faithful service and generosity.

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 cards and a new range of all-season greeting cards for sale

They are all designed by our Sisters. Please visit our website:

www.hcawhitland.co.uk/shop

Thank you for your support.