

<p style="text-align: center;">Pluscarden Benedictines No. 101 News and Notes for our Friends June 1994</p>

FR ABBOT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

As many of you will know, the chief event to record is the completion of our new guest house. We have referred to it hitherto as the West Wing; from now on, it will be known as St Benedict's. What is the term for a gathering of abbots? I don't know. But it was a pleasure to have such a gathering at the blessing of St Benedict's on 27th April. Abbot Gilbert Jones, the President of our Congregation, led the prayers and cut the tape. With him were Abbot Jan of Affligem (Belgium), Abbot Andre of Koubri (Burkina Faso), Abbot Thierry of En-Calcat (France), Abbot Innocenzo of Padua (Italy), and Fr Fabian Binyon, Prior Administrator of Prinknash. Our Bishop, Mario Conti, also did us the honour of attending, and gave the final blessing to the 200 or so friends, benefactors and local dignitaries who were present. It is thanks to them, to so many others and, in particular to our Appeal Committee and its indefatigable Chairman, Grenville Johnston, that all this has been possible. It is a pleasure to report that the new accommodation has been much used. The next stage is to extend the driveway to the front of the new building, and to provide the guests with an ample and secluded garden.

We have been blessed, too, by visitors willing to share their wisdom with us. Mr Lionel Shrago, a leading figure in the local Jewish community, gave us a most stimulating talk on the celebration of Passover. Fr Aidan Nichols gave four fine talks on Jesus Christ as seen by the historian and by the faith of the Church. These were open to all, and over 30 clergy and laity joined the Community to hear them. We hope to find speakers of similar calibre and make such open lectures an annual event. We are

grateful to our Bishop for his support of this initiative. Fr Peter Nowachs of Maria Laach (Germany) spoke to us of his community, as did Br Casimir of Montserrat (Spain). The first has 1½ million visitors a year, the second 2½ million! Most recently, Fr Denis of Quarr Abbey on the Isle of Wight told us of his monastery, the only male house of the Solesmes Congregation in Britain.

A visitor with a difference was Fr Gabriel Berthoniere, a Cistercian of Spencer, Massachusetts. He gave a month of his precious time to help us with our chant. He was a delightful guest and an inspired and inspiring teacher. Thanks to him our singing has improved, and ways of sustaining this have been opened.

On the 31st May, we had the great joy of celebrating the solemn profession of Br John Ogilvie van Overbeke. Br John entered our community in the early 1950s and for nearly 40 years has lived as a regular oblate. He worked for many years as sacristan and, more recently, has provided invaluable assistance to the librarian. Now, at the age of 82, it became possible for him to fulfil a long-standing desire and consecrate himself completely to God by solemn monastic vows. A great encouragement to us who are younger! His sister-in-law, Eileen Overbeke, made the long journey from Cambridge for the occasion.

On 26th June, we hosted the annual diocesan pilgrimage in honour of our Lady. It was a peaceful and prayerful occasion. Bishop Conti preached on the family, drawing especially on Luke 2:51, and Ephesians 5:21 ff.

Things generally progress well with our dependency in Massachusetts, St Mary's. Fr Anselm, the superior, visited us in April and was present at the opening of St Benedict's. Fr Bede was also able to spend three weeks with us in June, resting from his labours. A great lover of Scripture, he shared some thoughts on St Paul with the community. At the beginning of July, the ground of the projected new church was broken. The monks of St Mary's and nuns of St Scholastica's celebrate the liturgy together. The present church is on the ground floor of the men's house. The new church will be a separate building set between the two communities.

Later this month, we look forward to welcoming one of the junior monks of St Mary's, Br Gregory Philips. He is in his third year of temporary vows, and had a spell with us last year which he is anxious to repeat.

In May, I preached their annual retreat to the Benedictine nuns of St Cecilia's Abbey, Ryde, Isle of Wight. It was a privilege to meet this fine and multi-national community, deservedly famous for its chant. Like ourselves, they celebrate the Office according to the Rule and in Latin. They, too, have recently been able to enlarge their guest accommodation. I stayed with the monks of Quarr Abbey, three miles away, and felt very much at home there. Providentially, I was able, along with some 200 others, to attend the funeral of their retired abbot, Dom Aelred Sillem. He was abbot for nigh on 30 years, and a figure of considerable stature within British monasticism and the Congregation of Solesmes. Any abbot, like Elisha, would wish for a double share of his spirit!

