



*For those who stand steadfast
revering my Holy Name,
the Sun of Justice will arise
with its healing rays.*

- Malachi 3: 20

ON THE LONG WINTER NIGHTS THE HALF-MOON gracefully shimmers in the sky, and frequently we can see the dark shadow outlining its hidden yet emerging other half. The moon reflects the sun's rising or setting in the distance and awakens the hope that the healing power of a new day is close at hand. The mutual embrace of light and darkness in life draws us forth toward the wholeness of God's unfailing mercy and love.

Small communities of brothers/sisters living together in hope; standing steadfast in justice through their love and service to one another, especially on behalf of the poor of this world, breathing God's spirit of peace and forgiveness upon the earth are the emerging signs of the unimaginable reign of God in our midst. Rainer Maria Rilke writes that "the undefended heart" and "the child [in us] of an infinite union absorbed in play" radiate to the world the mercy and reconciliation for which we all long. (Sonnet to Orpheus II, 9)

It is the season of Advent and Christmas. As the year of our 60th anniversary celebration draws to a close, we remain humbly grateful for the light that illumines and blesses our monastic journey. The reflections in this bulletin share through story, poetry and song the gift of persons and experiences that bless us with new hope.

We remember our brother Philip this Christmas Eve, the fifth anniversary of his new life in God, and we offer a personal reflection from his writing. We also remember our long-time friend and recording-engineer, John Quinn, who passed to new life this past September.

For us it is a joy to see the House of Sabbath guest facility transition into a safe and hospitable refuge for our neighbors struggling with the dehumanizing effects of homelessness. This evolving journey is recounted by two friends whose dream became incarnate in founding Neighborhood Connections: Delores Barbeau, a physician, and Gloria Dawson, a social worker/program coordinator.

Also we relate how on our April trip to Mexico our Benedictine Sisters marked our 60th anniversary with a surprising and delightful

celebration; and about the visit we made together to friends at the indigenous village of Amatlán, outside of Cuernavaca.

We are grateful for God's unfolding presence enfleshed in our community life and prayer and in so many of you, our friends. This is Christmas! It is incarnation! Amidst the silence and darkness of night, Oh so holy, may our listening together spur our imaginations and sharpen our senses to respond with courage to say "yes/let it be" to the Spirit's overshadowing embrace. God has become one with us, embodying our humanity, gracing our earth through the gift of incarnation. With Jesus we earnestly pray: "...May your name be held holy, may your kingdom come..." And the Sun rises with its healing rays. ■

A Clear Evening

- brother Augustine

On a clear evening, in early winter,
The warm sun, with its brilliant
Reflection upon the first snow,
Has set, — and left
An orange-red glow
Above the stilled trees,
As if to speak of what has passed,
And more, — to hold our hearts
In waiting for what is still to come.