

Life Together in One Heart



December 31, 2012 to January 6, 2013

– Monastic Experience

Twice each year the Priory Community offers the opportunity for young men to experience the Benedictine monastic life with us for a week. Participants join with the brothers in the daily experience of prayer, work, and friendship as lived by the monks of Weston Priory. It is an opportunity to have a first-hand experience of monastic life as lived today.

Participants are welcomed into the monastic choir for some times of prayer, they join the brothers in the refectory for meals, have opportunity to take part in outdoor work and crafts, and engage in conversation concerning monastic life and spirituality with the brothers. The exchange also offers the brothers an opportunity to remain in touch with the challenges and experience of young men in contemporary society.



l to r, Matthew and Patrick

Patrick Murphy from Southern California and Matthew Tarlecki from Connecticut came for the monastic experience at Weston from December 31, 2012 to January 6, 2013. They participated in the life of the Community with enthusiasm and grew in friendship with the brothers during their stay. Their time with the Community was a joyful mutual gift.

January 13 to February 17 – Community Retreat

The Community enjoyed a quiet Vermont winter retreat at home from January 13 to February 17. The rich blend of quiet time for personal prayer and reflection along with Community prayer, value discussions and relaxed time together, refreshed and renewed the brothers spiritually and physically. Regular chores and a little informal creative work offered a balance during this special time for the Community. The constant and faithful assistance of friends helped to make such an enriching time possible for the brothers.

During these days, February 1 to 5, brother Richard represented the community at the annual Abbots and Priors Workshop held this year at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, California. Presentations at the workshop were offered by Brother Simeon Leiva-Merikakis, a monk of

St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts. The theme: "Christian Joy in Monastic Life and its Refusal in Modern Culture" was based on the Parable of the Marriage Feast from the Gospel of Matthew 22: 1-14.

March 1 to 24 – Group visits

In the month of March, three different college groups brought a lively and youthful presence to the Priory. Members of the Middlebury College Newman Club were with us March 1 to 3; a group from Merrimack College came from March 14 to March 17; and we welcomed several students from St. Michael's College during Palm Sunday weekend, March 22 to 24.

Each group brought their unique spirit and hopes. It is always inspiring for the brothers to be able to share prayer and our simple way of life with these groups of searching, young people and their devoted leaders.

March 24 to 30 – Holy Week

Prayer services during Holy Week at the Priory were especially enriched this year with new music and more simplified celebrations.

The development of simple mantra-like music engaged brothers and visitors in choral responses focused on the scriptural texts. Readings were simplified and more space given to musical refrains. The active participation of all enhanced the beauty of the celebrations.

Beginning the first morning prayer at 6:00 A.M. throughout the week and beyond resulted in more lively participation and attendance. Adjustments in the schedule enabled a relaxed and reflective spirit for brothers and guests.

April – Sugaring

Sugaring season was later than usual at the Priory. Trees were tapped and buckets were hung before the end of February. But the snow was still deep in the woods in the first week of April. With the generous help of friends, all turned out well. After a successful harvest the operation was all cleaned up in time for the Community to embark on a late visit to our sisters in Mexico on April 17.

April 17 to 30 – A Visit to Mexico

A highlight of celebrations for the 60th anniversary of the founding of Weston Priory was a Community trip to Mexico, April 17-30. After a very joyful celebration of Eucharist together, our Mexican Benedictine Sisters hosted the brothers with a festive meal accompanied by live marimba music at their Casa Central (Sisters' Motherhouse) in Mexico City. The event concluded with the surprise appearance of an extraordinary Mariachi Band that performs at the famous Palacio de Bellas Artes. Brothers and sisters joined in a joyous afternoon of dancing and music and viewed a DVD highlighting Priory events over the past two years. The gathering also marked nearly forty years of friendship between the Weston brothers and Mexican sisters.

As always, the brothers enjoyed a visit with the elderly and infirm

sisters at their residence, the old Novitiate. Their hopeful and joyful spirit is ever an inspiration to the Weston brothers. Before leaving Mexico City for Cuernavaca, Sister Chayo expertly drove the brothers through the city to a happy and celebrative gathering with brother Daniel's family. His mother, Lupita; his brothers, Alberto and José Arturo and their spouses; uncles, aunt, cousins, nieces and nephews, all offer a warm familial spirit of welcome.

In Cuernavaca, the local community of sisters shared with brothers their experience of offering hospitality at the Guadalupe Center. With fewer groups travelling to Mexico in the past few years, sisters have reached out to an increasing number of different Mexican guests. Six women from the Cooperative Ruben Jaramillo who embroider lovely T-shirts that will be for sale in our Gallery Shop on St. Benedict's weekend, came to share their experiences with the brothers at the Center.

While in Cuernavaca, the brothers were gifted with a day trip to Amatlán, a Náhuatl village in the state of Morelos. In the village they enjoyed warm Mexican hospitality at the home of the family of Lucio Perez and his wife. Amatlán is an important archeological site of the indigenous people. Lucio and his friend Nacho are gifted leaders in the village. The Weston brothers enjoyed the warm hospitality as well as the rich information shared by Lucio and a village elder, Doña Julia, as she sat in her little yard sorting seed for planting the next crop of corn.

Another fruitful visit to Mexico was concluded with a gathering with the junior sisters of the Congregation and a meeting with Sister Miguelina, the prioress, and the members of the leadership council. The enthusiastic spirit of the young sisters and the wise and sisterly guidance of the sisters in leadership is always a strengthening sign of hope and love as the brothers return home to Weston Priory. ■