



Our Lady of Glastonbury

Legend says that St Joseph of Arimathea built a wattle Church when he came to these shores. Whether or not this is true, it is an historical fact that Glastonbury was the site of a very ancient Christian settlement. The little wooden church, dedicated to Our Lady at Glastonbury continued for many centuries, until 25th May 1184. Not long after building work on the Abbey and Church were completed, they were burnt to the ground in a great fire. Perhaps the old statue of Our Lady, so long an object of veneration in the wattle Church, survived the flames, but we will never know. Very soon after the fire, on the same holy ground, a new stone Church was built with the same dimensions as the humble Church it replaced. It was consecrated in 1186 and dedicated to Our Lady, and the ancient shrine, with its statue, was set up again.

During the Middle Ages, this shrine in Glastonbury was an outstanding centre of pilgrimage, attracting people from far and wide, and the monastery flourished under the protection of Our Lady

In September 1539 King Henry VIII's commissioners arrived at Glastonbury. They stripped the monastery and shrine of its valuables and decoration, and as the last Abbot, Richard Whiting, resisted the destruction of this ancient place of devotion and love, he was hanged, drawn and quartered as a traitor on 15th November, on Glastonbury Tor.

From this date, it seemed that the memory of the ancient shrine of Our Lady of Glastonbury had gone forever from England.

But nearly 400 years later, in 1925, a small Church was built and in 1939 the foundations of a new Church were laid. It would be dedicated to Our Lady and would be the successor of the ancient Shrine.

In 1955, a statue bearing the ancient title, Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury was blessed by the then Apostolic Delegate, Most Revd Gerald O'Hara in the presence of Bishop Rudderham of Clifton Diocese. In the presence of thousands of faithful Catholics, and in the name of the Holy See, the Shrine of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury was restored.

More honour was given to Our Lady when in 1965, the Apostolic Delegate, Most Revd Iginio Cardinal crowned the statue, a privilege not frequently given and precious guarded.

And so in this place, the 'fount and source of all religion' in our country, Our Lady is again given the praises which are her due, and pilgrims flood to ask her intercession in this Shrine in Glastonbury, the oldest shrine to Our Lady in the UK.