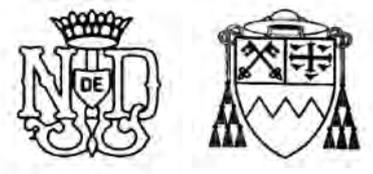


Ampleforth Hospitalité of Our Lady of Lourdes

November 2011

newsletter



A NOTE FROM OUR NEW CHAIRMAN

I am delighted to have the opportunity in this Christmas Newsletter to thank publicly those who have retired from leadership roles in the Ampleforth Lourdes Hospitalité this year after, in most cases, many years of service.

Our heartfelt thanks and gratitude must go primarily to Anna Mayer, who has been Chairperson of the Ampleforth Lourdes Hospitalité Committee for the last fourteen years, and Director for the last eight. Her outstanding contribution has set an enormously high standard for those of us who follow her, and we cannot thank her enough for her tireless dedication to creating an annual Pilgrimage week filled with love, prayer and laughter.

Others standing down since last year to whom our enormous thanks are due include: Presidents: Maire Channer and David Tate; Spiritual Advisor: Fr Bernard Green OSB; Ampleforth Hospitalité: Richard Murphy; Chief Doctor: Janet Squire; Chief Nurse: Annie Bowen-Wright; Chief Brancardier: Rupert

Plummer; Chief Handmaids: Annabel Brown and Susannah Angelo-Sparling; Health & Safety: Carol Riley; Hospital Pilgrim: Richard Plummer; Young Pilgrim: Tom Hill; and Hospital Pilgrim Administrator: Ros Lynch.

The dedication, love and compassion shown by this group of people over so many years of service, is so great it needs an effort to grasp, and I would ask you to take a moment to reflect on the commitment of these individuals, and on how fortunate we have been to have them guiding us.

Our special thanks also go to Sally Martin, who has kindly agreed to continue as Treasurer for a further year, in order to implement an effective handover of her role after the 2012 Pilgrimage, and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank those who will continue to serve in their current or new posts on the Committee and Annie Bowen-Wright who has agreed to return in a different role.

As I expect you will all know, from the announcement I made in October on the Ampleforth Lourdes Hospitalité website, we have now formed a new Committee, of equally committed Hospitalité members, and I am certain that together the new team will continue the friendly, family and above all Benedictine ethos of the Ampleforth Pilgrimage, which has stood the test of time since 1953. I thank this new team wholeheartedly for giving of themselves over the coming years to the service of Our Lady to ensure that our sick, frail and elderly Hospital Pilgrims can enjoy our Christian friendship and can experience what it means to be supported and loved by our Ampleforth family throughout the year and not just in Lourdes.

I also send my very best wishes to you and your families for a happy and holy Christmas and New Year.

Paul Williams

A REFLECTION ON THE 2011 PILGRIMAGE FROM OUR NEW SPIRITUAL ADVISOR



A first thought about our Pilgrimage last year will inevitably recall the cold and the rain. Although older Lourdes hands than I were commenting that it was the coldest July for 30 years; I can't verify that, but I can remember that the sweater which usually stays neatly folded at the bottom of my suitcase all week was being worn all the time. But that is not the abiding memory, not the feature of the Pilgrimage that makes it stand out in my mind. This year I thought that, perhaps because the weather was so against us, that the care of our hospital pilgrims reached a particularly high standard. We were very blessed to have

an outstanding and large group of nurses; over the last few years the faithful few have had to work too hard, but having 20 nurses this year meant that the burden on these all-important members of our Pilgrimage was fairer. This was combined with as generous and cheerful a group of younger pilgrims as I can remember. Their constant willingness not merely to do the tasks which were requested of them but to spend time enjoying the company of those in the hospital was a great feature of the week. I hope that many both nurses and younger pilgrims will join us again next year. Their presence this year, and all

they contributed, was certainly a reminder of how the spiritual health of the Pilgrimage depends on ready willingness to serve the sick.

The spiritual theme that the Sanctuary was inviting us to reflect on this year was that of the "Our Father", the second strand of a three-year programme reflecting on the three great prayers of the Rosary. For us the most concrete product of this reflection was the attempt gently to raise the profile of public recitation of the Rosary in the life of the Pilgrimage. During the course of any Pilgrimage there always a number of periods when we wait for each other to gather, and this year we made a particular effort to recite the Rosary together during some of these. Those who arrived first nobly took up this challenge, and the gentle rhythm of recitation transformed what can sometimes be a rather empty time into an occasion of prayerful reflection. Next year we will be reflecting on the "Hail Mary", which invites us not merely to think about that beautiful prayer but also to continue the process of reflecting on the role of the Rosary in the life of the Pilgrimage, as well as its role in our own personal spiritual lives.

