

# Life Together in One Heart



## **November 2011**

Construction of the main monastery buildings was largely completed more than forty years ago. This year vinyl siding, replacement of windows, and much needed roof repairs have given a new and fresh look to our monastic home.

### ***November 8:***

The month of November began with a visit from a group of students studying comparative religions in Hanover High School. The young people, accompanied by their innovative teacher, Margaret Caldwell, were enthusiastic and well prepared. They had challenging questions for the brothers on ancient and contemporary monastic life. Brothers look forward to this annual event that keeps the Community at the Priory in touch with the spirit and interests of young people today.

## **December**

In early December the Weston Community harvested pigs, sheep, lambs and rabbits to fill freezers for a year's supply of protein for the Priory table. An ample supply of eggs from the flock of chickens and stores of squash, pumpkin, potatoes and root crops from the garden contributed significantly to the healthy Community diet during the winter months.

With the help of friends and the benefit of our new wood processor an abundant supply of fire wood was stored for the winter that proved exceptionally mild. There were fewer snow storms than usual but the demanding work of snow removal was relieved by the much appreciated assistance of friends.

Christmas celebration began with First Vespers on Christmas Eve. The Community celebrated Christmas Vigil Eucharist at 5:00 A.M. on Christmas day. It was followed by a pot-luck breakfast in the monastery dining room. Another Eucharist was celebrated at 11:30 A.M. Subsequent Community reflections have considered the adoption of a more simple and opportune Christmas schedule for the coming year.



l to r, Jesse, David and James, in the Monastic Experience.



Sharing music and dance in the village of Xoxotla, Morelos, Mexico.

## **January 2012**

### ***January 2 to 8:***

The year began with the semi-annual Monastic Experience. We welcomed three young men, Jesse Bodin from Chittenden, Vermont, James Farrell from Brookline, Massachusetts, and David Kispert from Hanover, New Hampshire. The three participants joined the brothers in prayer, work, meals, discussions and recreation. Their eager involvement helped to create a mutually enjoyable and profitable time together.

### ***January 15 to February 19:***

The winter retreat included the annual Community visit to our Mexican Benedictine Sisters. With familial hospitality the Sisters hosted the brothers at the *Casa Central* (Motherhouse) in Mexico City and the Guadalupe Retreat Center in Cuernavaca. A highlight this year was the visit to an indigenous village where the people are reclaiming their culture with dance and music in contemporary forms. As in previous years, the brothers enjoyed a moving visit



1 to 4, Sisters María de Jesús, Belén, Clementina and Isabel, at the Sisters' retirement community in Mexico City.



1 to 3, Sisters Fidelina, Miguelina and Rosa, during Holy Week.



1 to 3, Trinitarian Sisters María Isabel, María (the prioress), & María José.

with the elderly and retired Sisters at their home in Mexico City.

## February

### *February 10 to 14:*

After leaving Mexico, Brother Richard attended the Benedictine Abbots' and Priors' Workshop in St. Joseph's Abbey in St. Benedict, Louisiana. The speaker this year was Archbishop Jonah Patthausen of Washington. He is Orthodox Metropolitan of All America and Canada. His topic was Orthodox Spirituality and Theology.

## March

### *March 16 to 18:*

A group of students from Merrimack College, accompanied by our long-time friends, Peggy and Padraic O'Hare, came to the Priory for their annual retreat and reflection.

### *March 30 to April 1:*

Jason Moore, chaplain at St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vermont, introduced a group of interested college students to contemporary monastic life with a weekend retreat at the Priory.

## April

Early spring witnessed the birth of ten new lambs, many bunny rabbits, and the arrival of two piglets. It also enabled the preparation of soil in the garden for planting as soon as the danger of frost is past.

### *April 1 to 8:*

Holy Week and Easter were unusual with the absence of snow and with unseasonably mild temperatures. Numerous friends and visitors joined the brothers for the Holy Day celebrations rich in symbolism and new music. An unprecedented gift for the Priory Community this year was the presence of three of our Mexican Benedictine Sisters: Sisters Miguelina, Fidelina and Rosa.

### *April 23 to May 4:*

In response to the brothers' invitation, Sisters María, María José, and María Isabel, nuns of the Trinitarian Community of Suesa (Cantabria, Spain), came for a first visit to the Priory. Their questions sparked a lively exchange and deepening friendship between the two communities. They shared with the brothers their vibrant spirit, penetrating insights and numerous questions related to monastic life and the contemporary church, especially in Spain. They spontaneously entered into prayer, work, and dialog with the brothers. At a Saturday afternoon gathering they shared their history and values with friends in the Priory Visitors' Center.

As spring draws to a close, we look forward to the celebration of Pentecost and the ever welcome presence of friends and guests during the summer season. ■