

NEWSLETTER 19 : April - June 2007

Monastery of St Barnabas the Encourager.

DIARY DATES

Our Monthly Eucharist/Communion

will be on the third Sunday of each month at 8.00 am.

April 15th, May 20th, June 17th The service is followed by Communion Breakfast in the Community Kitchen. Eucharist can be celebrated at other times by arrangement.

OPEN DAY

Open day and **Patronal Feast of St. Barnabas Day on Saturday June 9th.**

12.30pm – 1.00pm **Silent Meditation** in the Chapel followed by **'Bring & Share Lunch'**. All Welcome.

WARDENS REPORT 19

During the last quarter, Christmas, was attended by one couple and we had two people stay for a day retreat.

Winter activity was concerned with property maintenance and repairs after some gale damage. We are also in the process of rebuilding the wood/garden store at the bottom of the garden and a local DIY man has sometimes been needed to assist with the construction. We have also been gathering up fallen timber.

We would like to say thank you to Ian Jones and his family for their help at the monastery. Ian

repaired the fence and garden post attached to St Veronica's retreat hut which was damaged in the storm and the family gathered branches from the wood for the woodburner. Thanks also to Ann Townend who is tidying up the garden and has already made a big difference to it.

We were snowed in for a couple of days at the beginning of February for the first time since 1982!

We would also like to thank Hazel Danson from Kerry shop and Post Office for her donation to the monastery of £100, which she

raised through sponsorship on the Across Wales Walk.

The biggest innovation has been the installation of a new full-size woodburner in the Reception/Library. We hope to have an extra radiator in the barn conversion so that the entire building will be heated. Although long overdue, we have now had secondary glazing fitted in the upstairs Meeting room and Warden's bedroom.

RESIDENT ANCHORITE THE MONASTERY IN THE COMMUNITY



In some ways this letter is rather like the one I wrote in Newsletter 17 in that it is about monasteries but this time I want to focus on the place of the monastery in the community.

Some time ago I was approached by the editor of a newsletter being circulated around the Black-led churches in Birmingham. He asked me to write an article describing a monastery. They, like so many other black church people, had never met a monk or heard of a monastery. The black led churches are not alone in this, of course, many white church members, although they may have heard of monasteries; monks and nuns have little or no idea of their place in society. They may have read about Mother Theresa or seen monks and nuns in films or in the streets but they have no understanding of the life of a monastery and its community. So far as I know the article was never published but it is possible that the gap in knowledge might have been partly filled by the

recent television programmes showing a monastery and a convent accepting a group of ordinary men and women and giving them a 40 day experience of the religious life in a monastic community.

We and those who use the monastery here at Brynmawr see ourselves as part of the community and as a spiritual resource within it.

Some time ago I remember having a conversation with a social worker, a regular church member who, when she needed someone who would listen to her and pray with her, someone who was not part of any established system, a person who could be impartial and detached: at such times she would go to her local convent at any time of day or night and spend some time with one of the sisters there.

When I am asked these days to describe a monastery, I can draw on the testimony of that social worker and confidently say that a monastery is a spiritual resource facility within the community, providing just what that social worker received and more.

A monastery has an historically fixed basic routine of prayer times. It provides hospitality to people who visit.



Because unlike a church, or other institution, it does not adapt to the requirements of people, because it has a centuries old traditional agenda, it is a resource to draw on.

People can take from a monastery what they need, be it an oasis; a place of peace and quiet, a place just to be, a place to stay awhile and there are four services a day to attend if one so wishes

In a monastery there is also a listening ear, someone to

talk to or pray with, in short a monastery is a place which, because it has no fixed agenda leaves people free to engage or to just receive whatever it has to offer.

I hope and pray it can be a place of support, comfort, spiritual sustenance, worship and guidance, for each person that visits along the Way.

Father Bryan

The Holy Spirit

Fountain of Love! Thyself true
God!
Who through eternal days
From Father and from Son hast
flowed
In uncreated ways!

O Majesty unspeakable!
O Person all divine!
How in Threefold Majesty
Doth Thy Procession shine!

Fixed in the Godhead's awful light
Thy fiery breath doth move;
Thou art a wonder by Thyself
To worship and to love!

And undivided Nature shared
With Father and with Son;
A Person by Thyself; with Them

Thy simple essence One;

Bond art Thou of the other Twain!
Omnipotent and free!
The consummating Love of God!
The Limit of the Three!

I dread Thee, Unbegotten Love!
True God! sole Fount of Grace!
And now before Thy Blessed
throne
My sinful self abase.

Ocean, wide-flowing Ocean, Thou,
Of Uncreated Love;
I tremble as within my soul
I feel thy waters move.

Thou art an unborn Breath
outbreathed
On angels and on men,
Subduing all things to thyself,

We know not how or when.

Thou art a God of fire, that doth
Create while He consumes!
A God of light, whose rays on
earth
Darken where He illumines!

O Light! O Love! O very God
I dare no longer gaze
Upon Thy wondrous attributes,
And their mysterious ways.

Thy love of Jesus I adore;
My comfort this shall be,
That, when I serve my dearest
Lord,
That service worships Thee!



**Frederick William
Faber, 1814-1863**



Editor: Rowan Wells **Layout:** Gary Hiscott **Website:** Dave Scott-Morgan

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