



Holy Cross Abbey
Whitland

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

2024 News

Hold Firm and Take Heart (Psalm 26:14)

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Sr Elizabeth Platinum Jubilee



In the old days people entered monasteries at earlier age. Sr Elizabeth celebrated her 96th birthday in October this year. Her platinum jubilee of profession had been expected by the Community and all her dear worldwide friends. Greeting cards, gifts and blessings were loaded in her cell, including from Dom Bernardus the Abbot General.

Sr Elizabeth was asked to make her first profession on Whit Monday in 1954 at Stapehill. Her devotion to the Holy Spirit has grown even more since then. Therefore she was delighted to keep Whit Monday as this milestone jubilee celebration.

This year Whit Monday fell on 20th May. During Holy Mass celebrated by our Chaplain Fr Liam Bradley, Sr Elizabeth renewed her vows and received blessings from Mother Jo. After Mass we had a solemn procession to Our Lady's Well, the statue was crowned with flowers. This day the Universal Church celebrates the memorial of Mary, Mother of the Church, the procession consummated the liturgical commemoration.



Another highlight on that day is the festive dinner, with all the food and treats she likes. Her first words of wisdom are: those who eat and sleep well have vocations.

In her life time, Sr Elizabeth was the prioress, the novice mistress and the portress. She also worked in the vegetable garden and the kitchen. After moving to Whitland, she structured the top piece of land and became 'the Paradise Garden'. Roses all around are her work of art.

'Hold firm and take heart', with hope in the Lord nothing is impossible. Sr Elizabeth is the witness of this Psalm quote.

Sr Elsie Solemn Profession

On 29th June, feast of St Peter and St Paul, Sr Elsie pronounced a bigger 'yes' to the Lord. She made her solemn profession in the presence of the Celebrant Dom Joseph our Father Immediate from Mount Saint Bernard Abbey, the Community, religious and friends.

The ritual was solemn and grace-filled as she wished. The refectory and the cloisters were filled with laughter and pleasure during the buffet lunch afterwards. Our Sunday Mass regulars Lorraine and Bob crafted a professional delicious cake which astonished and was appreciated by everyone.



(continued on next page)

(from page 1) The spiritual life of Sr Elsie cannot be separated from 'bread'. When she was 8 years old, she attended the school reopening Holy Mass, Mass for her first time. She saw the Catholic students in a queue receiving 'something'. 'What is that?' she wondered, 'it must be something very good.' She likes bread, 4 slices for breakfast is well known by those around her. Since youth she wishes to learn how to make bread, or further to be apprenticed in a bakery. Now in the monastery she is the main baker of altar breads. God is mysterious. Is God fulfilling her desire, or making a joke with her? 'I like this job, I do hope that we are able to carry on and serve others with our own altar breads.' It is not merely a job, but a vocation in both earthly and religious sense. The sincerity of making each single piece not only yields fine altar breads but also bears delightful spiritual fruits. Therefore, during ceremony, both Dom Joseph and Mother Jo reminded Sr Elsie to live a monastic life responsibly, prudently and faithfully. This 'yes' does not last just on that day, but all the days of her life.



Sr Elsie is very grateful to all who have accompanied her, encouraged her as well as attentively chastised her, in particular, the Community and Mother Jo who was her Novice and Junior Mistress and now her Abbess.

Let us give thanks to the Lord for he is very, very, very good.

Sr Usia joined MFP

Sr Usia participated the Monastic Formators' Program this year. The MFP, designed for religious following the Rule of St Benedict, offers an intensive study on academic, pedagogical and pastoral subjects. This year 22 participants lived, prayed, shared and studied together as an extended community for 3 months. The first part took place at Rome, whereas the second Assisi.



The director of the MFP was Dom Brendan Thomas (first monk from left), a monk of Belmont Abbey. Shortly after the MFP this year, he was elected Abbot. The Abbatial Blessing took place on 12th July, Mother Jo and Sr Usia attended.

Sr Usia is very thankful for this MFP and enjoyed it very much.

She applied and was granted settled status. Congratulations!

Mother Jo's travel journal

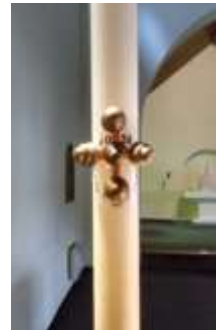
It seems that travelling is a norm for abbesses and abbots of our Cistercian Order.

In January she visited the monks at Bolton Abbey at Moone, Ireland. At the end of this trip to Ireland Mother Jo was warmly welcomed by the Community at St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn.

In March Mother Jo attended the Regional Meeting at Mount St Joseph Abbey in Roscrea, Ireland. During this meeting, they agreed and presented a report for the Central Commission of the Order.

In late April, Mother Jo and Mother Brigitte from Taura Monastery in Norway were invited to be the witnesses of the Abbot Election at Caldey Abbey. (more news on next page) After the election, Mother Brigitte, together with Dom Damien, the Father Immediate of Caldey Abbey, and his translator Fr Bernard MEP stayed with us for a weekend. A good time of sharing.

