

Society of the Sacred Cross, Tymawr Convent

23rd September 2026

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings from all at Tymawr.



Today is the equinox - twelve hours of day-time and night-time worldwide – and, I suppose, the beginning of the descent into the darkest part of the year. And yes, the world is dark with much continuing violence and the threat of more suffering with potential weather patterns changing under ‘el nino’ and the impact this will have on world food production and livelihoods. How do we live with this darkness? How do we act? The first autumn Quiet Day this year on the legacy of the dream of Martin Luther King Jr. led by Dr. Victoria Omotoso, both gave us hope and challenged us to action. There were two addresses (one morning and one afternoon). Both sessions opened with a showing of the ‘Dream Speech’ of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963 in Washington DC. The group listened spell-bound and reverent each time. This opening with the visual image of hundreds of thousands of people gathered in hope and expectancy set the mood for the day. Here were not only moving, covenantal words

but a mass of human bodies: being the Body of Christ in the world at that time, daring to take the risk of gathering in non-violent solidarity and trust. We were invited to identify words /feelings that stood out for us from the clip and in the speech. Maybe the clearest shared feeling was of sorrow that despite the vision, there is to this day no true freedom between people. However, Dr. Omotoso then led us into a day of hope and truth, based around four central themes that were present in the speech: freedom, restoration, hope and belonging. This hope and truth are embedded in King’s larger frame: the words of Scripture, the prophecies of the Old Testament and the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The vision held before us by King belongs to God, it is not a personal ‘dream’. It is God’s, not ours, thus making the vision, the promise proclaimed, unassailable to our failure to love. Dr. Omotoso identified the four themes with texts within Scripture, aligning King’s legacy with the story of humankind with God. In the afternoon, time was given to going through the same four themes but applying them to one’s own life and crystallising an action that would embody the consequences of freedom, reconciliation, hope and belonging within the particularity of our ‘kinship/working’ group. When guilt might have been an easy avoidance of facing truth, we were presented with the ordinariness and therefore inclusiveness of God’s vision for humanity expounded by Martin Luther King. God’s dream for those he loves is true, and must elicit our response. We were left reflecting on our own part in the world of violence and segregation, and on our understanding of the real hope of God’s promise to shape our lives humbly within His love. The fruit of a life lived under the yoke of non-violence is true inclusion.



On the eve of Holy Cross, the community joined the ecumenical celebration of Vespers at Tintern Abbey. Abbot Brendan OSB from Belmont Abbey invited us into the ‘school of love’ and to the small acts of love and mercy that embody our response to God’s already-given love. That same evening in our Chapel, the Revd. Romola Parish made her Oblation and was welcomed as an Oblate of the Society of Sacred Cross. Oblates Jeannie and Carla were there to welcome her into the body of the Oblates. The next day +Dominic came to celebrate the Feast of Holy Cross and reminded us of the

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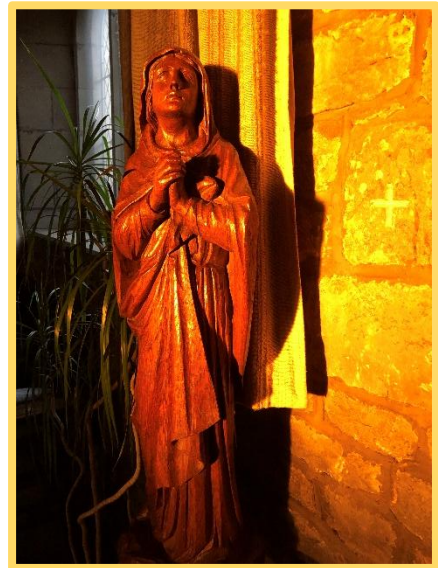
seriousness and joy with which we make the sign of the cross on our bodies during the liturgy. The cross is both a sign of our failure to love and, nonetheless, the seal of God's love for us.

In our Ordo, Holy Cross is followed by the Feast of the Compassion of Mary (otherwise known as Our Lady of Sorrows). This feast is dear to our hearts in that it shapes our life here at Tymawr: we are asked to stand at the foot of the cross with Mary. The gospel for the day is John 19. 25 -27. Through the words of the following poem by Madeleine L'Engle, the Revd. Janet Bone invited us to enter into the fidelity and trust of Mary - the same trust we heard about at the Quiet Day and which was explored in the homily by Abbot Brendan OSB, a trust which calls us out of ourselves into a relationship and a response of loving self-gift.

