

Colwich Chronicle: Advent 2018

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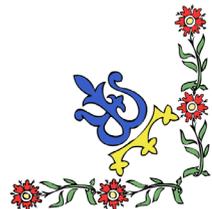
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As winter comes we are faced with the dark nights, and cold spells with frost and snow. It can feel gloomy and people feel low, but in the heart of this, there is warmth, the warmth of love, a log-burning fire for those lucky enough to have one - rather than central heating. Christmas trees and decorations are put up and there is, all of a sudden, a different atmosphere. There is radiant joy and happiness and love, and what for? The birth of a special baby boy 2000+ years ago. The Word was made flesh and lived among us. God became man. He became a small helpless baby dependent on other people so that we might become big and dependent on him. Humility is truth; we need to learn humility in order to recognise who we truly are. When we look at the situation God was born into - a smelly stable with animals, a young couple expecting their child, though the mother was suspected of having an affair with someone else, no home of their own, foreigners in a town - doesn't it echo some of the day to day problems in our time, immigrants, homeless people, young couples unmarried with children and so on. How many of these will have loving families to share Christmas celebrations with this year? We who give and receive presents, who love and are loved, have to acknowledge Jesus for who he is, God made man, the Word made flesh. 'Come, let us adore him!'

Mother Abbess

St. Davina



National Eucharistic Congress - Liverpool

September 7th - 9th 2018

Sister Theresa Mary

Mother Abbes and I missed the morning session on the Friday as we were delayed on the motorway.

The first talk in the afternoon session was giving a brief history of the Eucharist outside of Mass. We started to see the Eucharist as a sign of the Church. We have progressed and how we are still on the way to union. We had brothers from other denominations speaking. We heard from the Church of England, Methodist, Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic traditions. They each gave a talk on what they believed about the body of Christ, the things that unite us and the things that we are to still to work towards in the understanding what is meant by the Body of Christ. We were recommended to read again the book, 'One bread, one body.'

The third presentation, concerned the ministry of extraordinary ministers of holy communion outside Mass and how it developed over the years. On Saturday we went to the Cathedral for morning prayer and mass where we met up with Archbishop Bernard Longley, who was pleased to see us there. We had a full day, beginning with Our Lady of Walsingham taking her place on the platform. The Apostolic Nuncio gave an address from the Holy Father. Then we had a welcome from the Bishop of Liverpool...and more testimonies from different people.

After lunch, the talk was a presentation by young people, about how they see the Eucharist. We saw how the Eucharist can bring us together. We had a talk about Mary's Meals by the founder. After a short break we had evening prayer and Adoration in the ACC area with Benediction at the end. We stayed for two nights at the Liverpool Carmel.

On Sunday we went to morning office with the sisters then went to the Cathedral for 11:30 Mass which was delayed as the 9:30 Mass was still in progress. When the Mass ended, Our Lady of Walsingham was brought from the Cathedral and led the procession outside. The Cathedral was full to capacity. The Cardinal presided, and the Bishop of Liverpool (Malcolm McMahon) gave the homily. After the mass we assembled for the procession which Our Lady led once again to show us her Son, followed by the servers, priests and bishops and finally all the lay faithful. As soon as we got outside the rain came down very heavily but it was a great witness to all who saw us. About 10,000 people took part in the procession. Singing hymns to Our Lady and the Blessed Sacrament, we arrived back at the Cathedral where we had Benediction.

We then left to go back to the Carmel to say our 'goodbyes' then departed for HOME!

Sister Monica

I went with **Sister Benedict** to the Eucharistic congress on 8th September, just for the day, accompanied by **Hilary** and **Mary**, who regularly attend our Masses. Hilary gave us a lift to and from the coach stop-off point at Trent Vale.

The keynote speaker was Bishop Robert Barron. Who was welcomed by Archbishop Malcom McMahon O.P., of Liverpool and greeted by the Apostolic Nuncio, who read a message from Pope Francis.

Bishop Robert gave two long addresses, one in the morning on the mass and another, expanding the theme in the afternoon. He used very vivid simple language which sticks in the memory. For instance, he told us how he noticed all the dirt and smears on his windscreen and windows when the light shone through them. This was an image of our sinful souls. When the Divine Light shines on them, we see our sins. He told us stories illustrating this.

He spoke about the Wheel of Fortune. As we were in Liverpool, he talked about the Beatles. He had been a fan, as a boy. The wheel of fortune was a good symbol of their life. They were all on top of the wheel. I was a fan myself. They were extremely popular, even with many older people and were honoured by the Queen. However, their huge success made them go a bit 'haywire.' John Lennon upset the other Beatles with his nasty sarcastic

remarks and they broke up.

They began to slide down the wheel, especially John. His marriage to Cynthia broke up and he went off with Yoko Ono. On a trip with her to America he was murdered. He really reached the bottom.

Bishop Robert described the rose window of Notre Dame, a feature of 13th and 14th century churches. It's round (like a wheel) and always has an image of Christ in the centre, in this case He is in his mother's arms, the Cathedral being dedicated to her. From this hub radiate 'spokes', between each of which is a different scene, mostly Biblical. As all the scenes radiate around Christ, so all the activities must radiate from Him. We must always keep Him as the centre of our lives.