The Sanctuary had made some small but important changes to two of the great

ceremonies of Lourdes. The Blessed Sacrament Procession now begins from the Crypt of the Upper Basilica. The presiding bishops, priests and doctors process with the Blessed Sacrament down to the Esplanade in front of the Rosary Basilica. Hospital pilgrims and helpers are already assembled there, and a time of reading, prayer and reflection follows. From there we all process together to the Underground Basilica for the Blessing of the Sick in its customary form. This new beginning seemed to me to have two particular advantages: the first was that every member of every Pilgrimage could be fully involved in the initial moment of reading, prayer and reflection. When this happened on the

podium on the other side of the River Gave it was much less easy for people even to see and hear, let alone to feel themselves involved. Secondly, the new arrangement seemed to me to tie what one might call the 'spiritual geography' of Lourdes together much more effectively, drawing the Crypt (which St Bernadette herself knew) into the Procession and linking it with this great moment of the Lourdes day. The other change is that the Torchlight Marian Procession now begins in such a way that every Pilgrimage passes in front of the Grotto. Once again the 'spiritual geography' of the Sanctuary is reinforced, and our Procession began with the opportunity for a moment to reflect at the heart of Lourdes and to

thank Our Lady for appearing in the darkness of the Grotto, and bringing the light which our candles symbolise.

Another distinctive feature of this year's Pilgrimage was that an unusually large number of people were fulfilling senior roles of service for the last time. Tribute is rightly paid to them elsewhere in this Newsletter. But one final note is appropriate here. We can all be glad that the Pilgrimage has stayed in touch with the spiritual heart of Lourdes so well over the last few years. I hope that as the new committee takes up the reins we will all be able to remain responsive to Our Lady's invitation in future years.

Fr Luke Beckett OSB

A WEEK ON PILGRIMAGE. A NOTE FOR PARENTS

"Yes, a man might say, you have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" James 2:18

Has your son or daughter expressed a wish to go on the Ampleforth Lourdes Pilgrimage?

What have you heard about the pilgrimage – that participants have a good time, it is a good place to socialize, a place to help the sick, a spiritual place?

Whatever you might have heard let me tell you a little more about it.

We make our Pilgrimage to Lourdes in response to Our Lady's invitation. We are made aware there of her love, and her wish that we should be drawn closer to her Son. We are conscious of her request that we should do penance and pray for sinners and as ours is a Benedictine pilgrimage the core values of the Benedictine Rule of attentiveness, hospitality, respect, integrity, spirituality, equilibrium (AHRISE) underpin and are evident throughout the week. It is therefore a call to a deep conversion and to change in our lives – a scary thought!

Our pilgrimage starts from the moment we accept Our Lady's invitation. To help us to prepare for the pilgrimage helpers are sent a Novena with their final instructions and are invited to pray with others for nine days just prior to arriving in Lourdes.

First timer pilgrims are invited to get to Lourdes the day before the pilgrimage starts so they can be taken on a tour of the Sanctuaries and Holy places and given more detailed information about Our Lady's apparitions and the working of

the hospital where the Hospital Pilgrims ("HPs") stay. This is not a hospital as we know it but more like purpose built accommodation for those with special needs with small bedrooms of 6 or less beds. We take our own Doctors and Nurses to help us care for the frail and less well, who come from all over the UK. Some HPs need total care others less so but they all depend entirely on our helpers for their care throughout the week. Our service for the HPs and each other can be put into the context of a prayer. We therefore perform our service of care with reverence, respect and dignity – they are Christ and need true loving caring. Being responsible for the needs of the HPs gives all helpers a sense of being valued, a sense of fulfilment and reward.

All helpers are divided into groups of about 20 and each group has a Group leader, chaplain, nurse and if we have enough of them a Doctor. The Groups have a daily timetable and a typical day would start at 0600 getting the HPs up and dressed, breakfasted and ready for the first ceremony of the day. Each group goes out of Lourdes once in the week for a quiet half day of reflection. Our day while on pilgrimage is centred on the celebration of Holy Mass in either the morning or afternoon. During the week we participate in the Blessed Sacrament procession and Torchlight procession in the evening. On another day we make a visit to the Baths, or take the HPs in chairs known as voitures up the hill to a quiet venue for a Mass of Anointing followed by a picnic. We arrange a sing song for the HPs on a couple of evenings and a Ward Party at which helpers perform which is always most

entertaining. The helpers day would end when all the HPs are in bed about eleven pm. There is time to catch up with friends in the evenings, but getting to bed is a priority as there are some early starts! So a long day and often quite exhausting especially if it is very hot.

