



from  
**Jamberoo Abbey**

**Winter  
2026**

**May there be an outpouring of  
Prayer and Peace  
over our world at this time**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Winter edition of *News from The Abbey*. We hope you are staying warm! Perhaps the arrival of our newsletter in your inbox is an invitation to boil the kettle and enjoy reading it for a few moments over a hot cup of tea or coffee.

We at The Abbey are well and truly back into it after a wonderful two weeks of R&R in April/May. The break from our everyday routine was rejuvenating and we thank all those who helped make it possible.

We are thrilled to report that our Fundraising Appeal has reached \$850,000 and we are within sight of our goal of \$1 million. We cannot overstate how grateful we are to all those who have supported us in the Appeal. As you will read in the story below, those funds have helped us to complete Stages 1 and 2 of the Roof Replacement project as well as significant drainage and ground repair works. There is more to do, however, including more roof works in the church, community room and formation area, as well as other big maintenance works, which you will read more about in this newsletter. A renewed fundraising push towards our \$1 million goal should go a long way towards covering those costs.

It is impossible for us to adequately express our gratitude for the support we have received in dealing with these pressing repairs. While the Abbey is our home, we know it is also beloved by you, our oblates, friends and retreat guests. Your support is helping to ensure that it remains a place of beauty, prayer, peace and rest, not only now, but into the future.

May God bless you and keep you.  
*The Nuns of Jamberoo Abbey.*

## Concert at the Abbey

It was so wonderful having the first concert in the Abbey church as a fundraising event. The St Jude's Chamber Choir was the main performer with Allan Beavis as conductor and Brett McKern as organist. (Note: Allan was for years my pipe organ teacher). The tickets were sold out quickly within a week once registration opened. The performance was so magnificent and uplifting! Everyone in the audience was just still, listening intently to the singing and the organ playing! And the clapping at the end of the concert went on and on and on. It was just amazing!

The program included Harold Darke's "Mass", Henry Purcell's "Rejoice in the Lord always", Herbert Sumsion's "Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis" and "They that go down to the Sea in Ships" and John Rutter's "A Gaelic Blessing".



Our schola (Srs Magdalen, Petra and Mary Bernadette) sang, in acapella three parts, “Hail Mary” which was composed by Dom Cyprian Smith OSB, a Benedictine monk from Ampleforth Abbey in UK, and was arranged by our Sr Petra. Then, Brett played on the organ an improvisation of “Hail Mary”, the piece that we just sang. He is a very talented organist!



After the concert we had a lovely afternoon tea inside and outside the guestry, which was prepared by Penny, our cook, Sr Mechtild and the nuns. It was very well done and was a perfect way to end this magnificent day.

Thank you so much to Allan Beavis, Brett McKern and all the members of St Jude’s Chamber Choir for sharing your talents and time so generously with us.

Also, big thanks to all of you who came and joined us for this special occasion. We appreciate all your support.

*Sr Mary Bernadette*

## News from the Craft Department

Each of the departments in the craft area: candles, cards, art and pottery, gifts and books have set a target of income for the next financial year. It will be a lot of hard work and a big marketing push to achieve this goal, but we are willing and enthusiastic.

Coming up we have a fully sponsored exhibition and sales at the National Catholic Schools Principals’ conference in Sydney from July 6-10.

Then on July 21-23, we will exhibit and sell at the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Religious Education Symposium. Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools is sponsoring our exhibit. but we are needing a sponsor to cover the costs of travel and accommodation. If you are able and willing to assist, we would be very grateful.

Please contact us on [candleorders@bigpond.com](mailto:candleorders@bigpond.com).



*Sr Mechtild at last year’s NSW Catholic Schools Principals’ conference. A similar exhibit is planned for the upcoming national event in Sydney.*

Don’t forget, if you are having a special celebration in your family or workplace, we can customise a candle gift for you. Thank you to everyone who already supports us.

*Sr Mechtild*

## Next Stage of Maintenance and Repair Work

We are happy to share that the work on the second stage of the roof replacement has been completed. So, in 2024 we did the first stage of the roof replacement work that covered our work areas. In 2025, we did the ground work, re-leveling the landscape to improve the drainage and prevent water coming into the building. This year, from March to May, we completed the second stage of the roof replacement that covers our formation area.

