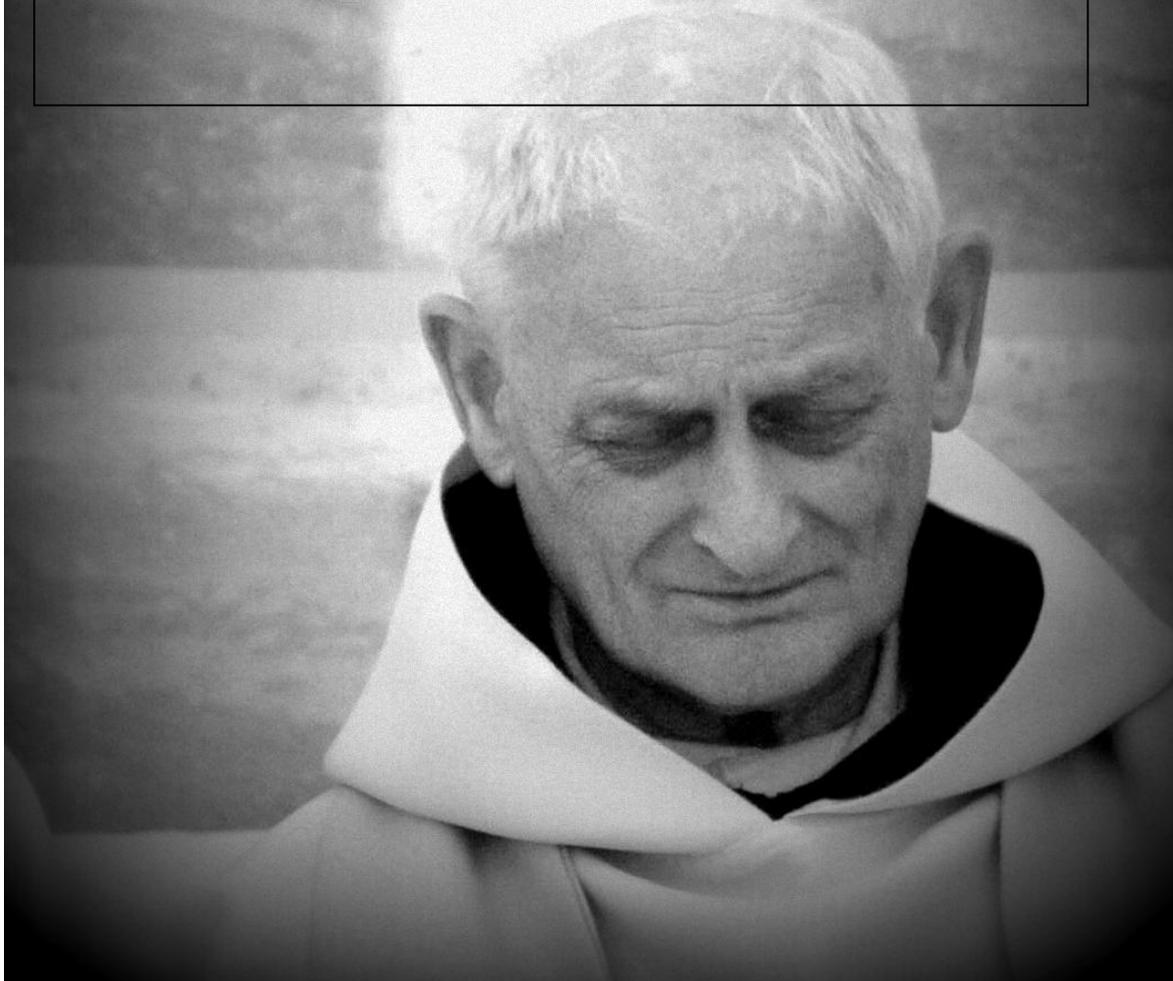


*From Waterford to  
Leicestershire  
Permanently*

*The story of the Cistercians  
at Mount St. Bernard*



I remember fondly those Sunday afternoon trips when my dad would load us all in to his "Thames" lorry and we would set off from Thurles for a spin. One of those regular trips would be down through the Vee and its wonderful views over Tipperary and Waterford with a stop off at Mount Melleray Abbey near Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. Situated on the slopes of the Knockmealdown Mountains (or as we called them 'the knock me down mountains ')



Mount Melleray in high summer

I live now in Nottinghamshire, not far from the Cistercian Abbey of Mount St. Bernard, which is near Loughborough. Cistercian abbeys in Ireland and England had a turbulent period with the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII.

There is an interesting connection between these Irish and English monasteries. Before the end of 1835, six monks, led by Fr. Odilo Woolfrey as Superior, were established at Mount Saint Bernard, Leicestershire. The mother house of the new monastery was the Irish abbey of Mount Melleray, Co. Waterford.

The monks settled in and from these humble origins, Mount St. Bernard, Colville, Leicestershire was designed by Augustus Pugin. He also designed the interior of The House of Commons and St. Mary's Church in Derby. Pugin's Irish structures included St. Aidan' Cathedral and St. Peter's College, Wexford.

Melleray has an in-depth museum on site and both abbeys are open during the day for visitors to walk the grounds and listen to their prayer services.



January 2010

In 2005, the skeletons of more than six hundred medieval Trappist monks were re-buried in the grounds of Mount Saint Bernard. The remains had originally been found by workmen excavating an extension to London Underground's Jubilee line in 1998, on a site which had once been occupied by the Abbey of Stratford and Langthorpe. This had been one of the wealthiest monasteries in England, closed in Henry VIII's dissolution in 1538. Cistercian Trappist monks are buried in their habit but without a coffin. They are laid out in a wooden coffin shape bier without a lid but lowered into eternity with just the simple daily clothing habit of the monk and the wooden bier is returned to the monastery attic for next time!



Keep in mind that both abbeys have guest houses and websites to book if you wish to visit.