Every year, some of the monastic novice masters and mistresses of Great Britain try to meet. This year, for the first time, Pluscarden has been able to play the host – some Sassenachs venturing north of the border for the first time in their lives!

At present, our prayers are especially with Dom Francis Baird, recently appointed Prior Administrator of Prinknash Abbey for one year. He succeeds Fr Fabian whose six months term ended early in July. Our own Br Meinrad Gibson, too, is very much in our thoughts. He has been giving invaluable help to the small community of Kristo Buase in Ghana. He will return to us in August.

Amid all this, we try not to forget the wider scene – both in the Church and in the world as a whole. It is shattering to realise that in the last few months more Rwandans have lost their lives than Britain sustained casualties in World War II. Later this year, the Synod of Bishops will meet in Rome to discuss the consecrated life. May this mean that monks and nuns, and all religious, are able to enter more effectively into their vocation – for their good and the good of all!

Finally, between the first and last drafts of this letter, there

has occurred the death of our much cherished Br Andrew. Many of you will remember him. A full obituary will appear in our next issue. He was one of the five “pioneers” who came to the ruins of Pluscarden in 1948. He has been a constant presence in our community since then. He died simply of old age, with little pain, peacefully and in prayer. Pray that he comes to the vision of God, and remembers his brethren there.

Yours in the Lord,

+Fr Hugh OSB, Abbot

WEST WING APPEAL THE OPENING OF ST BENEDICT’S

After the inevitable contretemps inescapable in extensive projects involving many participants, the West Wing was blessed and opened on 27th April by our Abbot President, Rt Rev. Dom Gilbert Jones, in the presence of Bishop Mario Conti and several Abbot Visitors of our Congregation, as detailed by Fr Abbot. There was a large turn-out of those associated with the Appeal in various ways, from Patrons to week-end guides to well-wishers and other invited guests.

Here I must offer an apology to those who did not receive an invitation. I am afraid that uncertainty about building progress caused us to delay sending out invitations till rather late, and at a critical stage

I had to be away for a week (on my return I did intercept one invitation addressed to New Zealand by 1st class inland post!), so that there were various sins of omission...

Michael Fraser Associates kindly and generously attended to the production of a brochure and Order of Service, and also rallied the Fourth Estate, besides being personally present.

Members of the Appeal Committee read lessons and

intercessions, the Schola sang and Abbot Gilbert blessed, before cutting the tape with panache and inviting all to look round, after which there was a buffet lunch in a marquee. Throughout all this, the weather behaved in exemplary fashion, allowing the fine building, which all admired, to be seen at its best and photographed in its best light.

That evening we had a buffet supper-cum-recreation with our guests from abroad, and enjoyed the rare experience of the internationality of our Congregation.

By the time you read this, the road to St Benedict's should have been laid and the work of clearing up and landscaping the site begun.

THE "MESSIAH" FOR ALL

On 21st May a performance of Handel's "Messiah" took place in the Transepts, modelled on the very successful previous "Messiah" and "Creation" performances, under the baton of Graham Wiseman, with an orchestra led by Colin Saddington, a 150-strong chorus from near and far, and four young soloists from the Royal College of Music, protégés of Neil Mackie. The transepts were filled completely, and an overflow audience in the Chancel was able to watch by closed-circuit T.V. on a large screen. It was a fine clear sunny evening, and matched the performance, except in warmth, where the weather fell somewhat short of the music!

Angela Henckel sang the soprano solos with clarity and grace, Tobias Cole's counter tenor soared without strain (but sensibly declined to follow when accidentally offered accompaniment at soprano pitch), Simon Spencer Williams confidently announced the Good News of the Lord comforting his people, while Richard Morrison's authoritative baritone demonstrated to his family in the audience that he was indeed his father's son.

Sponsored by Capel-Cure Myers, and with a programme generously supported by friends and advertisers, the event raised over £2,500 for the Appeal, thanks, as usual, to the hard work of

numerous unsung (and some unsinging!) heroes and heroines.

MUSICK FYNE

Led by D. James Ross, Musick Fyne came once more to the Abbey, to sing a reconstruction of a Scottish Renaissance Mass, as it might have been sung for James IV by the singers of the Chapel Royal in the early 16th century.

