

Nunraw Newsletter, Christmas 2015

We tend to say that it seems no time since last Christmas. However, as we have been busy trying to get the plans for our new guest quarters sorted out, it has seemed an age all year before things fell into place. 'Rome wasn't built in a day' expresses the feeling better.

A decisive meeting with our architect and the structural engineer has finally pushed things on. The plans for the new guest rooms and other living quarters will be with the local planning department in January. We have been promised that permission to start on the renovations will be given quite quickly. The work on the guest house wing, therefore, should start in the early months of 2016.

While we have been waiting for this main project to be sorted out we have used the time to provide three infirmary rooms for the sick or frail members of the community. It's surprising we have been able to manage without these over so many years. The work on those rooms was completed earlier this year.

Other jobs needing attention were also tackled. The cloister windows, which were beyond patching after fifty years had to be replaced. Other main jobs were the renewing or improving of electrical wiring and the plumbing.

Our next plan is to replace the windows in the community refectory which are letting in draughts and water when there is heavy rain.

Besides all these physical distractions, our daily monastic life does still flow on. The daily Office in Church and our Eucharist continue to draw us into the changing liturgical seasons which often match the varying seasons of the year. That is one of the blessings of living in the countryside and in a monastery. With the new windows we seldom feel the cold inside as we did sometimes in the past when it was particularly cold outside.

As regards the numbers in the community, we may be growing that bit older but no one seems to be in a hurry to get to heaven. Fr Nivard, the blood brother of Fr Donald, has been living here at Nunraw for a number of years preparing new choir books for his community at Bamenda Abbey in the Cameroons. At the grand age of 85, due to his health, he has now changed his stability to Nunraw. In true monastic style he doesn't do things by half. As well as changing his stability he also changed his name, reverting to Brendan, his Baptismal name. With that change of stability, we are now officially 14 members in the community

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Michael Downie, who entered the community as a postulant on St Andrew's Day last year, became a novice in June. It's good to see the white Novice's habit around the enclosure again.

Pope Francis continues to keep us all surprised with his dynamism and the freshness he has instilled into the Church by the way he proclaims the Gospel. He reminds us of the real joy there is in taking the Gospel seriously, and that there is no shame in admitting faults or past sins. Mercy and love go together which is why the Pope is keen for everyone to enter fully into the Year of Mercy he has just inaugurated.

One wonders why such a positive teaching of the Gospel has been lost over the years. We can only pray that this spirit will fill all our celebrations this Christmas and continue to inspire us in the coming year.

**Wishing you all a Joyful Christmas
and Many Blessings in 2016.**



Fr. Barry Thomas
Mark
Raymond
Fr. Patrick
Kantigern

Fr. Hugh
Fr. Philip
SEANUS.

Fr. Brendan
(Wivard)
Fr. Leonard
Michael
Aelred
Donald