



# The Raven

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GLENSTAL ABBEY SCHOOL

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 3

DECEMBER 2006

## From the Headmaster

Not that long ago, Christmas seemed like it was a long way off. But now it is almost upon us. We are in the season of Advent and the birthday of our Saviour is not far away. How quickly the Christmas term has gone. It is nearly four months since we started back to School. It has certainly been an eventful term with so much happening on every front. You have to be absolutely in the full of your health to put in just an average day here at Glenstal Abbey School... not to mention the busy ones. With classes, games, music, study, so many different activities and pastimes and much more besides: it is hard to find room for it all.

With all this hustle and bustle we very often forget what matters most in our lives. We are all guilty of overlooking what is at the very centre of our beings: that God is love and that we are made in the image of God. It is not that the other aspects of our lives are not important. They certainly are. But sometimes we can place too much emphasis on what is peripheral to that centre of our lives and don't give enough attention to what really matters to us. It is so easy to fall into the trap of not paying enough attention to the spiritual dimension of our lives.

The important thing every so often is to stop and listen. "Obsculta", from the Latin verb "to listen" is the first word in the Rule of St. Benedict. Over a thousand years ago he recognised that we can be far too busy to listen and to pay attention to what is going on about us. We must take time to absorb what God is saying to us in our lives. When we do stop and listen to what God is saying to us through the hustle and bustle of our lives, something amazing happens: a real calm envelopes us. Just try it and you will know what I am saying. When this happens, we know that despite all the problems in our lives, despite the crazy pace our lives can take, there is a greater presence than ourselves in the world. And that all will be well in the end. We must just pay attention and never ignore the spiritual aspect of our lives.

So, as we prepare to end what has been a very busy, sometimes happy, sometimes not so happy but always eventful Christmas term, let's remember to pay attention to every aspect of our lives; the material and the spiritual. And let us also remember to look after one another and those who are not so fortunate as we are.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who in any way is associated with Glenstal Abbey School. May God bless each and every one of you over Christmas. May He bring His peace and joy to your lives, not only at Christmas but throughout 2007. I look forward to seeing everyone in January. In the meantime, Happy Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to one and to all.

## NEWS FLASH

◆ **Ian Nagle** (VI) continues on the trail to next year's U.19 Rugby-World Cup in Belfast with his 2nd weekend squad training session in Dublin.

◆ **Cathal O'Connor** (V) has been selected in the final eight in the Irish E.U. Science Olympiad. From this eight four will be selected to represent Ireland at the European Science Olympiad in Potsdam, Germany in March 2007. Watch this space...

## UCC SCHOLARSHIP

A recent wintery Monday evening witnessed a pleasant and not-too-formal ceremony in University College Cork to acknowledge the 69 Scholars of 2006, amongst whom was our own Darragh Hurley. Students from 49 schools assembled with their families and friends and, in many cases, representatives from their schools for the award ceremony. Br Denis and Br Timothy attended and afterwards were treated to a relaxed family celebratory dinner to mark the fine off-pitch achievement of last year's Rugby Captain which sits comfortably beside those on-field achievements already celebrated elsewhere.

Br Timothy

## ABBOT'S BLESSING

The return of Advent and the approach of Christmas present a welcome opportunity for me, as Abbot, to greet the readership of *THE RAVEN* and to reflect very briefly on the wonder that is ours as recipients of the Good News that "God has visited his people" (*Elk 7,16*).

I often reflect that the generosity of parents and their care for their children, such as is the case for the fortunate young men in our school, is a key for us, their elders, to appreciating something of the relationship between God and us, human beings. The young don't appreciate it, by and large, and they cannot be expected to, at least, not yet; and neither do we elders, with regard to God's yearning care for us. The wonder of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ is the measure of God's commitment to us, as the joy of God's heart, the light of God's eyes. Let us rejoice and be glad...really! That particular joy unfailingly adds a rare quality to the rest of what we are accustomed to enjoying, during the festivities of Christmas.

May the joy of Christ fill your hearts, in the days and weeks ahead!

+Christopher Dillon *osb*

## On a musical note

On Thursday the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, nine students that make up the sixth year music class, accompanied by our new music teacher Miss Geraghty and her colleague Miss Barry, caught the 7.55am train from Limerick Junction to Dublin. The purpose of our trip was to see and hear the Leaving Certificate Music 'set works' being performed.

