

KINGSTIDE

Kingstide was a great tradition in the Community. According to the “Red Book”, it dates at least from the time of Reverend Mother Christina Dennett in Liège. It began at teatime on the Sunday after the octave of Epiphany and opened with a poem usually read by the Sub-Prioress.

Kingstide lasted 3 days. It was traditionally a time when plays were performed, fires lit and meals were informal. There was a general relaxing of rules and little freedoms given such as talking, eating elsewhere other than the Refectory and reading. The older members of the Community today remember being allowed to choose a book to read for recreation and to keep it for a week after the end of Kingstide. They also recall that it ended on what was then termed ‘Sticky Friday’ when all the sweets and treats were finished up.

Throughout Kingstide, the Divine Office was strictly adhered to.

An extract from the Community ‘Customs’ archive records is attached (and transcribed below).

Kingstide

If the Epiphany falls on a Sunday, Kingstide begins that evening and the privileges are asked immediately after Compline, the verses to Rev Mother being read by the nun who teaches the plays, if there are plays, otherwise by the Sub-Prioress. There is no Fast, abstinence or discipline in Kingstide week. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday there is no silence even in the passages and leave to eat and drink out of meal time and in any place and we are exempt from all regularity except the Divine Office, Mass and the morning examen. Night prayers and evening examen are at each one’s convenience and the 2nd meditation may be made at any time in the day, provided there is the space of ½ hour between the two meditations. Vespers and Compline are said together – supper is at 6 ½ or 7 as Revd Mother judges most convenient. We may sit up all night but on Wednesday till 12 when the privileges of Kingstide end. Thursday is an ordinary talking day. Friday and Saturday are private recreation days; the sisters serve. We sit at the Office. The King asks leave for buttered toast for tea on the Epiphany – the Queen on Kingstide.