

AMPLEFORTH ABBEY

(ASCENSION) SUNDAY 16 MAY 2010

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses to this.

And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high.' Then he took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and lifting up his hands he blessed them. Now as he blessed them, he withdrew from them and was carried up to heaven. They worshipped him and then went back to Jerusalem full of joy; and they were continually in the Temple praising God.

(Luke 24:46-53)

ASCENSION: MISSION STATEMENT



The Solemnity of the Ascension can seem to suffer from what – in the political sphere – might be called a 'two-party squeeze.' On the one hand stands the glorious and unsurpassable Resurrection of Christ - the Feast of Feasts, the ground for hope in our own rising from death to new life in the eternal kingdom.

On the other side appears Pentecost – the coming of the Spirit and the 'launching' of a small, dispirited group of disciples into a force which would eventually reshape world history.

The Ascension, by comparison, *can* seem more elusive. However, by holding together Christ's call to his followers to preach the Gospel to the whole world *and* his promise to be with them (and so us also) until the end of time, we can more fully appreciate the Ascension as a great compliment from Christ – a delegation of his mission to us, and a challenge to be prepared to follow closely in his footsteps on earth, in the hope of following him to glory.

MASS TIMES IN THE ABBEY CHURCH

Sun.	16 May	ASCENSION OF THE LORD	10.00
Mon.	17 May..	Feria	12:35
Tues.	18 May..	Feria	12:35
Weds.	19 May	Memoria St. Dunstan	12:35.
Thurs.	20 May..	Feria	12:35.
Fri.	21 May	Feria	12:35
Sat	22 May	Feria	12:35

AMPLEFORTH ABBEY

REBUILDERS FROM 'YEAR ZERO'



We like to believe that we live in uniquely dangerous times. There are some grounds for this. However, we can at times forget the wider historical picture.

A homily of St. Augustine notes a constant tendency to idealise the past. We would not do so, he argues, if we lived *then*. This certainly seems true for the lives and times of the monastic saints and bishops Dunstan, Oswald and Ethelwold.

Each was faced with the immense practical task of rebuilding monastic life from 'zero' after its destruction by successive attacks by Viking invaders. Dunstan in Canterbury, Ethelwold in Winchester and Oswald in Worcester (and later York) Each faced opposition from incumbent clergy in their struggle to found new monasteries after the 'deluge.'

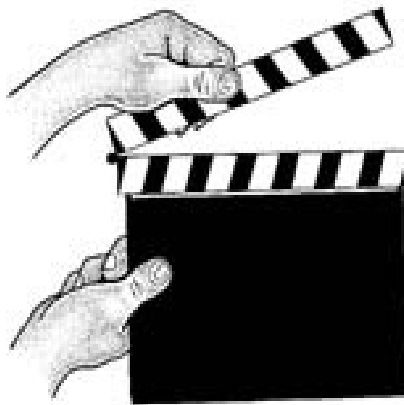
Such realities give us both reason to revere their memory – and to consider how well-equipped any of *us* might be to undertake such a daunting mission.

GOD AT THE MOVIES

Visitors on retreat last week had – via Fr Kieran – an opportunity to reflect on some of the varied ways in which God has been portrayed in film.

The Bible's cinematic potential was soon recognised. In the 1930s, De Mille's *Ten Commandments* provided an unforgettable interpretation of the Exodus. However, the New Testament also has provided both opportunities and challenges – for audiences and cineastes. Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* has been both praised and criticized for its uncompromising portrayal of Christ's sufferings.

There is clearly still public interest in the 'big questions' of life despite a fall in formal religious observance. For some, it might even provide a way back. God seems likely to be 'at the movies' for some time to come.



BUFFET MEAL FOR MASS SERVERS



A buffet supper in the Main Hall last week marked the monastic Community's thanks in a tangible – and digestible – form to those students from the College who regularly serve at the weekday Conventual Mass. Some of those due to finish school this summer, have served for four years or more.

Each School House also has one or more student sacristan who assists their chaplain in the smooth running of the House chapel and collecting supplies

The buffet also offered a welcome distraction from public exams already underway or about to begin. As the Eucharist is also a foretaste of the Heavenly Banquet, a celebratory meal was doubly appropriate.

WEEKDAY MONASTIC OFFICE IN THE ABBEY CHURCH

6.00 a.m. Matins

7.30 a.m. Lauds

8.45 a.m. Little Hour

6.30 p.m. Vespers