Having risen at 6.00am that morning students and teachers alike were a little drowsy and I'm sure most would have appreciated a quick snooze on the train, unfortunately, it was already packed with commuters and there wasn't a seat to be found. For most of the journey the small space at the far end of the last carriage was packed with a pile of Glenstal's sixth years who, trapped in by the evil man with the food trolley – couldn't even get to the bathroom.

Having arrived in Dublin with time to spare, most found time for a second breakfast, before we took our seats in the National Concert Hall. We were first treated to an in-depth analysis of Tchaikovsky's Romeo and Juliet, with sections being described by a narrator before being played briefly by the youthful 'Royal Irish Academy Symphony Orchestra', who then performed the piece in full. This, I'm certain, will prove extremely useful to us in June (HOT TIP!)

Tchaikovsky was followed by a recital of Gerald Barry's 'Piano Quartet No.1'. Before the trip, I'd be the first to admit this was not my favourite piece, in fact I had always believed it was a headache described only by the composer as a piece of music. Yet, seeing it performed, it was easier to appreciate the deft skill required to play it and, at the very least, it *looked* like music. This and the hyper-active pianist – and the group who performed it – are beginning to change my mind about Barry (the composer that is and not Miss!) We also watched a documentary on the making of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody", which is another one of our set works, and watched a performance of it on the big screen.

After the concert had ended Miss Geraghty gave us permission to wander around a wet but busy Christmassy Dublin city centre. She suggested we do some Christmas shopping. Surprisingly, on meeting up again to get back to Heuston station, Miss Geraghty and Miss Barry were the only ones with shopping bags!

On behalf of us all I would like to take to thank Miss Barry, for accompanying us and especially Miss Geraghty for organising the trip.

*Rory O'Donovan (VI)*

**T**he long awaited trans-location of the permanent-temporary classrooms to their new location at the gable end of the sports-hall has commenced. Full installation is expected in time for the start of the new term in January.

## U15 Seasonal Update

There have been many ups and downs since our beginning in late August. It was great to acquire our coach Tim Van Vliet. We started off our campaign after three weeks of strenuous training against Castletroy College of Limerick. As this was not a very important game we decided to go with two teams half "A" half "B". While we performed well during periods of the game we were not fit enough to do ourselves justice which would gradually change with Tim's after training runs which we all enjoy. Really we do!

About two weeks later we played Crescent Comp of Limerick. Missing a few players we played with the same format half "A" half "B". Having played terrible there were flashes of brilliance in the second half which would be key to our success. Despite playing a few more matches our season really began with the arrival of Lawrence Sherriff from England if we were planning to be competitive in competitions this year we had to put in a good performance. By God did we produce sending them back with a 57-0 trouncing. Things were just warming up. The following week we played another touring side from Trent Bridge in England despite going 8 nil down we recovered to record a convincing win.

It was time for the Limerick City U15 Cup. Our first round was against Villiers School which we beat quite comfortably after bringing on our subs in the second half. Our next game was against Ardscoil Rís who we had beaten easily in earlier in our campaign. We turned up there expecting a win. They gave us the fright of our lives but we duly won 7-5.

On to the final where Castletroy were to be our opposition.

Despite playing poorly we were only 5 points down at half time. But due to our own mistakes and series of decisions going against us we lost by 12 points.

On a whole this has been an very good year so far not just for me but the whole team. Each player has improved there skill level greatly and there has been consistently a number of about 30 going to training everyday.

I think everybody on the squad knows there is more to come from this team and we can seriously challenge for the Junior Cup this year, but first up we must guarantee our participation by beating the winner of the Junior Development League on 17th January, whoever and wherever!

On a not so competetive note we have gotten to know each other better and enjoy our rugby more.

