

By ANTHONY GALVIN

THE fourth Abbot of Glenstal Abbey, Murroe, Fr Christopher Dillon, received the Abbatial Blessing from Dr Dermot Clifford, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly, at a special ceremony in the Abbey on Sunday afternoon.

Local parishioners, clergy and dignitaries, including the Nigerian ambassador, packed the abbey for the ceremony, at the end of which Abbot Dillon said he was looking forward to his task of leading the Benedictine Community in Glenstal. He said the community could make a contribution to the Church in Ireland and in Nigeria, where the Benedictines of Glenstal have founded a new abbey.

During the ceremony Abbot Dillon, who comes from Dublin, received his insignia and the symbols of office - mitre, ring and crozier - from Archbishop Clifford, following the gospel.

The new Abbot is the son of the late Professor Myles and Mrs Elizabeth Dillon, Portmarnock, Dublin. His uncle was the late James Dillon, TD, while his great-grandfather, John Blake Dillon, took part in the Ballingarry Rising of 1848.

Abbot Dillon was educated at St Conleth's School, Dublin, and St Gerard's School, Bray, before going to Ampleforth Abbey, York. He also studied in University College, Dublin, Cambridge University and St Anselm's Benedictine University, Rome.

A member of the Glenstal com-



Dom Christopher Dillon, the new Abbot of Glenstal, centre, with Brother Benedict, left, and Brother Raphael at the Abbatial Blessing in the abbey.

New Abbot looks forward to challenge

munity since 1970, he was professed in 1971 and ordained to the priesthood in 1977.

After ordination he was appointed chaplain in Glenstal school, and

taught religion, Latin, Greek and English. More recently he spent two years in Ewu, Nigeria, an Abbey founded by Glenstal monks.

During his homily in Glenstal on

Sunday Archbishop Clifford said: "The influence of the Benedictines and others who adopted the Benedictine Rule has had an enormous influence on the development of

Europe, including its educational, cultural and even economic spheres.

"It is important that we should study the development of Europe from a religious point of view, now

that we have formed closer links with Europe.

"Our people who go to Europe in different capacities should not put their Christian values into intervention. Rather they ought to confront their European counterparts with their religious roots. Ireland has a proud tradition in Europe. We can continue to make a contribution by giving witness to Christian principles."

The Archbishop went on to say that he hoped Glenstal would continue its long tradition in the development of liturgy, hospitality, education, ecumenism and culture.

Among the concelebrants at Sunday's Abbatial Blessing was the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Emmanuel Gerada, Bishop of Killybegs Dr Michael Harty, Archbishop Thomas Morris, now retired from the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, who had ordained the new Abbot in 1977, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Limerick and Killybegs, Dr Edward Darling, and a number of abbots from Benedictine and Cistercian Abbey's in Ireland and abroad.

During the ceremony Archbishop Clifford was assisted by Fr Bernard O'Dea and Fr Dominic Johnson. Among the congregation was the Nigerian ambassador Mrs Wadibia Anywanwu, as well as Abbot Dillon's family and friends, and parishioners of Murroe.

The second lesson was read by the new Abbot's niece Caroline Gore-Grimes, while his nephew, Nicholas Gore-Grimes, carried the Processional Cross.