James Ross has now firmly established himself as the leading expert in the field of Robert Carver studies, with his book *Musick Fyne* (published by the Mercat Press), and unsurprisingly therefore, the music of Carver figured largely, in the form of the Ordinary of his Mass, “L’Homme armé”, together with music of the Inverness Sangschule and plainchant.

A large and enthusiastic audience rewarded their devotion, and clearly enjoyed the singing. With their customary generosity, Musick Fyne donated the proceeds to the Appeal, and we thank them heartily.

ABERDEEN “FRIENDS”

Under the leadership of Mr George Brand and a committee of local people, fund-raising has been going on in Aberdeen, in various time-honoured ways, to support the Appeal. Taking the opportunity offered by the Diocesan Pilgrimage here on 26th June, they prevailed upon Bishop Mario Conti to draw the prize-winning tickets in their raffle, and then handed over to Fr Abbot a very generous cheque for £1, 000

PRIORS OF PLUSCARDEN

Accounts of the Priors of Pluscarden can be found in S. R. MacPhail’s *The Religious House of Pluscarden* (1881) and P. F. Anson’s *A Monastery in Moray* (1959). There are only scattered references to the Priors during the Valliscaulian period (1230-

1454), but by using other sources in addition to the above one can produce a fuller picture of the Priors during Pluscarden's first Benedictine Period (1454-1560). The aim is not to collect all information on these men but to present evidence concerning their background and the occasion and date of their becoming and ceasing to be Prior.

JOHN BENALE 1454-1456

He was a monk of Dunfermline and shortly before August 1447 was made Prior of its dependency of Urquhart in Moray. Benale played a major role in the negotiations leading to the union of Pluscarden and Urquhart by Papal Bull of 12 March 1454 in which he, the Valliscaulian Prior Andrew Haag having resigned, is made Prior of Pluscarden. On 7 November 1456 the Sacristan of Dunfermline, William de Boyis, who had previously been sent north in November 1454 to take formal possession of the Priory and receive the professions of the Valliscaulians, was again sent to Pluscarden; this time "to punish and reform monks ... for the savour of their religious life is not all that could be desired". Benale was recalled by his Abbot and made Sacristan of Dunfermline until his death just before 18 May 1478, when another monk, David Ruch (Apostolic Camera p 192), was obliged for the annates of the benefice. Benale's career and the rise of de Boyis thus illustrate both the possibilities and the dangers for the upwardly mobile ecclesiastic of this period.

WILLIAM DE BOYIS 1456 - 1476

MacPhail and Anson both confuse this Prior with the William de Boyis who was bedellus of the University of St Andrews from 1424, Imperial Notary and a prominent figure in the University, who died in 1456 (see note in St Andrews Copiale p 453). Our man is mentioned in 1440 as a monk of Dunfermline and was appointed Sacristan of the Abbey. He is also said to be a Licentiate in Canon Law and, before he gained Pluscarden, to have attempted to be presented to the Priory of Coldingham. The events leading to his nomination as Prior are mentioned above, and

provision was made by Pope Callistus III on 1 September 1457 (Calender of Papal Registers XI p 330). This is interesting as it states that William had been elected Prior by the Convent, "in ignorance of the Pope's late reservation of all conventual priories". Various legal documents with his signature as Prior are extant and he resigned in 1476. No mention of him has been found after this date.

THOMAS FOSTAR 1476-1480

In 1476 on William's resignation he was nominated to the benefice and in March 1478 he is mentioned in RMS as having been elected Prior of Pluscarden. On 2 November 1479, however, Anson notes that Gavin Dunbar, Clerk of the Diocese of Moray, 'was obliged for the annates of the Priory of Pluscarden OSB which were to become void by the deprivation of Thomas Foster (AC p 197). A further explanation of this is provided by a mandate of Pope Sixtus IV dated 19 October 1479 (CPR XIII pp 75-76), thus issued a few weeks before the previous document. It is addressed to the Abbot of Kinloss, the Dean of Moray and a Canon of Moray, and says: "The Pope has been informed by Gavin Dunbar, MA, clerk of St Andrews, that Thomas Foster, the Prior of Pluscarden, has alienated its goods, kept a concubine and his offspring, committed sacrilege and consented to homicide; if Gavin, who is of noble birth, will accuse Thomas before them, and if it be true, deprive and remove him, in that case to grant the Priory to Gavin in commendam for six months after his taking the habit, to be received thereafter as a monk and receive his profession, and to make him collation and provision of the said Priory." Dunbar was the son of Alexander D. of Westfield and a member of one of the most important local families. He determined (BA) at St Andrews in 1473 and graduated as Master in 1475 and so would probably have been about twenty four at the time of his attempt to become Prior. He later went on to become Dean of Moray (1487-1518) and Bishop of Aberdeen (1518-1532). His connection with the Priory continued and just before his death he had the great satisfaction of seeing his nephew made Prior. His

