

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
F R I E N D S   O F   O U R   L A D Y   O F   T I N T E R N

PATRONS:   RT REVD DOM D VAN SANDVOORT OCSO   RT REVD DOM P STONHAM OSB   RT REVD D WALKER OGS

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**Advent 2008**

Dear Friends

This is the first of the Newsletters we shall in future be posting on our website. When we update them we will alert you each time by email, if we have your details. Otherwise we will send out hard copy to you as usual.

First of all, we want to thank CADW for offering us such an excellent position in Tintern Abbey for the statue of Our Lady. Since the installation most visitors to the Abbey have seen her as they approach through the cloister that leads into the nave, and a steady stream of people have paused to pray. Others made special journeys because of her and have felt deeply rewarded.

It is our hope to establish a Centre at Tintern Abbey that will be developed, chiefly, to serve the many visitors drawn there. In due course we hope to gain the use – perhaps together with others – of Beaufort Cottage, a building owned by CADW and very close by. This could also be of value for the Friends' own scheduled events. Much of the day-to-day activity of the Centre will depend on the support of local Christians and we hope in the near future to approach Churches Together in Monmouth and Chepstow to outline our plans and ask for their help.

As an ecumenical organisation we cannot take up effectively the opportunity such a Centre would afford unless we have a respectful understanding of one another. This may include remembering that views within each tradition can vary almost as widely as those between them. Being genuinely open to learn from and about other traditions will bring great rewards to us and to others.

In laying foundations for our future work, we feel a great debt is owed to one of our Committee, the Reverend Norman Wallwork, Methodist Minister and longtime member of the Ecumenical Society of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Friends have adopted the following prayer that he has written. It was first heard this autumn during Sung Vespers at the Abbey and is also included in the *Simple Office of Our Lady of Tintern* he has drafted.

God, our Father,  
by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit  
and the loving obedience  
of Our Lady of Tintern,  
Virgin and Mother,  
you gave your Son to be our Redeemer.  
By the same Spirit  
fill us with your grace,  
heal the nations  
and renew your creation,  
until with Mary and all your saints  
we are crowned for ever  
in the glory of heaven;  
through the merits  
of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Norman Wallwork also led an evening meeting for us in May, based on a devotional anthology he had prepared, *The Ecumenical Mary*, which we hope soon to make available. But perhaps his

most significant contribution has been the paper he recently gave to an ESBVM conference, titled *Mary - Mother of All God's Children*. At its conclusion he links the founding of the Friends of Our Lady of Tintern in striking fashion with the most urgent issues humanity now faces.

It is three months since the damp but joyful day of the 2008 Monastic Vespers at Tintern. The Abbey may now be technically termed an 'ancient monument' rather than a living church, but when we worship in it, even when wind and rain assail us, we know it to be a special place, where centuries of worship seem to have seeped into the stones.

Blessed are you, O Virgin Mary, because you believed in all things which were told you by the Lord. You will reign for ever with Christ.

*Breviary: Divine Office*

We hope that Christmas will be a happy time for you.

The Rev. Nora Hill and the Rev. John Dearnley  
Co-Chairs of the *Friends of Our Lady of Tintern*