What is next? We have three locations where the roof is still leaking, the church, community room and the formation area. We also have a section just outside our church where mould has grown and, despite being difficult to access, it needs to be addressed.



*The latest section of new roofing taking shape.*

We also have smaller but crucial maintenance work to do. Our solar batteries, which we installed eight years ago, have been out of use for a while, making it hard to keep our electricity usage from the grid as low as we used to. This has a big impact on our electricity expenses. Hence the urgency to get it fixed.

The second thing that we have had to look at is our envirocycle system. This is our sewerage system. We have to replace one of the blowers. Also, to comply with the regulations from Kiama Council, we will need to install an additional blower which will run at night with a lower noise level. Our envirocycle system is older than the Abbey buildings. The outlet pipe was broken at two locations by a tree root that has grown around it and caused two leaks. Another council regulation has also required us to replace all 16 key valves and sprinkler heads which were the outlet for the reclaimed water (non-drinking water).

The third thing on our needs list is the flue on top of our community room. In our community room, we have a gas fireplace with a flue. The flue was accidentally damaged during the roof replacement work done in 2024. It

was only in winter 2025 that we realised something was wrong. We kept smelling gas whenever we turned on the fireplace. As we prioritised the expenses for building maintenance, we have waited for this work to be done now in 2026.



*Sr Petra was on hand to gratefully receive a donation of materials from the CSR company.*

to be able to do this as soon as possible.

The last thing that we need to do is to remove two very big trees in the property. We had these trees inspected by Kiama Council. They found that the trees have weakened the buildings structurally. They have given us permission to have these trees removed. But they are very big trees and their removal will cost a lot. We hope

We were recently blessed to receive a donation of building materials from CSR which was a big help to us. We are grateful also for your continuing support for our community. We hope to reach our fundraising goal of \$1 million, which will enable us to do all those major maintenance works. We continue to pray for God's blessings upon all of you for your generosity.

**To donate to the building fund, please click this link:**  
<https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/about/make-a-donation/>

## Renewal for the community

Just as we are working hard with your support to get our grounds and buildings in good order, so too we, as a community, are embracing a time of renewal and discernment about our way forward as a monastic community here at Jamberoo on God's holy mountain. This nine-week discernment is being led by Sr Mary, our Prioress. She, drawing on her wealth of wisdom and knowledge of the community, is gently guiding us to ask the hard questions and to listen to what God is saying to us through one another. Please keep us in your prayers. Thank you.

*Sr Mechtild*

## Book Launch

Sr Antonia's latest book *Dying to Die* will be launched on August 22 at 11am, and you are very welcome to join us.

The book chronicles Sr Antonia's conjectures around how she might take the journey of dying if she were given a diagnosis of terminal illness. Using the Rule of St Benedict as a guide, and her own experiences of facing a possible terminal diagnosis, she evokes nature to introduce her topic.

Sr Antonia has also invited four guest writers to write a chapter for the book from the perspective of their own experience of facing death. These four writers add new and interesting perspectives on dying and how it has played out in their lives.

The guest writers are: Dr Sarah Thompson (Kirsop), Oblate of Jamberoo and Palliative Care Physician; Fr Paul Gurr O. Car., former chaplain at Jamberoo; Kerry Wensing, biological sister of Sr. Antonia; Dr Jamie Moran, psychotherapist and friend from London.

The launch will include a talk by Dr Sarah Thompson, Palliative Care Physician, Sr Antonia and others who have contributed in some way to getting the book to this point of being published. There will also be some musical entertainment from the nuns. The launch will be followed by luncheon in the Abbey guestry.

***Click here to register to attend the book launch (for catering purposes):***  
<https://www.jamberoabbey.org.au/events/dying-to-die-book-launch/>.

## Benedictine Union Meeting

Sr Magdalen represented us at the Benedictine Union meeting in New Norcia in May. Benedictine houses from Australia and New Zealand come together to support one another and share Benedictine hospitality and communion. Of special interest at this meeting was a proposal from Fr Robert Nixon osb, a New Norcia monk and Oblate Director. His suggestion was to establish networks of oblates from our various communities, with the same intention of encouraging support of one another and to share in communion. More will be forthcoming later in the year.