own attempt to gain the benefice failed and it is not known whether Fostar was deprived. In a lost bull of Sixtus IV from the year following 9 August 1480 (CPR XIII) the office of Prior is said to “have become vacant by the death of...” (name missing) and so he no doubt died within a year of being defamed by Dunbar.

DAVID BOYS 1480/81 - 1486/7

He is mentioned in the lost bull as being provided to “a Priory in Moray”, obviously Pluscarden as his name appears as its Prior on a charter of 1482. Previously he was a Tironensian Benedictine monk of the Abbey of Arbroath and he is mentioned as Subprior of the Abbey in a charter of 30 March 1480 (Liter Aberbrothoc Part II pp 181-2). In early 1463 a Dominus David Boyis determined as BA at St Andrews (ERUSA p 39; AFA p 150) and this is probably our man. Anson (p 96) describes his failure to pay annates in 1482 and his being threatened with excommunication “in the congregation of the people, with the ringing of bells, candles being lighted and extinguished and cast on the ground”, i.e. with Bell, Book and Candle. The Abbot of Dunfermline attempted to remove him by intruding one of his monks, Robert Harwor as Prior, but Boys neutralised this threat in early 1483 by giving Harwor a pension. It was only after Boys’ death in 1486 or 87 that the Abbot was able to have his way, thus showing how the system of distribution of benefices hindered the normal working of monastic government.

ROBERT HARWOR 1487-1509

The new Prior swiftly paid his annates and was sent a receipt on 18 April 1487. As said above he was a monk of Dunfermline and on 14 April 1483 he had been provided as Sacristan of his Abbey (AC p 205). He had also been “terror” or keeper of the land-rolls of the Abbey. A number of legal documents survive from his long period of twenty two years as Prior and he was host to King James IV at Pluscarden in 1506. After the controversies concerning the previous Priors, his period

in office, almost exactly contemporary with the King's reign, gives the impression of being one of relative peace and prosperity. Masons were working on the building at the time of the royal visit and in 1508 "two tabernacles" (altarpieces) were provided for the High Altar and the Lady Altar, thus showing that there was a concern for a dignified setting for the Liturgy. Prior Harwor resigned early in 1509 and he was granted an annual pension of a third of all the fruits of the Priory and a house "known as the 'eastern' on the said priory" (CPL XVIII pp 71-72). In the document quoted, a Papal letter of Julius II to Robert dated 20 August 1509, he is given permission to dispose of the pension without the Prior's consent "and for his own uses, not for the utility of the priory ... even if he should not be personally resident in the said priory." The only condition is that he should not take more than a third of its revenues. This practice of resignation whilst retaining a proportion of the revenues was common in this period and could be used to keep a benefice in the family. We have no evidence of how long or where he lived after his resignation.

To be continued

DAH

BOOK REVIEWS

To love fasting: the monastic experience by A. de Vogüé, St Bede's Publications, Petersham, 1994, 137pp

Père Adalbert de Vogüé is a Benedictine monk of La Pierre-qui-Vire, who for the past 20 years has lived at his monastery as a solitary. He gave a memorable retreat here some years ago; he is a scholar widely known as one of today's foremost authorities on the Rule of Saint Benedict, and on early monastic literature in general.

Apart from Sundays and great feasts, Père Adalbert fasts daily, according to the manner prescribed in the Holy Rule. That is, he eats only once in the day, and that towards evening. He insists that, according to his experience, this regular fast is not

difficult, once the habit is established, nor is it in any way debilitating. On the contrary, he has found it invigorating, liberating, productive of inner tranquillity, peace and joy: even of euphoria. With a stomach that is empty during the day, he has found himself both able to pray and to work better than ever before. He has thus understood St Benedict's injunction "o love fasting" (Holy Rule 4:13) to be not a baffling paradox, but the natural fruit of experience.

