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MASS OF CELEBRATION OF BISHOP MARK'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

Bishop Mark Jabalé celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination to the Priesthood with a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving at St Joseph's Cathedral, Swansea on Saturday 12th July 2008.

In addition to some 30 priests, serving in the diocese, present and concelebrating were the Apostolic Nuncio His Excellency Archbishop Faustino Sainz Munoz, two archbishops (Peter Smith of Cardiff and Patrick Kelly of Liverpool), three diocesan bishops (Declan Lang of Clifton, George Stack Auxiliary in Westminster, Thomas Williams Auxiliary in Liverpool) and of course our own Bishop Daniel J Mullins, Bishop Emeritus of Menevia. Also concelebrating were three Abbots (Stonham of Belmont, Yoe of Buckfast, and Scott of Douai - Abbot Shipperlee of Ealing was due to attend but unfortunately due to a bereavement at the monastery was unable to be present). Bishop Mark mentioned that there would have been many more of his brother bishops present but for the fact that some were already in, or on their way to, Sydney, Australia for the World Youth 2008 celebrations (according to the current weeks published 'Bishops Engagements' there were 15 so involved and a further 11 had their own prior diocesan engagements - ordinations etc.)

In a foreword to the printed order of service Bishop Mark wrote... "I welcome you all to this joyful celebration of the Golden Jubilee of my priestly ordination. Fifty years ago tomorrow, Archbishop Michael McGrath came to Belmont Abbey, to ordain Brother Mark, a young monk of Belmont. It was actually a very memorable day for him personally, not so much because of the fact that he was ordaining me, as that it was actually the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of his own priestly ordination.

No stretch of the imagination could, on that day, have made me think that on the Golden Jubilee of my ordination I would myself be a Bishop. Monks' minds tend very much to focus on their monastery, even when they are priests; and, for many years, that was indeed my horizon; teaching in the school, and being a member of the Belmont Community. I was, of course, ordained in the full pre-Vatican II Liturgy, and celebrated the Tridentine Mass until the late sixties when the New Rite came into force. As with all of us, this rite was a major change in my priestly life, and one to which all of us had to become accustomed; we had to learn to pray the Mass in English. It took some years for the richness of the Liturgy in the vernacular to become more real, and therefore more in tune with the Council Fathers' vision in their Document on the Sacred Liturgy 'Sacrosanctum Concilium', both for the faithful, and indeed for many of us priests.



Since my ordination, my ministry has taken me to many places. Join the Monastery and see the world is not a common expression; but, for me, it certainly has a ring of truth. After my teaching career at Belmont, with some fifteen and a half years as its Headmaster, I was sent to Peru, to build Belmont's new monastery. Three memorable and experience-filled years later, Abbot Alan brought me back to Belmont as his Prior, on the day of his election. Seven years later, I was myself elected, as the tenth Abbot of Belmont. Almost eight years later, hoping for a quiet life in retirement, I had to start an entirely new phase of my life. The last eight years, as Bishop of Menevia, have given me a great admiration and respect for secular priests and the priestly vocation. I am particularly grateful to all the priests of Menevia who accepted a foreigner, and one of such a different background to that of their own, with the greatest kindness and warmth.

Today, I thank God for his many gifts to me over the last fifty years. He has given me the immense privilege to serve his beloved people. I ask you all to keep me in your prayers, as I will pray for you. Bishops have their difficult moments. My life, these last eight years, has not been without its

moments of trial - there are times when only God has the solution to problems; the difficult bit for us is to acknowledge that fact; but, believe me, age does help. However, what I can truthfully say is that the faithful of Menevia have been a joy and a great consolation to me; and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

May God bless you all, and thank you for joining me on my very special day."

+ Mark OSB

Also present in the Cathedral as guests were the Rt. Rev. John Davies, the Church in Wales Bishop of Swansea & Brecon, and his predecessor, Bishop Emeritus Anthony Pierce, together with the Anglican Chaplain at Swansea University the Rev. Nigel John; also three members of Bishop Mark's family who had travelled to South Wales from Italy for the occasion and had assisted at the Mass by bringing the bread and wine to the bishop in the offertory procession. And apart from those concelebrating priest there were, in the congregation representatives of all the Religious Orders serving in the diocese.

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