In September, Mother Jo conducted the regular Visitation at Bolton Abbey as the Delegate 'Mother Immediate'.



Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia

After a series of consultation across both former dioceses, Pope Francis promulgated the new Archdiocese of Cardiff-Menevia on 12th September. Archbishop Mark O'Toole is very thankful to this swift decision. Let us keep our Archdiocese in prayer.



Community Retreat

Dom Joseph from Mount Saint Bernard Abbey gladly accepted to preach the retreat in August, the topic he chose is the Tenth Hour. It

is 4pm, almost the end of the day, but there is time. He encourages us to spare time each day for retreat, not to lose hope in prayer, and to take up the cross which is the integral part of the journey. Let us pray for the graces.

Come and See Weekends

We received some positive feedback last year, therefore this year we continued and prepared two Weekends, we welcomed altogether 3 women who fully lived a monastic life with us. They took this experience seriously and were thankful to our sharing and support. May the Lord bless them and guide them.

Open Doors Celebration

Whitland Abbey is a site of ruins of the Cistercian monastery and was destroyed in 1557. It is just opposite of the highway with us. On 20th September, Whitland Abbey took part in the Cadw (the Welsh Government's historic environment service) Open Doors celebration of the heritage of Wales. The Community was invited to show the students and visitors how we pray the psalms, and Mother Jo to give a blessing.



Cadw is a Welsh word meaning 'to keep' or 'to protect'. May their service be fruitful.

Lasting Friendship with Tymawr Community

On 11th April M Jo, Sr Edith, M Chris and Sr Isabelle visited the Sisters of the Society of the Sacred Cross, at the Tymawr Convent, Monmouth. It was an opportunity for both communities to share their experiences and laughter once again. Sadly Mother Katharine broke her wrist by accident shortly after we had gone. We valued the shared fellowship between our two communities.

Other News



On the Epiphany of the Lord, Fr Liam proclaimed the **dates of moveable feasts** for the coming year. Also we followed the tradition of the

blessing home with the chalk writings.

In March Canon Pius and Sr Angela brought the Cardigan Parish **RCIA group** for a quiet day. May the Lord bless those newly received into the Catholic Church.

In July **Sr Agnes** from Trappistine Shudoin at Imari, Japan stayed with us for a few days. It is always our pleasure to welcome and learn from a sister of different culture. She enjoyed her stay and we were delighted to meet her.

We have **Community Shared Lectio** on first Friday morning. Also, we have **Community Gathering** for learning and updating ourselves in all areas on every Friday afternoon.

Dom Jan Rossey

In April the Community of Caldey Abbey elected Dom Jan as their new Abbot. The Abbatial Blessing was held on 26th



September presided by Archbishop Mark O'Toole. Six of us attended, and had an opportunity to meet friends old and new too. The weather was horrible that week, boat sailing was difficult. May the Lord watch over him and the Community.

Obituary

Fr Owen McGreal died on 28th November 2023. He was the Diocesan Priest of Haverfordwest, our Parish. After his retirement, he regularly came to celebrate Mass with us and be our confessor. We mourn the loss of a good pastor and friend.



Sister Jacqueline Moor died on 3rd June 2024. Sr Jacqui was born in 1932 in Wallasey, England. She entered Stapehill in 1955 and made her solemn profession in 1960. She was the abbess of our Community from 2001 to 2005. In 2011, she moved to Santa Rita Abbey in the USA and changed her stability. She spent the rest of life with the Sisters there.

Pat Horton died in August 2024. She is the mother of our former gardener Dave, and a friend of us.



May they rest in peace.

Another Obituary

Snap our beloved cat and 'guest-master', after enjoying with us over 16 years, died of liver cancer. We all miss him very much.



**May God bless you,
your communities and
families abundantly in
'Pilgrims of Hope'
Jubilee Year 2025**



Farewell to Neil

After working with us for 2 years, our vegetable gardener Neil resigned. He treasured these 2 years with us very much. We are grateful for his hard work, wish him and family all the best for the future.

Thank you Kevin

Sincere gratitude also to Kevin who helped us with the accounts. We thank him for his generosity and kindness too.

New Book Recommendation

Fr Michael Casey is a monk at Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia. He has written many books.

In November 2023 he published a new book 'The Longest Psalm', relating our seven-times-a-day chanting with practical reflection.



*** A Big Thank You ***

To Fr Liam Bradley, our Chaplain, for his trustworthy service and unfathomable kindness.

To Canon Pius Augustine, our new Confessor.

To our Sunday Mass Readers and Altar Servers.

To all our benefactors for their generosity.

To all the Carers from Quayside.

To our part-time team: Clem, Sue and Suzanne, for all their work and friendship.

To Eliana Kennedy our volunteer who stayed, worked and enjoyed with us for a month in February.

Christmas cards and 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.