Fasting, like praying, is a practice proper to Christians, which has been particularly appropriated by monks. Our monastic fathers considered it an observance as fundamental, almost, as celibacy, or recitation of the psalms, or silence. Yet modern monks do not fast. In every Western monastery the author could discover, apart from the Carthusians, the inviolable custom of three daily meals for all is firmly established. It is as if the truth that we are a unity of body and soul, with an incarnational religion, has been lost sight of. The whole of our tradition proclaims that it is not possible to leave the body out of account in the task of dedicating one's life entirely to God, and of seeking to practise authentically Christian contemplative prayer. De Vogüé believes that this tradition is as true today as it has ever been in the past.

His approach to fasting, it should be noted, is entirely positive: he has little time for its purely penal aspect. Thus hard words are levelled at de Rance and the early Trappists, who attempted, unsuccessfully, to combine a single daily meal with deliberately disgusting and un-nutritious fare. Fasting should in fact be distinguished from abstinence, and from mortification. Strictly speaking, fasting does not mean eating smaller or plainer meals at the regular times, but, for a set period, not eating at all. And Fr de Vogüé, this has an overwhelmingly beneficial effect.

This book is then something of a prophetic voice, crying in the wilderness. It examines the meaning, the history, the various modes of fasting, and outlines the course of its inexorable decline to the point where, as in monasteries today, it is actually suppressed. The reasons commonly given for the complete abandonment of monastic fasting are analysed. With admirable

humility, moderation, calmness and realistic common sense, de Vogüé issues his suggestion for conversion, and a change of ways.

It is to be expected that many will smile at this and carry serenely on, dismissing the whole issue as irrelevant and outdated. But others will be disturbed, challenged; unwilling to rest content with the comfortable mediocrity imposed by current custom. They will consider again the Council's appeal for renewal and aggiornamento, and wonder when they too will be able to recover this essential bodily aspect of the faith.

D B H

Polygot Carthusiana

Scriptores Sacri Ordinis Cartusiensis in 10 volumes is, as the title suggests, a catalogue of Carthusian writers and their works. This is a photographic copy of a manuscript work by Dom Stanislaus Autore O.Cart (1853 -1920) who, Dr Hogg tells us, “was noted not only for the breadth of his scholarship but also for his very considerable corpulence”. The former is shown by the large number of articles he contributed to the authoritative *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*. The entries in our volumes generally consist of some biographical details and a list of works in their various editions. We are told that much material is offered here that is otherwise difficult to locate.

Particularites du Temporal et du Sanctoral du Missel Cartusien by Dom Emmanuel Cluzet. In the post-conciliar period certain religious orders have abandoned their traditional rites of mass and adopted the new Roman Missal. Such a retreat from pluralism has not been followed by the Carthusians, who have nevertheless modified their rite. This work, in the tradition of ressourcement is an attempt to “retrouver la plus authentique tradition liturgique et cartusienne” It is interesting to note that the Valliscaulians who were at Pluscarden 12301454 used the Carthusian Missal which is studied here.

Der Kartausen und ihre Welt: Band 2 is a collection of three papers in German, Polish and English with a note on the

microfilming of Parkminster manuscripts for the Collegeville Library. Dr Hogg's survey of sources for the history of Carthusian nuns is thorough – the first footnote is longer than the body of the article – and has some interesting comments on the nuns today. This volume also announces the retirement conference of Dr Hogg, and many will be grateful to him for his work in making Carthusian sources and scholarship more widely available.

A World beyond the World is another book of poems by “a Welsh novice monk” (Alun Idris Jones). In them we continue to follow the fascinating story of his monastic odyssey which has led him to various, mainly white-habited, communities and finally, at the time of publication, to the Irish Norbertines. He writes in a number of languages and readers will be interested to note references to Fr Basil and other monks of our Congregation. Although a doctoral dissertation has been done on the poet's work, one suspects that these poems, with their archaism and romantic obscurity, will not find a wide circle of admirers.

All volumes are available from: Dr James Hogg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, A-5020 Salzburg, Austria.

D A H

NEWS FROM ALTON

On Candlemas Day we went to St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, to take part in solemn Vespers and to attend the inauguration of the splendid new organ. The service was the first of several to mark the restoration of the Cathedral which has taken a few years to complete. Happily, Pugin's great rood (though not the screen unfortunately) has been put back. All in all, this is a model of “re-ordering”.