## An artist's R&R

Not long after Easter R&R began, I found myself driving up Jamberoo Mountain to Robertson to begin a workshop with the Printmaking Sisters, Robin Ezra and Annie Day, who run their own sustainable printmaking school.

'My Place' was the theme of our printmaking adventure and we explored it using different printmaking techniques.

I had decided to portray people without a home. You know when you see someone sitting on the street, that's it, what surrounds them is their place. I wondered about their place in the world, their place in time and space, their place in history. It's not a comfortable place for our homeless rather a place of want and vulnerability.



The labyrinth is a powerful healing symbol which I wove into my images to bring some healing through the presence of God to their situation.

From this time of R&R I feel a strengthened connection with our homeless who are often seen as having no place. Yes, they have a place, in my heart and evoke compassion.

It's also nice to have a roof over our heads. Thank you.  
*Sr Veronica*

## Upcoming Retreats

Join us if you can for a retreat over the next few months. Details can be found on our website <https://www.jamberooabbey.org.au/retreats/abbey-retreat-programs>

**Praying Icons with Julian of Norwich 27 June 2026** Presenter: Sr Julian Grigor osb

**Welcoming Sister Death 10-12 July 2026** Presenter: Sr Antonia Curtis osb

**The Cloud of Unknowing 17-19 July 2026** Presenter: Sr Magdalen Mather osb

**Circle of Women September 5** Presenter: Sr Veronica Chandler osb

**Abba, Give Me a Word 18-20 September 2026** Presenter: Sr Magdalen Mather osb

Please remember that you are very welcome to come and experience a private retreat at the Abbey in our retreat cottages. You may request a spiritual director to accompany you or simply give yourself to the silence, the prayer, the liturgy and the peace.

## My Stanbrook Experience

I was fortunate to spend six months living at Stanbrook Abbey in Yorkshire, England between Nov 2025 and May 2026. It was a deeply enriching experience that allowed me to witness how the Rule of St Benedict is lived in another monastic community, shaped by its own history, culture, and circumstances.

My time at Stanbrook was enriched by visits to nearby Ampleforth Abbey and the ruins of Byland and Rievaulx Abbeys, which flourished during the Middle Ages. These visits provided a valuable context as I continued to learn about the history of the English Benedictine Congregation, of which we are now a part. Stanbrook also welcomed many visitors, and I was grateful for the opportunity to meet and learn from people such as Sr Julianna from Taiwan, Sr Marie Benedicta, a hermit from Germany, and Sr Genevieve from Kylemore.

One of the first things I noticed was the difference in weather and landscape. I arrived prepared for a harsh English winter, even bringing an electric jacket, only to discover that the well-insulated and heated monastery was often warmer than some spring or summer days at Jamberoo. I grew to love the cold, crisp air, which refreshed my mind more effectively than caffeine.



*Sr Grace enjoys a spectacular sunset at Stanbrook Abbey, Yorkshire.*

The Yorkshire landscape captivated me immediately. For the first time, I experienced sleet and began to notice the subtle changes in colour, light, and scent as the seasons turned. Snowdrops, primroses, daffodils, and bluebells heralded the arrival of spring, while newborn lambs, the scent of pine trees, and the occasional sight of a deer created memories I will always treasure.



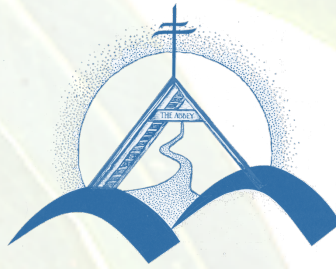
*Curious sheep. Christmas 2025.*

Before my visit, I had often heard about the special connection between Jamberoo and Stanbrook. During my time there, I experienced that connection for myself. It is deep, enduring, and beautiful, spanning generations and linking our shared histories.

The hospitality and openness of the Stanbrook sisters were remarkable. I benefited greatly from studies in Scripture, Patristics, Greek, and monastic practice. Yet my most profound learning came through simple conversations with the sisters over tea or during long walks.

Through the sisters' stories, I discovered that the most valuable lessons do not come from hearing about success, but from learning how others have faced failure, endured difficulties, and found the courage to begin again. This insight has given me hope and practical wisdom for my own journey. After all, the difference between Peter and Judas was that Peter rose again after his fall.

*Sr Grace.*



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