Our children are fortunate to be privileged and the week in Lourdes enables them to see others less fortunate than themselves and it is a week where they will see faith lived and practiced. It is so easy to go through life thinking that everyone lives the way we do – so the importance of coming face to face with the daily reality of those who are less fortunate sows a seed of awareness and perhaps humility and can nurture an acorn of faith. It is a place where helpers give rather than receive and where others are more important than self. We cannot be the people we aspire to be without such an experience.

Once young helpers have been a couple of times they could get their first taste of leadership by being given responsibility as a Deputy Group Leader and later as a Group Leader - this is obviously good for their CVs! Through their experience in Lourdes they will hopefully seek a change of direction in their personal spiritual lives and their faith will grow and develop. They may even decide on a change of direction in their careers. I have known several who have decided to become nurses, doctors, teachers or religious having been in Lourdes. The young are the future of our Pilgrimage and they may well go on to take further roles in management of the pilgrimage. They need different and challenging experiences to allow them to stand out



amongst their peers and Lourdes is certainly such a place.

The pilgrimage is a place where new and often lifelong friendships are made and old ones rekindled. Many come as a family and the entire pilgrimage is part of the wider Ampleforth family. What better place for your son or daughter to grow in their faith. During the year Reunions are held in London and round the country and there is an annual Retreat held at Ampleforth usually after Easter.

As a Mother and someone who has been on the pilgrimage with my late husband and three sons for many years I can assure you that if your child approaches the week of pilgrimage with the right attitude then it will be a truly positive experience. I have seen my own sons grow in Lourdes from adolescents to caring young men. I am quite certain that the experiences they had there has helped them to grow in their faith and love of God. So what better experience for your child than to go for a week and to put others before themselves, to pray and to grow in their love of Christ. As St Benedict says in his rule "nothing should be put before the love of God".

Lastly, could I recommend reading a history of the Pilgrimage "Not Strangers But Pilgrims" by Bernard Green OSB which is available on line via the Ampleforth Bookshop or our website www.lourdesampleforth.org.uk

I would like to thank the parents I interviewed prior to writing this article.

Anna Mayer

THE YOUNG HELPERS - LIFEBLOOD OF OUR WEEK AWAY

Sitting in the car on the way back from Stansted returning from Lourdes every year, there is a feeling of being drained physically down to the very last drop of energy. For the week is spent in a very different environment to what one is used to for the rest of the year. There are the inevitable trials of trying to explain to friends why one is going to the South of France but not the beach; for the service that one gives in Lourdes is quite unique, and a form that is immensely difficult to articulate.

For me, one of the more distinctive facets of the Pilgrimage is the interaction between a diversity of people, far beyond what you tend to experience in everyday life. From the outset, being sorted into a group consisting of not only one's own age group, but also many older and younger, means forming a team with very different dynamics compared to what one is more familiar with. In an operational sense, this provides benefits as there is the blend of youthful enthusiasm and energy and wisdom, with experience and leadership from the more seasoned members of a group. In Britain, there is much segregation by age, and you spend time with classmates, colleagues, or (and dare I stereotype!) the bridge club. It is so rare that one actually forms a partnership with people of all ages, and it is this aspect of the Pilgrimage which I believe provides richness to all. One is told of the importance of the young on the Pilgrimage, and before my first trip, I certainly wondered to some extent why it was deemed so important that young pilgrims played their part. However, when you see the whole pilgrimage operate, it is quickly apparent that the contribution is integral to the fabric of it.

However, a service in Lourdes has deeper impacts than just the help which can be provided to fellow pilgrims. After my first pilgrimage, I certainly hadn't noticed many of the personal effects, bar the 18 hour sleep when I returned back to Britain - a clear sign that it had taken a lot out of me. But all that which has been taken out of me has, in my eyes, been returned to me in very different guises. Beyond developing many personal skills, it has led to a significant deepening of my faith. I will never forget someone telling me at the top of the Esplanade during a Marian Torchlight Procession to look down at all of the candles and people, and to just contemplate as to whether that many people could all be wrong. This overwhelming sense of power is coupled with a more discreet sense of spirituality which is displayed every time you see a pilgrim in Lourdes, knowing that each person there has their own story about why they are there, and often remarkable stories about the dedication displayed in order to arrive there.