Early in March Fr David gave a day of recollection to a group of priests, which included the Provost and several of the fathers of the Birmingham Oratory. Fr Anton Guziel of St Osburg's, Coventry, sang the Mass and Fr Andrew Wadsworth of

the Oratory played the organ for Vespers.

On Sunday 20th March David Burrowes' choir which had occasionally sung for us at Oulton came here for Mass. We were delighted to hear music by Palestrina, Byrd and Gibbons, and we hope that the choir will return later in the year. Abbot Alfred, our Visitor, was here for the feast of St Benedict on the following day and celebrated the Mass; a few friends also joined us for the celebration. On Maundy Thursday Lionel Lethbridge, formerly Director of Music at Denstone College nearby kindly came to play the organ for Mass. Afterwards we went in procession to the altar of repose which had been set up in the small chapel off the cloisters. As it was our first Holy Week in new surroundings it was gratifying that all went smoothly. It was also good to see about 22 people filling our modest chapel on Good Friday. The Easter Vigil began with the blessing of the new fire outside the cloister door and procession up to the chapel. On Easter Day Joanna Kingston, a talented young musician from St Dominic's, Stone, played the organ. It was also the occasion of Fr Anscar's and Fr David's 40th anniversary of priestly ordination.

The spring this year has been cold and wet so the bees which we brought with us from Oulton have been slow in developing. Now that the warmer weather has arrived they are making rapid progress. Their wax will be used in the balm and the polish we are making for sale.

On 1st June Fr Andrew gave a day of recollection at St Joseph's Convent in Stafford to members of the SVP for the area. A sizeable and appreciative group attended.

DDH

MONASTERIES OF THE SUBIACO CONGREGATION NO 64

Monastery of the Transfiguration of Our Lord

Lammermoor, Queensland, Australia

Early in March 1978 the community of Benedictine Nuns, now resident at Lammermoor, Queensland, Australia, responded to the

invitation of Bishop Bernard Wallace to establish a foundation in his diocese of Rockhampton. The nuns came from the monastery at Pennant Hills, presently sited at Jamberoo, New South Wales.

Dame Magdalen le Clerc of Stanbrook Abbey, England, and Dame Scholastica Gregory of Princethorpe Priory, England, opened the first Benedictine monastic house of women in Australia in 1848 at Rydalmere, west of Sydney. It was here, on the property purchased by Archbishop Bede Polding, a monk of Downside, that the community lived until their move to Pennant Hills in 1957. Another twenty one years were to elapse prior to the establishment of a daughter house.

Sister Teresa Gillin (Appointed Superior), Sisters Cecilia O'Shea, Claire Johnson, Frances Slade and Ancilla Leech formed the 1978 Queensland community. Mother Placid Wilson, Prioress of the motherhouse, accompanied the sisters in the early days, and later, in January 1981, rejoined the community permanently. Their first home was a temporary residence at Emu Park, offered them by the Sisters of Mercy pending building arrangements by the Benedictines on a 10 acre block generously donated by the Rockhampton diocese. Completion of the planned building enabled the community to move, in 1982, to Lammermoor.

Our monastery of the Transfiguration is situated between Yeppon and Emu Park along the Capricorn Coast overlooking the Great Barrier Reef. On a hilltop extending from the old Scenic Highway is the off-white building of the monastery officially opened in September 1982. On this occasion Bishop Wallace acclaimed the Benedictine order and its English adherents who brought their faith and the Rule to Australia, and he expressed his vision for our monastery – “To offer our increasingly violent and mobile world the example of a place of stability and order, a place of quietness and peace, a place of gentleness and pause; a place where those who are alienated may find their identity in Christ.”

On 10th April 1992 our community attained its autonomy; on 6th May 1993 we were aggregated to the Subiaco Congregation and on 12th June that year Sr Joan Moloney was elected first Prioress to succeed Sr Placid Wilson whose term had expired.

At the present time there are six nuns in Solemn Vows and three sisters in the process of incorporation. Nine of the community's oblates have made their final oblation. The nuns earn their living by the work of their hands – making altar breads and liturgical crafts. Our pastoral activity is essentially prayer, extended as hospitality in the guest wing. We share our spiritual and personal resources with our oblates, with individuals and small groups who come to the monastery, through the weekly Christian Meditation, retreats, spiritual guidance and conferences.

We desire that our monastery be an expression of the mystery of the church within our Australian culture, where nothing whatever is preferred to Christ and all things are ordered to his kingdom.

A nun of Lammermoor