

OUR LADY OF CARDIGAN IN NAZARETH

In 1987, Canon James Cunnane, then parish priest of Cardigan, was asked by the Welsh Bishops to commission a plaque of Our Lady of Cardigan to be placed in the courtyard of the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Countries all over the world place images of their national shrines there in testimony to traditional Catholic devotion to Our Lady. Maggie Humphry, a gifted artist in ceramics, was commissioned to execute a plaque seven feet high and two feet eight inches across (213 x 81cm).

The illustration shows how gloriously colourful it is. Our Lady of Cardigan is surrounded by a mandorla, highlighted in gold. Around it are flowers, including the daffodil (cenhinen Bedr/St. Peter's leek), and others named after Our Lady in Welsh. Above and below are vignettes depicting sacred sites in Wales:



In **Caerwent**, in the county of **Gwent**, a fourth-century bowl with the Chi-Rho sign comes from the time when Rome ruled Britain. It is the oldest material evidence of Catholicism in Wales.



Bardsey Island or **Ynys Enlli**, off Caernarfonshire in north-west Wales, is reputed to be the burial-place of twenty thousand saints.



The **Holy Well of St. Winefride**, at **Holywell** or **Treffynnon** in Clwyd, has been a place of pilgrimage from the seventh century. Pilgrims never ceased to visit it even during the persecution following the Reformation. It is recorded that John Nichol, a crippled young man from near Cardigan, had himself placed by the road in a handcart in 1674. He asked wayfarers to push him towards Holywell, which he reached after three weeks. On being immersed in the well he was instantaneously cured.



Croes Cynfelin, or the **Cynbelin Cross**, at **Margam in Glamorgan**, is dated to the late ninth or early tenth century.



The ruins of **Strata Florida** or **Ystrad Fflur** in **Ceredigion**, mark the site of the greatest Cistercian abbey in Wales. Cistercians are noted for their devotion to the Virgin Mother of God.



The shrine in the **Cathedral of St. David** in **Pembrokeshire** is believed to have held the relics of St. David until they were cast out at the Reformation.



The plaque was added to those in the Basilica courtyard on **8 September, 1988**, and blessed by Canon James Cunnane one week later. A member of the Franciscan Fine Arts Commission told him the plaque of Our Lady of Cardigan was the best! Welsh pilgrims of many denominations have expressed joy upon seeing it.

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