As a young Pilgrim, there is a sense that the service one gives is a sign of the joy that can be spread amongst our friends. I have often rationalised my Pilgrimage through the analogy of going to the petrol station to fill up the car. For my Pilgrimage tops up so many of the values that are so important to my life: the renewed faith that I receive through being there, the dedication to service and some extraordinary friendships serve as a fuel for my life through the rest of the year.

Will Dawson

REFLECTIONS FROM A CHIEF DOCTOR

"Honestly, Janet, it's no big deal....."

These were the words Dr. Robert Blake-James said to me some years ago to encourage me to take on his role as Chief Doctor to the Ampleforth Pilgrimage. It seemed a huge responsibility and, as a Palliative Care doctor working in hospices, I was not at all sure I was the right person for the job of leading the medical team. But reluctantly I agreed "for a year or two", and here I am 8 Pilgrimages later, finally moving on.

In many ways of course he was right - it shouldn't be a big deal. The wonderful thing about the Pilgrimage is the support of everyone around you, willing it to be a success and offering any help they can. I am particularly grateful to Anna Mayer for her unfailing support and encouragement at every turn. Similarly the nurses, so ably led by Annie Bowen-Wright, are a source of strength and wisdom, and never fail to cope, cheerfully, in often difficult circumstances.

However, as Chief Doctor, there is always cause for concern. Will other doctors volunteer this year? How many will there be, and what are their particular skills? Will they all get on? Will they be comfortable working in a team of colleagues from very varied backgrounds?

Will they be prepared to deal with whatever is thrown at them - from an unexplained epileptic fit to a sudden cardiac episode, from a severe depressive to the "worried well"? and so on.

Amazingly, every year my fears have been unfounded. The Pilgrimage has been blessed with excellent medical support. Some doctors have returned many times; for others once is enough! Friendships have been forged, and many have gained from the sharing of knowledge and informal teaching that inevitably goes on within the team. Increasingly the younger ones, still in higher training, find it hard to get the time off. However, without exception I have found everyone willing to try hard for the good of the Pilgrimage.

Generally we have more doctors than other pilgrimages, which has meant that we have been able to participate in our groups more, and even do some of the more menial tasks. Rubber gloves take on a whole new meaning sometimes when working with your group in the Hospital...!

Our Pilgrimage differs from other Diocesan or Parish ones as we take Hospital Pilgrims from all over the country-not just a limited geographical

area. Thus it is not always possible to meet them or know their needs personally until we are on our way. The HP administrator has been hugely helpful in getting as much information as possible through the application form, G.P.'s, relatives, nursing homes etc., and I would like to pay tribute to Caroline Thoms, Angela Stock, Alice Murphy and most recently Ros Lynch who have worked so hard in this role. Ideally all Hospital Pilgrims should be visited by one of us before we accept them but the huge geographical distribution can make this difficult. If you are able to help by visiting and liaising with potential pilgrims in your area we would be very grateful.

Well, now it is time for me to move on, although I still hope to continue as part of the team in future years. I am very fortunate in being able to hand over to Dr. Rita Rigg, a wonderfully experienced GP from Edinburgh who has been part of the medical team for many years. I know the Pilgrimage will be in safe hands. I hope she will enjoy the role of Chief Doctor as much as I have, because, honestly Rita, "it's no big deal"!

Dr Janet Squire

FR CHAD'S REFLECTIONS AT OUR OPENING MASS OF 2011'S PILGRIMAGE

Introduction

Why are you here? Perhaps that's the question you are asking yourself at this very moment. Is it because of your friends, your family? Do you feel guilty about good fortune – this is one week to redress the balance? Or is this one week for a much needed break, truly a holiday, seven holy days?

We all come to Lourdes with mixed feelings and mixed motives. Those here for the first time are understandably nervous - what is it going to be like, will I be able to cope, will I be disappointed? Those here for the second or third time are thinking – where are the others? Those who've come for years are thinking– why am I here, giving up an expensive week of my holiday, not something I can easily explain at work – I'm just going off to the south of France.

Whatever your reasons, you are here, and the beginning of Mass offers the chance to give thanks for being here, but also the chance to ask the Lord to purify the intentions of your hearts.