*Liam Mungovan (III)*

*U15 Captain*

### IMPORTANT FIXTURES TO NOTE:

Wed 17th January—Glenstal v Winner of League (A)

Wed 31st January—Winner of match above v Crescent

**T**he Senior Rugby 2006/7 season began with a home fixture against a monstrous New South Wales Country side. Our antipodean opponents were a physically daunting prospect, with their pack alone outweighing the entire Glenstal team. However true to the Glenstal spirit, the side in red and grey battled valiantly throughout a ferociously physical test. It was testament to sheer courage and commitment which saw Glenstal defeated by a score of 5-3, considering Glenstal almost stole the match at the death. The sentiment of Montaigne's famous words were echoed by the Australians in the aftermath of this Glenstal reverse; "there are defeats more triumphant than victories". However in truth Glenstal sold themselves short against a side featuring no less than three Australian schoolboys. On a personal level it was a great honour to be presented a NSW tie, a souvenir to the touring tradition of the past between the two nations prior to the advent of the professional game.

Despite the absence of several key senior players the Glenstal side, galloped to a 17-0 half-time lead against Castletroy Colloge on their next outing, through outstanding tries from Daniel O'Shea, Peadar Brehony and Mark McManus. Nonetheless true to the cliché, "rugby is a game of two halves". And this was painfully emphasized to the Glenstal players by Castletroy's second half dominance, culminating in a last minute equalising score. On the day a young Glenstal side lacked the maturity to close out this game.

In early October a full Glenstal side, including Munster U/19 representative Ian Nagle for the first time, came up against many people's Senior Cup favourites and our Limerick rivals, Crescent Comprehensive. A controlled and clinical first half saw Glenstal secure a an 8-0 half-time lead through a Daniel O'Shea drop-goal and an excellent Conan Reilly try. The physically larger Crescent players couldn't match Glenstal's tenacious intensity, particularly at the breakdown. However Crescent did score a consolation try late on, the mark of a fine side. On this occasion the leadership of Mark McManus and Daniel O'Shea, allied with a powerful performance by Owen Grennan, ensured that Glenstal held on for a narrow 8-7 victory.

Thereafter ensued a trio a of below-par performances, resulting in a 5-0 loss to Ardscoil Rís, a draw with Middleton College, and culminating in a hugely dissapointing (13-3) defeat away to St. Munchins. Admittedly Glenstal were denied the talents of several important players and leaders during this difficult period by means of a lengthy injury list, but in truth the performances of those who played didn't do themselves justice. Undoubtedly the highlight of this period was Peadar Brehony's outstanding solo-try in the rain and mud against Middleton College. Our annual fixture against Rockwell fell victim to the appalling November weather but this has been rescheduled for January 31st—hopefully we will have ensured our right of entry to the Senior Cup Quarter Finals the previous week.

To make up for this postponement we travelled to Newbridge on the day of the Bowen Shield Final—it was

to next column

## U16 Bowen Shield

This year at Glenstal we have seen a team that has gone beyond expectations and has truly made Glenstal proud. Beating several high profile teams such as PBC, Rockwell and Castletroy College the U16's have made a lasting impression on Munster schools' rugby. Storming through to the semi-finals of the Bowen Shield led by Sam Holt and under the guidance of fantastic coach Eddie Price the U16's became the first team in recent history to reach such great heights. This amazing campaign sadly ended at the semi-finals losing in a very close match to Christians in Cork. I'm sure many of this team will go on to form the backbone of a very talented senior cup team in future seasons. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed by the Munster Branch as Duncan Casey (3) and Michael O'Flynn (10) have been selected for the Munster Schools U16 UK tour in January.

*Theo Lambton (V)*

## 1st Year Retreat

On a dark, wet, winter's morning the First Years set out for their first retreat as part of Glenstal Abbey School. Their destination was the De la Salle retreat centre in Castletown, Co Laois. If the weather was cold and wet, the retreat atmosphere was quite the opposite. We all received a very warm welcome from the retreat team, in whose capable hands I left the boys. Needless to say I was not privy to what went on in the retreat sessions - that's private and is between the boys and the team. I did however sense a very positive atmosphere at break times and at meals. I was privileged to join the boys for their final session of prayer, which was prepared by themselves, and very well prepared at that. I was delighted to see such a strong and promising beginning to the retreat experience for the class.

*Fr Columba*

from previous column

another close affair with the final score 5-3 to our hosts. Unfortunately our scrum-half Conan Reilly dislocated his shoulder and looks likely to miss the remainder of the season. The last match of the term saw us travel to Wilton to take on PBC on a bright, crisp December morning. This turned out to be a frustrating and disappointing game as we failed to turn good possession into points. The last pass quite often let us down. This is a facet of our game that we need to improve on.