The Tenth Hour *Madeleine L'Engle*

*My lips moved, "Mother." Though no sounds come.
She leaves the hill, three crosses.
I follow. To her empty house.
She does not weep or wail as I had feared.
She does the little, homely things, prepares a meal, then
O God, she washes my feet.
"An angel came," she said,
"to tell me of his birth. And I obeyed.
No angel's come to tell me of his death."*

*This, I thought, was not an argument.
I held back the tears, since she held hers, though foolishly.
We ate – somehow – she always listening.
I said at last, "You do not mourn."
She looked down at me gravely.
"No, my son. My second given son.
I obeyed then. Shall I do less today?"*



Since the last newsletter, the community enjoyed a day away at Whitland with the Cistercian Sisters of Holy Cross Abbey. At the end of August, we celebrated and gave thanks for the gifts Kirstie Pope has given to the community through her service as our financial administrator. What began as a seed in a whispered conversation in a school playground, became a great tree carrying the story of the community over twenty years. We acknowledged that Kirstie has been here longer than any of the



current Sisters and has seen many changes both in people and to the fabric of the buildings and the estate. It was a joyous celebration and we shall all miss her very much.

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In early September we said good bye to Alongsiders Poppy and Ffion who have returned to their studies. It has been a joy to share our lives with them both. We look forward to hearing of their studies, and maybe, future visits.

Please note that if you are coming to stay between now and early Spring you will be residing at Michaelgarth and sharing Chapel and the Refectory with the Sisters. Waterproof shoes and a torch are vital for your retreat! Yesterday evening Sr. Joanna Ruth attended the first online session for her 2-year MA in Theology. Thank you to all who have contributed to the costs for this course. Meanwhile apples and pears are beginning to fill the store and jars of chutney and jam appear on the larder shelves.



After 3 years of fund raising, the Access project building work began this month. The contractors, Ernest Heal and Sons, have already completed the ground work for the re-aligned west driveway and turning area and are excavating the area for a platform lift from the car park to the level of the Sacristy door. Yesterday after Terce, we were reading the section of our Rule on Enclosure when we heard the workmen begin to 'seal off' the chapel door which is the entry to the Sacristy – enclosure that felt all too real!!!! We are grateful for your generous support and the grants from other religious

houses for the Access Appeal that have enabled work to start.

The Appeal remains open as there is more to do inside the Chapel to ensure a welcome for all. We also hope to extend Access to Nature – Llwybr Mynediad I Natur with improvements to the front of the Convent. Please visit www.tymawrconvent.org for information on how to donate.

We look forward to seeing you at the Quiet days, or on the Oblates' Study Day or for a time of 'quiet refreshment for body, mind and spirit'.

With all our love and prayers,

M. Katharine SSC,
on behalf of the whole community.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

QUIET DAYS AT TYMAWR Autumn 2026 THE UNBOUNDED HEART

The 'Dream' of Martin Luther King:
Living today in the spirit of the teaching of Martin Luther King

Saturday 3rd October with Revd. Andrew Sully honorary Canon of Llandaff Cathedral and Ministry Area Leader of West Cardiff in the Church in Wales. Ordained in 1993 and husband to Mary, the current Bishop of Llandaff. Trustee of Christian Aid, the Male Journey, and an Ambassador for Inclusive Church. Andrew is about to make a profession to the Third Order of St Francis of Assisi. He is an ecumenist and Welsh speaker, having held posts in five of the six dioceses of the Church in Wales. He is also an accredited teacher of the Enneagram.

Saturday 7th November with Professor Anthony G. Reddie Professor of Black Theology and Director, the Centre of Black Theology, University Oxford & Extraordinary Professor, Theological Ethics: University of South Africa. Author of *Living Black Theology: Decolonizing Knowledge*. (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2025); *Theologising Brexit: A Liberationist and Postcolonial Critique* (London: Routledge, 2019.)

Bookings: sscchaplain@gmail.com

OBLATES STUDY DAY 24th October 2026 with Revd. Dr. Bonnie Thurston

please book your place with Sr. Elizabeth at
bookings@tymawrconvent.com