Inside Liverpool Cathedral at the Eucharistic Congress

Travels

We have done an unusual amount of travelling this year.

- Eucharistic Congress: Two separate accounts.
- Stanbrook: Four of us went to Stanbrook in February. There were two other day visits in June as well.
- Buckfast: Four of us went to Buckfast in June, and another of us joined us for a day visit.
- Finally Mother and Sister Theresa took part in the English Benedictine Congregation Conference in Buckfast from 22nd - 26th October. They also took part in the Mass celebrating the Buckfast Millennium on 27th October

Mother Abbess and Skippy on Paignton Beach



Sister Theresa Mary, Mother Abbess, Sister Benedict and Sister Monica at Stanbrook in January at a novitiate tea with Sister Marion and Alex (who is now a novice - Sister Myriam)



Mother Abbess & Sister Theresa Mary on the River Dart

Father Stephen

Father Stephen retired as our Chaplain on 24th April and returned to Belmont Abbey.

He had been our chaplain since 2012. As well as celebrating Mass for us, he joined us in the choir stalls for Vespers and we appreciated his voice. His cheerfulness was unending. Many guests have enjoyed entertaining lunches with Father Stephen and our Assistant Chaplain. Visitors to Belmont tell us he has settled back very happily into his monastic community.



Our Oblates

Edna (Sister Mary Antony) Penman was our first Oblate. She first made her promise in 1982. She was allowed into the enclosure on her visits, where she helped us in many practical ways. For many years her health was a concern but she did not let it stop her. She died on 10th December 2017. May she rest in peace.

From 12th to 14th October the Oblates Group held their annual retreat here, which they organised themselves on, the theme of evangelisation.

Geoff the husband of **Norah** has been at Mass and Compline with us for years. We were delighted to know that he was received into full communion with the church on 12th August.



Mother Abbes, Norah and Geoff at Fr. Stephens party.

Garden Sale

We held a very successful Garden Sale in our front garden and car park on 14th July in very fine summer weather. There were stalls and raffles and guided visits to the church. For many local people it was their first visit to the Abbey!

Felix Plant was born to our Assistant Bursar **Frances** and husband **Steve** on 18th February. While **Frances** was on maternity leave we had the able assistance first of **Emily Adams** and then of **Mary Strong**.

Assistant Cook

We welcomed **Alison Hill** on 27th February as our part-time, assistant cook. **Sister Theresa Mary** still cooks four days a week. The day before, we received a new cooker for the monastery kitchen, which was also very welcome.

Community Annual Retreat

We kept our time of community retreat from 2nd August to 9th August. It was unusual as we had a Columban missionary, **Father Denis Carter**, to give the conferences, say Mass and hear confessions. He gave us an insight into missionary life, especially in Pakistan which was a breath of fresh air.



The community with Fr. Stephen

Mother Gertrude

was 92 on 14th October. She still takes part in Mass and office and is with the community for recreation.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, Friends.

These few words (and I'll try not to let it become an Epistle) come with some very important news for you.

One or two of you already know a little of the background about Colwich but if you bear with me I'll explain it... Nearly three years ago now, the Colwich Community were asked to think about their future and we have done so in various ways. Firstly, by engaging architects to help see if we could alter present buildings in some way to make them better suited to our present situation and charism, hospitality is a special gift of Benedictine life. However, this was put on hold when last year we were invited to re-think the situation, so we brought together a small group of people which included both monastic and lay people and met regularly every two months, approximately. At the beginning, we started with four options to think about but ten months later nine options appeared. At the beginning of the year four of the Sisters spent ten days at Stanbrook in the lodges - not the best time to go in January/February, but it was a helpful period. Likewise in August we had the chance to spend two weeks at Buckfast Convent to see if this was a possibility. Again this was a treasured experience helping us keep mind and heart focused on what we are seeking.

Anyhow, after time in prayer and discernment the Community who wish to stay together, have decided to move to a smaller place. This is something that has happened before at various points in our history. By the Lord's providence, there is a place not too far from us at Colton, Rugeley. This is where we are trying to go.

One drawback with this is that we will not be able to take as many guests as we have done in the past, at least for the moment. There will be a limit of 2 guests at a time until we get established as a monastery, so I hope and pray that many of you will be patient with us and support us in many ways. Our Archbishop is very pleased indeed that we want to remain in this Diocese.

A very special thank you to all of you for your friendship, prayers and support, not only during our time at Colwich, but as individuals. Long may it last!

We wish to keep our identity as the Community of Our Lady of Good Hope.

Mother Abbess.

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You may have heard about the new data protection law which came into effect on 25th May 2018.

This law requires us to inform you that we keep certain information about you, namely you name and address and, if available, telephone number and email address.

We keep this information only so that we can send you the Colwich Chronicle or any other community news.

This information is stored on computer on a mailing list.

We undertake to keep this information safe and not share it with others, unless required by law.

We will keep this information only for as long as necessary and destroy it when no longer needed.

You have the right to ask us to stop contacting you and using your information.

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