We now face into the Christmas lay off knowing that we have to work on our conditioning and physical well-being over the break and return in January both focussed and ready for the run-in to our Quarter Final qualifier on Wednesday 24th January against either Newtown or Middleton. None of us under-estimate the significance of what lies ahead...

*Hugh McCarthy (VI) - Senior Rugby Captain*

## The Holly & the IV (and the I, II, III, V, VI)

Just over three months ago I commenced my position as Head of Music in Glenstal Abbey School. Without a doubt it has been a busy, hectic, demanding, tiring couple of months but the sense of enjoyment and reward I obtain from my job makes everything worthwhile! The fundamental role music (alongside rugby!) plays in the cultural environment and ethos of Glenstal is undeniable indeed the battle of the bands, lunch-time recitals, music workshops, musical, extracurricular music programme and not least to mention the roaring (sometimes deafening) drum beats and electric guitar riffs that permeate from the cinema gym, stand as avid testament to this statement. As we enter '07 with the musical *We Will Rock You* on the horizon I have no doubt that the music department and indeed music in general will continue to prosper in Glenstal.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome three new music department staff members to Glenstal, Ms Dannette Eddy (violin), Ms. Julie Rearden (piano) and Mr. Aidan Boland (piano). I would also like to welcome back the rest of the music department crew, Ms. Mary Fullam (voice), Mr. Gerry Hanly (drums), Mr. James Hanley (piano), Mr. Mike Moriarty (guitar) and Mr. Bernard Casey (woodwind). I commend and thank these expert teachers for the wonderful job they are doing with the Glenstal music students and wish them the best for the New Year!

Numerous music events have taken place since the

beginning of term. In October Ms. Maria O'Connor visited Glenstal to give the transition year students Irish dance lessons, in the same month the Harlem Gospel Choir gave an unforgettable performance in the school church. Professor Paul Deegan visited in November to give the voice students a valuable singing workshop and in the same weekend a troupe of renowned Irish traditional musicians/singers, including Mary McNamara, Tommy Hayes and Noirin Ni Rian visited Glenstal to give a workshop on Irish traditional music and song. November also marked the first student lunchtime recital of this academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the fifth year music students and the Irish traditional music ensemble on the outstanding performance they gave in this recital, well done! In December the sixth year music class visited the national concert hall to hear their set works, they also managed to squeeze in a little Christmas shopping! These types of music events contribute significantly to the overall well being of music in Glenstal, I would like to thank Fr. Joseph Mc Gilloway, Mary Fullam and any other parties that were involved in the organisation of these events. Hopefully there will be many more music events to come in the New Year.

I wish everyone a very merry Christmas.

*Holly Geraghty*

### VITAL CONNECTIONS

It would appear that many parents do not have the direct-dial numbers of critical members of the House Management of the students. These are given below.

All these numbers access the voice-mail of the named person and it is advisable to leave messages on the personal voice-mail rather than with the main switchboard.

061-621 029 Br Denis – Headmaster

061-621 030 Fr William – Dean of Boarding

061-621 064 Mark Twohig – Asst Senior Housemaster

061-621 001 Fr Joseph – Inter Housemaster

061-621 081 Tim Van Vliet – Asst Inter Housemaster

061-621 077 Tim Van Vliet – Sports Director

061-621 062 Br Matthew – Junior Housemaster

061-621 039 Dermot Blake – Asst Junior Housemaster

061-621 052 Br Cillian – Dean of Studies

061-621 025 Br Timothy – Career Advisor & Senior Tutor

061-621 013 Br Luke – Special Education Needs Co-ordinator

061-621 010 Fr Columba – School Chaplain

061-621 096 Nurse Breda Berkery & Nurse Margaret Moloney – School Health Centre

### LECTORS 2006/7

The following students have been inducted as official Sunday readers:

- ◆ Declan Hughes
- ◆ Peter Hamilton
- ◆ Marcus Allen
- ◆ Nicholas Gavin
- ◆ Jack Hanly
- ◆ Cathal Dolan
- ◆ Peter O'Donnell
- ◆ Justin Sammon
- ◆ Gareth Halley
- ◆ Ben Donohue
- ◆ Ian Nagle
- ◆ Daniel O'Shea
- ◆ Hugh McCarthy
- ◆ Julian Quirke
- ◆ Christopher Barter

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