

NEWSLETTER 27 : Apr May June 2009

Monastery of St. Barnabas the Encourager.

DIARY DATES

The Eucharist (Communion) will be celebrated on the third Sunday of each month and will be followed by Communion breakfast in the main kitchen.

MONASTERY REPORT



Last quarter was over a time of bad weather, particularly the week of snow, which as usual was only half as bad as they had in the midlands.

It is very encouraging to have a couple of local church people doing a day retreat with us. As I always maintain, Day Retreatants just contribute to the general atmosphere, (spiritual temperature), of the Monastery. Our two 'Guests in Residence' had left by the second week of the New Year.

We are greatly indebted to Alan Jewel for his contributions to the monastery of practical help, particularly in the field of electrics. A major was the contribution of a larger cooker when the previous one packed up. This proved extremely helpful over the Easter period, when we had so many Fiends of the Monastery as guests.

We had a very interesting visitor who was born and brought up in Brymawr. She was the daughter of the first tenant farmer to become owner when it was freed from the very large manorial estate.

The Friends of the Monastery is rather in limbo until Rowan is well enough to take the helm again.

WARDENS LETTER

SIMPLE FAITH IN JESUS

A recently broadcast programme on Radio 4 entitled "The most Godless town in Britain", pinpointed Telford in Shropshire. This came as little surprise to me because the survey, carried out by a national newspaper, was based on church attendance.

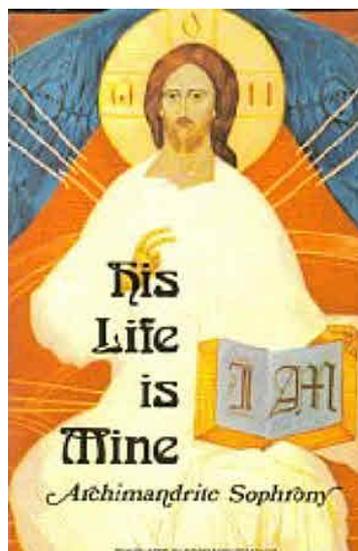
I have found many in Shropshire are thirsting for mystical and spiritual experiences but the simple concept of the person of God in Christ and having a personal encounter with Him causes them unease. There is a particular interest in Eastern religious mysticism and methods and there is much practice of these undertaken in an endeavour to achieve peace of mind.

They are focusing on life forces of creation in the universe and see these practices as therapeutic lifestyles. They are rather like that well known atheist professor who cannot seem to get beyond his brain in matters of faith. Jesus commended the simple faith of little children and perhaps these people who are trying to understand spirituality have never heard that Jesus said "Blessed are the little children for theirs the kingdom of heaven; he was speaking of simple faith. Faith in God as a

person is a very difficult concept for some people to get their heads around: They feel more at home with abstract phenomena. The God of the Bible seems rather remote and powerless to them.

Telford town centre is totally commercial and feels rather soulless. The whole town was built as a commercial centre. In part its suburbs are made up of people who have been re-housed or have chosen to move out from the major cities where they and their parents were part of the community with friends, family and neighbours in the towns from where they came. I have found in Shropshire that those on a spiritual quest meet each other for friendship and the possibility of exploring alternative spiritualities.

The simple concept of opening ourselves to God and expecting him, to make himself known in the person of Jesus in ordinary everyday life seems like abandoning self sufficient abilities. This does not appeal to many of the self-confident and up and coming young persons.



The local newspaper responded to the BBC's presentation by highlighting the activity of Mark Berry, a Church Missionary Society evangelist working in Telford. He is approaching people with a Christian message to encourage encounter with Jesus and

to consider their making some commitment by joining a Christian group. This personal encounter, which Mark Berry sees as so important, was illustrated by another BBC interview many years ago when several religious leaders were asked what they felt about the resurrection of Jesus. When Metropolitan

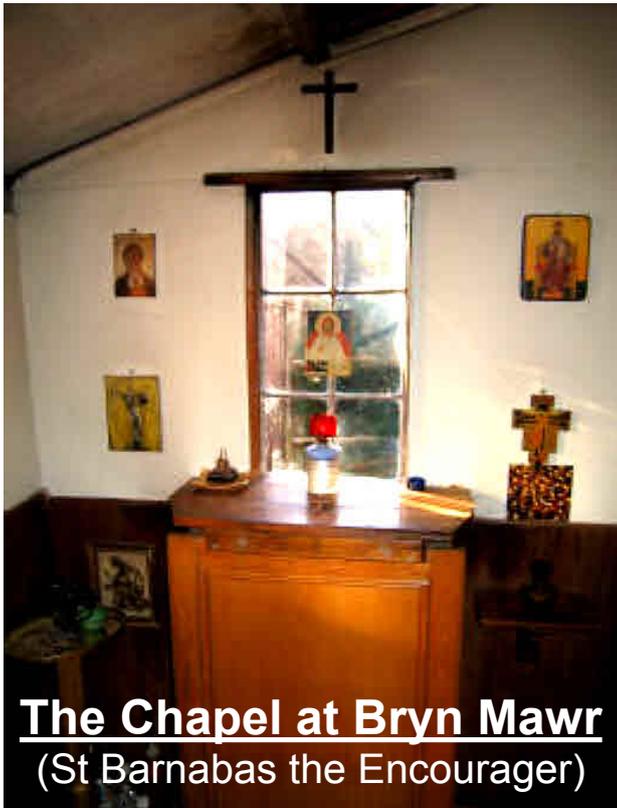
Anthony was asked he replied I believe in the resurrection of Jesus because I have met him: he was speaking from his personal experience. Most stable and mature Christians can relate to this because they also have some experience of God working in their lives.

DEPENDENCE ON GOD

I am rather late, as usual, in getting round to writing my letter.

Unfortunately I am starting to have quite severe memory lapses. I recently saw a leaflet on Alzheimer's disease and I could relate to a number of conditions described in that pamphlet. This is quite embarrassing apart from impeding practical efficiency.

It is even more awkward when I have someone who is facing a big problem and is sharing details I am trying to hold on to. However recently, while praying with someone, I actually experienced receiving inspiration, which was absolutely spot on and appropriate for that occasion. I was not able to think of the appropriate responses but God actually dipped into some incident in my life, which was, appropriate for the situation this person was facing. But Alzheimer type memory lapses can be very scary. They are not just ordinary memory lapses. However, this incidence proved Paul's experience when he clearly heard God say: 'My grace is sufficient for you for my strength is made perfect in weakness. [2 Corinthians 12 v9]



The Chapel at Bryn Mawr
(St Barnabas the Encourager)

LIGHT IS COME

Inspired by a stay at St John the Baptist,
Orthodox Monastery, Essex
.... by *William & Alexandre Riggins*.

Chorus:

Light is come
Life is come
Love is come in the form of a man
Light is come
Life is come
Love has come and His name is I AM.