

Life Together In One Heart

July 2007

The month of July at the Priory seems to revolve around the summer feast of Saint Benedict, and our grateful celebration of the Benedictine monastic tradition which has enriched the church and the world for 1500 years. Ours is a heritage embodied in communities of men and women on every continent, called to a vibrant gospel life of dialogue with the cultures, the poor, and the great religious faiths of our world.

This year, six of our Mexican Benedictine sisters shared in our common life during the first two weeks of July: Sisters Juana Ernestina, Edith, María Antonia, Rosa Evelia, and Guillermina, from Mexico; and Sister Margarita from Guatemala. In each visit, we are gifted by the opportunity to reflect deeply together on the hopes and challenges facing us as Benedictine communities.

During the weekend celebration of the feast of Saint Benedict, we were happy to share our newest recording, *Pilgrimage of the Heart*, a fruit of our life together.



Six of our Benedictine sisters from Mexico visited us in early July.

August 2007

In August, we were honored to welcome men and women from near and far for the celebration of the 20th anniversary of VAMOS, a grassroots network in solidarity with the people of Mexico. Founded in 1987 by Patty and the late Bill Coleman, VAMOS cooperates with poor communities in the Mexican state of Morelos, offering meals, basic literacy classes, medical and dental care, and leadership training.



Patty Coleman, together with her late husband Bill, founded VAMOS, a bridge of solidarity linking the people of Vermont and Mexico.

September 2007

Early September is the time of our community retreat, as the rhythm of our life moves from the activities of the summer into the quieter season of autumn. At the conclusion of our retreat, two of our sisters from Mexico—Sister Rosa (the prioress) and Sister Fidelina (a former prioress)—came to Weston for one week. They had come to the United States to visit two communities of their sisters in Kansas.



We began the season of autumn by welcoming Sister Fidelina and Sister Rosa from Mexico.

October 2007

In mid-October, Brother Richard participated in the annual meeting of the board of directors for the United States secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM). The annual meeting was held at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery in Erie, Pennsylvania, where the US secretariat's offices are located. AIM USA is an organization composed of 168 communities of men and women in the United States and Canada who follow the Rule of Benedict and over 300 English-speaking monasteries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. AIM USA provides spiritual, educational, formation and building assistance to monasteries in developing countries to enable them to be centers of life for others. Monasteries in Africa, Asia and Latin America enrich their brothers and sisters in the United States with global vision, fresh insights into monastic life, cultural diversity and gospel witness of service to the poor.

The monastic charism continues to find expression in new and challenging forms as communities seek to respond faithfully to the signs of the times. The October dedication of Green Mountain Monastery, in Greensboro, Vermont, marked the flowering of a commitment to the healing of the Earth. With roots in the Passionist contemplative tradition, and inspired by the life-work of Fr. Thomas Berry, CP, the monastery's founders—Sister Gail Worcelo and Sister Bernadette Bostwick—express their vision in these words: “Monastery: from the root *monos*, meaning: single-hearted, undivided, unitive, the dwelling of a community of women or men committed to the



Sister Bernadette and Sister Gail lead us in prayer during our visit to Green Mountain Monastery.

transformation of consciousness. Sanctuary: a sacred place, the holiest part of a sacred place; a place of refuge and safety; a wild place.”¹ In late October, Sisters Bernadette and Gail welcomed us for a day of sharing, in celebration of the dedication of their monastery and sanctuary.

November 2007

Since September, we brothers have been reflecting together on the “search for God” in the context of contemporary North American culture. In early November, brothers and sisters from the Eastern Orthodox communities of New Skete Monastery, in Cambridge, New York, came to the Priory joining us for a day of stimulating, mutual sharing on this challenging theme. In a time when the human “search for God” takes a rich variety of forms and paths, we are gifted with a new question for further exploration: What is the specifically *monastic* contribution to this search?



Four of the sisters and brothers from New Skete Monastery enjoy the priory grounds with our brother Elias.

¹ From the Green Mountain Monastery website, www.greenmountainmonastery.org.