Homily

How would you rate your own father - out of 10? How much time did he spend with

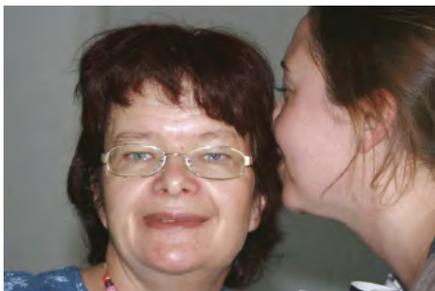
you when you were growing up? Did he love you, nurture you, challenge you? How did he influence you - was he someone you wanted to spend time with, someone you wanted to keep in touch with, someone you wanted to share your news with? Perhaps he has died. Is he someone you miss desperately, whose guidance and wisdom kept you going? Or were you relieved when he died? Without that pressure, those expectations are you able to live your life freely?

I know some people think that the language of father is irredeemably tainted, lacking in credibility today. You cannot say 'our father' - your own associations dominate that word too much. It may be that the wider difficulties in your life undermine your confidence to call God your father - the difficulties you bring with you to Lourdes: unhappiness with your marriage, stresses at work, problems with your family, anxieties about old age. For some, your difficulties obvious to others, the disability you have carried for years. For others they are hidden: you put on a brave face, and get on with life. But we all have them – even those you think of as successful, in control. One of the things about hearing confessions is that you realise that

everyone, if they are honest, has difficulties.

It might be that your fears hold you back– what today's reading calls the spirit of slavery. You fear failing, fear that contemporaries will judge you, for not getting into the right university, the right job. You fear not finding the right person, fear ending up lonely and isolated. You fear letting others down, committing yourself and then not honouring that trust. You fear breaking under the strain of the burdens you carry, whether that's your own pains or the pains of those you're responsible for. You fear losing your faith, finding the world without meaning. You fear death, the destruction and negation of all your hopes and efforts.

Walking through Paris railway stations recently, what struck me was the lack of joy. People were anxious, focussed on getting to their train, suspicious of others, caught up in own worlds, unable and unwilling to relate to another. Our world is full of pleasure, of fun, of excitements – but not full of joy. I cannot stand up here and tell you – shout for joy: I can say – look for joy. This week is a call to joy - to move beyond what you are familiar with, towards people you would



not have met otherwise, and through them to experience, discover, receive, inherit and enter the joy of the kingdom. It might be their courage, their gentleness, their faith, their humour. It could be just a word, a smile, a touch.

But that joy will not come about if you seek it directly. 'You suffer with Christ so that you may be glorified with Christ'. So often we get it the wrong way round. We go for the glory and then cope with any suffering that results - the glory of a great night out, the suffering of the morning's hangover. A successful, all-consuming career that leads to the loss of a family. An irresistible relationship that leads to a life of deceit.

St Paul says it is the other way round, suffering comes before glory, the cross before the resurrection, the pain of childbirth before the joy of a new baby, the sacrifice of hard work leading to the glory of exam results next month. This week will see all sorts of opportunities for suffering leading to glory - when you are woken up and simply want to pull the duvet over you, when you invite someone new to share a meal with you, when you make an effort that goes beyond what is immediately comfortable.

Perhaps the greatest test of suffering is the pain of forgiving others. The grudges you carry weigh you down – grudges against other people, against your spouse, your children, your parents, your friends, your Abbot. More difficult perhaps are the grudges against yourselves. Most difficult of all are the grudges against God. During this busy week, can you find a way of leaving grudges at the Grotto? Then you will discover not just that Mary is your mother, and Bernadette your sister, but also that Jesus is your brother, and that God really is your father.



Fr Chad Boulton OSB

GROTTO MASS: AMPLEORTH WITH DERRY - HOMILY

(Reading: Romans 8:14-16, Psalm: Ephesians 1:3-6,12, Gospel Matthew 11:25-27.)

Thank you to Bishop Hegarty for inviting me to preach at this mass, and thank you to the liturgy organisers for providing an impressive choice of readings. Together they invite us to an ever deeper relationship with God, a God whose nature is to relate, who pours out Love towards us to establish these intimate relationships.

I offer four reflections with the aim of strengthening these relationships.

FIRST: 'Our Father'.

Though the language of the readings is predominantly male, the intention is to be inclusive: all are invited.

