

The Colwich Chronicle

Advent 2004

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Mother Edith, our retired Abbess, has died



Mother Edith Street died on 22nd November after a short illness, at the age of 93. She had been a nun for over 50 years, and was the Abbess of Colwich from 1982 to 1994. Proud of her birth in Wakefield, Yorkshire, she also spent her youth in Lancashire, and taught in a Catholic school in Liverpool. Her mother died when she was very young. Her brother was a priest and her sister was a teaching Sister. It was only once her much loved father and stepmother had died that she began her monastic life. Her beautiful voice and skill at needlework served the community, but above all she was a great woman of prayer. Her wisdom and common sense, allied with humour and cheerfulness, made her a beloved Mother for nuns and guests alike. **May she rest in peace.**

The story of the Colwich crib

Colwich Crib in 1930s

Seventy years ago, **Dame Veronica Berry** gave the figures in memory of her Solemn Profession.

From the Colwich Chronicle for Christmas 1934:

“As time went on, and it came to three weeks before Christmas we began to think we should have to be content with our present minute set. But this was a disappointment, so we set to work to pray about it.

Almost immediately a friend gave us the address of a clever sculptor in Birmingham. We were exceedingly pleased with his modelling and decided to place the order with him. But as we found him to be an old gentleman of eighty two years, and he informed us that he worked entirely alone, without any assistance, and it was then so near to Christmas, we told him we could not possibly expect him to get them done in time. ‘I am only a poor old man’, he said, ‘but they shall be the best I have ever done, and they will be ready for Christmas’. On Sunday afternoon December 23rd, he arrived with Our Lady and St. Joseph. ‘I am sure’, he had written to Lady Abbess, ‘that your gentle ladies must have helped me with their prayers, or I should never have succeeded as I have done’.

The Infant arrived early in the following year .” [1935]



I will follow you wherever you go

Our Visitation took place from 15th to 17th March. The Abbot President of the English Benedictine Congregation, **Abbot Richard Yeo**, said to the community:

“When *Jesus* and his apostles met a man on the road, who said to *Jesus*, ‘I will follow you wherever you go’, *Jesus* didn’t reply: ‘I can guarantee you a future with total security, unemployment benefit and health insurance, not to mention old-age pension and nursing-home care in your old age.’ *Jesus* said, ‘Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.’ *Jesus* today is inviting his followers to share the precarious life that he himself experienced. Religious life today offers no guarantees that the life is going to be exactly the same in the future as it was in the past.”



Diamond Jubilee of Father Edward

Last Advent, on 18th December 2003, our chaplain, **Father Edward Delepine** (a monk of Fort Augustus and Ampleforth) celebrated at Colwich his Diamond Jubilee of Ordination. The Episcopal Vicar, **Monsignor Patrick McKinney**, said in his homily:

“All that the priest does and hopes to become only makes sense in the light of *Christ. Jesus* is not only the one who calls the priest to follow him, but he is also the one who sustains that call day in and day out, as he does the calling of each of us.”

Oblates Retreat

The first ever Retreat Day for our Oblates was organised on 9th October by **Edna (Sister Mary Anthony) Penman**. They joined the community for Mass and Midday Office, had talks, discussion and time for prayer. The community enjoyed sharing lunch and tea with the oblates.

Two new oblates made their oblation this year, **Aine (Aidan) Baptie** on 14th July, and on 26th August **Pat (Bernadette) Carter**. One of our oldest oblates, **Winifred (Elizabeth) Mayhew** died in October. May she rest in peace.

Vocations

Our postulant and our novice both left during the year. However, on 31st July **Sister Cordis** came to try her contemplative vocation. She is a Nigerian Sister of the Congregation of Daughters of Mary, Mother of Mercy, and her provincial superior brought her to us. Sister Cordis has been engaged in pastoral work in England for a few years.

We had a visit on 18th September from the Superior General and senior members of the Visitation Sisters from Belgium. They were happy to see **Sister Sheila**, who is transferring from their Congregation, and is at present continuing in her promise of stability with us.