

# Life Together in One Heart

We share with you some of the events which have marked our community life during the past months.

## July 2001

In July, we welcomed religious educators and pastoral ministers from various Christian churches for a day of study and reflection, sponsored by the Foundation for Biblical Research in Charlestown, New Hampshire. The brothers joined the participants for an afternoon of rich discussion, prayer, and dance.

At the end of the month, young people from the center city of Paterson, New Jersey came to the priory, engaged in work projects around the monastery, and joined the brothers for dinner in the refectory. The youth were all part of a collaborative summer program between the Father English Center in Paterson and Southeastern Vermont Community Action. We want to express our thanks, first of all, to the young people themselves, for their contagious spirit of enthusiasm and service. They are beacons of hope and pride. We thank Bob and Carol Vesota of the Father English Center, Gloria Dawson and her staff at SEVCA, and the adults from Paterson who accompanied the young people. In their commitment, they are an inspiration to us all.

## August 2001

Brother Richard and Brother Columba participated in a daylong program at the Foundation for Biblical Research in Charlestown, addressing the pressing question of inter-religious dialogue in the world today.

Religious educators of the Diocese of Burlington and the faculty of Mount Saint Joseph Academy in Rutland came to the priory for days of reflection, study, and participation in the common prayer of the community.

## September 2001

The beginning of September marks the transition from the activities of the summer to a quieter, more reflective season. We traditionally mark this with our annual community retreat. In this time of special ingathering for the brothers, we engage in serious communal reflection on the basic values and practice of our monastic life. It is also an opportunity for rest and re-creation.

It was in the midst of our retreat that the tragic events of September 11th unfolded before the eyes of the world. In a flash, our prayer and reflection assumed a new weight and urgency, and afforded us the opportunity to enter into this unprecedented time *together*.

We have been humbled by the numbers of people from the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut areas, directly touched by the tragedy, who have been coming to the priory for solace. Through ritual, gesture, and shared silence, all our celebrations of Eucharist and Evening Prayer have become a common plea for peace and healing. In the face of death, destruction, and war, we have highlighted the paschal character of the Sunday Eucharist, together with prayer and gesture extending the seeds of nonviolence to the four directions of the earth.

Some readers may remember the days in the 1960s and early '70s when the brothers pressed apple cider every autumn. It became an annual ritual of sorts, linking the community to the agricultural traditions of Vermonters around us. As with many of our "family industries," history comes full circle. This autumn, brothers began the work of pressing apples once again -- though on a much smaller scale, using a press designed and built by the brothers themselves.

At the end of September, Tomie DePaola, well-known author and illustrator of books for children, visited us to celebrate the publication of the new book *The Holy Twins: Benedict and Scholastica* (G.P. Putnam and Sons), with text by the author Kathleen Norris and illustrations by Tomie. (Ms. Norris had planned to visit as well, but was unable to do so at the last moment.) Tomie was once a member of our community and has remained a friend over the years. We congratulate both Tomie and Kathleen for their warm and imaginative rendering of the holy twins, Benedict and Scholastica.

### **October 2001**

In mid-October, Brother Richard and Brother Philip traveled to Massachusetts for the fall regional meeting of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. The monks of Saint Joseph's Abbey in Spencer warmly welcomed our brothers for an overnight visit. The daylong CMSM meeting, held at Assumption College in Worcester, was unique in that it was a joint gathering of representatives of religious and monastic communities of men with all the bishops of New England. Small group discussions provided the format for reflection in three areas: the tragic events of September 11th, issues of mutual concern, and outreach to Catholic young adults.

### **November 2001**

In early November, we began to prepare for the December recording of new liturgical music composed by our brothers. The practices and the recording involve the entire community, with the assistance of the recording and mixing skills of our friend, John Quinn. We express our gratitude to John and his wife, Ann, for their loving support and generosity.

Brother Richard and Brother Peter represented our community at the autumn meeting of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of New England. The monks of Saint Benedict's Abbey, Still River, Massachusetts, hosted the gathering.

### **They Shall Be Comforted**

Among the victims of the terrorist hijackings and attacks on September 11th were David and Lynn Angell, the brother and sister-in-law of Bishop Kenneth Angell of Burlington. To Bishop Angell, to his family, and to all who have lost loved ones in this tragedy, we extend our deepest support, prayer and sympathy: *We believe that all of you are held in the embrace of the God of life, who bears your grief with you.*

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