I reflect that this invitation is first expressed through our Mothers, at the very moment of our conception. What is happening in the womb is not a purely biological event. It is the moment that God creates a new unique being, and in consequence, inviting that being to an intimate relationship with our divine Father. They are holy moments. Billions of small 'creations', forming billions of unique human beings, each uniquely gifted with intimacy with God.

The mother's pain, worry and anxiety of the months before birth, are transformed into joy at the birth. For some the pain continues, others are denied it.

We conclude that 'being mother' is the privileged gift to each, flowing from God's creative intention and act. From this experience of participating in the divine creation, mothers learn to accept God's Will, gain a deeper understanding of the Passion of Christ and learn to value the gift of Patience, who is the Holy Spirit. Together this makes the mother's vocation privileged and private. Jesus said: 'I bless you Father for hiding these things.'

OUR SECOND REFLECTION starts when the baby is born. Now the focus moves from God's unique creative act in the womb, to the new gift offered at Baptism. This adds a new dimension to the holiness of the new person. The older mothers here may remember a time when so urgent was the desire to get baptism 'done' that it took place as soon as possible after birth, in effect, excluding the mother from taking part. This is a distortion modern medicine has rectified. Today, the mother usually attends the baptism and in so doing is affirmed for her earlier work, and endowed with an expanded vocation as mother, being responsible for the early growth of the baby in its relationship with Jesus. She teaches: 'Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done'. This is the mother's greatest responsibility and challenge, made possible by reading the stories of Jesus and praying together. This foundation is critical for the sacraments which follow, First celebration of Reconciliation with a growing awareness of good and bad, taught by the parents, then First Holy Communion and finally Confirmation and full membership in the Church. Delegation of these responsibilities to the school may provide professional teaching, but cannot replace the mother-child journey together in faith and ever-deeper intimacy with Jesus, well expressed by St Paul: each of us 'is chosen to be holy and spotless and to live through Love in His presence', and our daily plea is 'Give us this day our daily bread; forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

This leads to the THIRD REFLECTION. We live in a world that distracts our attention and the attention of our young people away from the framework of lived faith and away from God's invitation to intimacy. Our secular culture focuses on the present moment. In that space too much time is spent on enjoying self to make room for God. Religious values are seen as a threat.

Many parents find it difficult to focus the attention of the young on this fundamental element of our human nature. The result: chaos reigns in the hearts and minds of many. In that chaos the language of faith is lost, the emotions distorted and the example of holy people weakened, even to the point of denial.

We remember again the words of St Paul 'The Spirit you received is not the Spirit of slaves, bringing fear into your lives again'. But that is precisely what has happened. Modern culture is precisely that 'slavery' he is speaking about, a slavery to short-term pleasure, heightened emotions and denial of the inner freedom offered to each through intimacy with Jesus.

To counter this trend a new divine initiative was needed. God chose to act through specific SIGNS, to remind us that the divine invitation to intimacy is available to all. Here, in this Grotto at Lourdes, we are in the presence of one such SIGN: a Mother and a girl. Its aim is to remind us that we have returned to slavery and to renew the invitation to intimacy.

The Mother is Mary, Mother of Jesus, whose unique role is highlighted here. The girl is also unique because she comes from perhaps the most deprived family of the town; backward in education and fragile in health. Despite these difficulties she was able to dialogue with the woman of her visions. Invited to respond, she asks her name, receiving, eventually, the answer, 'I am the Immaculate Conception', and a new invitation to intimacy with Jesus, her Son. Significantly, here the SIGN focuses on the least important person of the Lourdes community in 1858. This reminds that human weakness is a firmer foundation for intimacy with God, than human success. Like so many others, this SIGN turns the accepted priorities of our society upside down. We plead 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'.

Bernadette was too weak to be a mother, but her whole life, (short as it was, she died aged 33 – in poor health most of the time), was an invitation to live the spiritual motherhood, dedicated ever more deeply to an intimacy with her Divine Lover, most especially through her sufferings. We heard Jesus' words, 'No one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him'. Bernadette was one of the chosen.

FINALLY, we come to the Eucharist. At each Eucharist, all our suffering, pain, frustration, rebellion is taken into the one redemptive act of Jesus, achieved through his pain-filled last days. Here, in the Eucharist, our own suffering is put into the bigger context, where a transformation takes place: the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. This is the important SIGN which confirms the truth of St Paul's words: 'We are claimed as God's own' and 'The Spirit and our Spirit bear witness that we are children of God'.

For that unearned privilege we say 'Thank You, from the bottom of our hearts, and we pledge ourselves to daily prayer, constantly pursuing greater intimacy with Jesus, especially through Scripture and making Bernadette's words our own, 'Give me the bread that will help me to see You always and in everything'.

SO IN SUMMARY, we can say that we are made HOLY in creation in our mother's womb. Then through our mother we are introduced to new intimacy with Jesus made increasingly available through the stories of Jesus and the celebration of the sacraments.

However, we are tempted to forget these gifts: for short-term goals, set according to the agenda of the secular world. We also know God does not give up on us. He continues to offer SIGNS, and here we ponder two. The visions of Mary to Bernadette, encourage us back to the life of Jesus, and the celebration of the Eucharist, whose mysterious power is the finest way to counter the temptations of the world. For all this we give heartfelt thanks. Amen.

Abbot Timothy Wright OSB



'OUR FATHER'

This year, all pilgrimages to Lourdes were asked to prepare some thoughts on the theme of the year. Below is Abbot Timothy's reflection, which is now attached to the wall of the Pie X Basilica.

God, our Father, invites each of us to ever-deeper intimacy within the Divinity, with no strings attached, a relationship of pure love with a Divine Lover who heals weaknesses, addictive, inherited or learnt. For God, 'Our Father', accepts each of us as the person we are. We have no need to pretend.

We know that none of us exists without a mother, now perhaps close or away from home, sick or alive with God. To her, our Divine Father delegated important functions from the moment of our conception in her womb to the end of our childhood.

Some struggle with this act of divine delegation, but many more are enriched. From her we learnt to say 'Hallowed be Thy Name', our first steps towards the unlimited 'fatherhood' of our All-Loving and All-Merciful God.

In the divine plan, our human mother led us to Mary, mother of Jesus, who taught us the challenge of 'Thy will be done', identifying each day, through our inner dialogue with Jesus, the unique vocation we are called to magnify.

As we grow in understanding the unconditional Love of the Father, whose will provides the framework for the lives we lead, we ask: 'Give us this day our daily bread', that is, the energy and courage to follow the Divine Will.

Sometimes things go wrong, so we ask 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us', thereby learning that what seems impossible for us to forgive, becomes possible with the Divine Lover at our side committed to 'Deliver us from evil'.

As we grow older we give thanks for this gift of the 'Our Father', saying: 'Thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever, and ever. Amen'.

Abbot Timothy Wright OSB



LOURDES AND THE NEW TRANSLATION OF THE MISSAL

As I write this we have been using some of the texts from the new translation of the missal for a number of weeks. We are all getting used to "And with your spirit." and the occasional autopilot "And also with you." is an increasingly rare event. Perhaps you have noticed how much richer the texts of the new Eucharistic prayers are, and how many more stimuli to prayer and reflection they contain. However, the full richness of the new translation has not yet arrived – for that we will have to wait until the beginning of Advent. But it will be worth waiting for. The new translations of the prayers that are specific to each of us (known as the "Proper of the Mass") see some of the most notable improvements in the new translation. They also illustrate for us some of the reasons for, and the methodology behind, that new translation. I would like to take just one of those prayers, for a feast close to our hearts, and show how this prayer has changed from its predecessor. This is the Opening Prayer, or Collect, for the memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes on 11 February.

In the 1973 translation of the missal (our present one) this prayer is translated as follows:

God of mercy, we celebrate the feast of Mary, the sinless Mother of God. May her prayers help us to rise above our human weakness.

In the new translation this prayer is translated with the following text: Grant us, O merciful God, protection in our weakness, that we, who keep the Memorial of the Immaculate Mother of God, may, with the help of her intercession, rise up from our iniquities.

You will immediately see that the new translation is more clearly framed as a request. It begins with the phrase "Grant us", rather than a statement of fact as in the 1973 version. Moreover, the new translation keeps the prayer as a single sentence, instead of being two separate sentences, which makes it clearer that the request we are making is addressed to God, and that the aspect of God which is particularly relevant to our prayer, his mercy, is prominently linked to the words by which we are asking.

This is an important point: the new translation makes it much clearer that we can only hope to rise up if God gives us the ability to do so. In addition, it is also clear that what we need to rise from is our sins. These are the fundamental cause of our falling, not our weakness as seems to be implied in the old translation. There is a realism here about human sinfulness which makes me remember Our Lady's instructions to Bernadette to do penance and to pray for sinners. Our weakness in resisting temptation means that we need God's help, and the new translation is richer in reminding us of the availability of that help. This theme is absent in the old translation. Moreover, in that translation one could receive the impression that we could rise by our own unaided efforts, even though the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary would probably be advantageous in our attempts to do so. The new prayer makes our absolute dependence on God's help much clearer.

There is one other interesting change in the new translation. In the old, Our Lady is simply called Mary, but in the new she is referred to as the Immaculate. This change reflects greater fidelity to the Latin original, but once again it draws to mind the events of the apparitions, and reminds us that the name Mary was never used, but that instead Bernadette heard: "I am the Immaculate Conception."

Once again the new text is not merely closer to the Latin original, but brings us back to the Apparitions and the Grotto. It helps us to remember with gratitude, through its allusion to specific details, the events of the Apparitions in 1858 and the message they still have to give us today. It reminds us that Lourdes and all it means to us is not just something for one week in the year, but is connected to the whole of our Christian discipleship.

Next year's Pilgrimage will be the first in which we use this new translation in Lourdes. I hope that this one little taster will whet our appetites for the good things the new translation contains which we will receive not just at home but also on Pilgrimage.

Fr Luke Beckett OSB

SEYMOUR SPENCER RIP AN AFFECTIONATE APPRECIATION

I first met Seymour on my first Pilgrimage to Lourdes with my husband, Frank, and my son Aidan, then a boy in the School. I seem to remember that Seymour suddenly appeared on the scene while we were 'resting' in the old hospital. There was lots of noise and laughter and affectionate greetings all round. After the 'whirlwind' had departed I was told he was a doctor from Oxford and was on pilgrimage with the University.

Seymour had an enormous love of Ampleforth, the Community, the School and the Pilgrimage. He took his wife, Margaret, there on their honeymoon, sent his sons to the school and was enormously proud of the fact that his grandsons were also pupils in the school. He was also an Oblate of the Community, and a Confrater, an honorary member of the Community given at the Abbot's recommendation.

His devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes and her Shrine was a passion. I have many very happy memories of this period. Having done a Stage they then stayed on to join our Pilgrimage, Margaret as a nurse and Seymour serving as one of our doctors. After Margaret's death Seymour continued to come on our Pilgrimage revelling in the fact that his grandchildren were now regular members: a fact of which he was extremely proud. After his retirement from the medical team, he generously gave of himself by attending to the transport needs of our Lady President, Katie Pfister.

Seymour was a generous friend, full of laughter, dreadful jokes (often told against himself), lover of music, a wicked smile, maddening beyond measure, generous to a fault, but who, when you were having a serious down in your life, dropped this jovial facade and showed an incredible insight into your problem giving you the most wonderful support.

It is a lovely thought that before he died he witnessed the birth and baptism of his longed for great grandchild, I miss a tremendous friend.

Maire Channer

Ampleforth Lourdes



A limited batch of scarves has been produced, which we are selling to raise funds to continue the Pilgrimage's work. They are made in the UK from Saxony wool, are hand pressed, and at 180cm long will keep you warm in the winter months ahead! The red, white and Marian blue colours will also remind you of the week we share in Lourdes.

The scarves cost £40 each, and will be available at the reunions and Carol Service.

If you would like to purchase a scarf please contact Matthew Plummer by emailing matthew.plummer@gmail.com

Please pray for the other members of our Pilgrimage who have died in the last year:

Aileen Roberts
Ann Staines
Paul Hanson
Sister Angela MacDonald
Willoughby Wynne

2000 CLUB RESULTS

The 2000 club contributed £4,500 to FOALS in the last year. Our heartfelt thanks go to Richard Reid and Michael Doherty for their hard work and dedication. As many of you know, Richard has been very unwell over the last few months, and whilst Michael has coped wonderfully in running the 2000 club on his own, the list of winners was not available prior to going to print. We promise a full list in the next Newsletter! The winners know who they are!

If you are not a member of the 2000 Club and want to try your luck please contact Richard on rech9@aol.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

REUNION

31st March 2012

Holy Apostles Catholic Church Hall, Pimlico.

PILGRIMAGE RETREAT

27th - 29th April 2012

The Grange Ampleforth.
Please contact Lucy Rowan-Robinson if you would like to attend by emailing lucy.rowanrobinson@gmail.com

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

6th - 13th July 2012

Applications will open in January.

LONDON EVENING REUNIONS

These occur every couple of months, please see the website for more details.