

# Remembering the Future

- *brother Elias*

DURING VERMONT'S WARMER WEATHER MONTHS OF 1964, from June through October, the community welcomed nine postulants to explore their discernment as monks of Weston Priory. From this varied group brother Placid and I, brother Elias, would eventually be received as novices. Two years later on October 5th, 1966, we made our first monastic profession.

It has been and continues to be a wonderful and happy life—a creative adventure. We often comment to one another that, “We have chosen well!”

There is much for which to be grateful: a life of chanted and sung prayer punctuating each day; time for reflective/quiet prayer and reading; learning the wisdom of the Rule of St. Benedict and our monastic heritage; acquiring a love for scripture and our Jewish roots; welcoming guests and visitors; down-to-earth work in the fields and forests, in nature and with the animals; growing as persons and developing stable relationships with brothers while the future lays wide open before us. Life in community is not without its usual difficulties and missteps, but we continue to engage it with much gratitude.

In considering all that has shaped and informed our many years of honest, monastic living, we are reminded of St. Benedict's wise insight in Chapter 73, the final chapter of his *Rule for Monks*: “Observe this little rule that we have written for beginners.” Yes, monks are beginners ‘per se’. We are encouraged daily to look ahead to the new challenges that await us: moving beyond our present reality and stepping into a new space where all that is not yet realized appears just ahead, faintly, on a welcoming horizon. There are challenges of growth before us that have yet to touch our hearts in previously unimagined ways.

These moments have the power to place us at a cross-over point where we are invited to become “more”, a place/point steeped in the unknown and unfamiliar where we can discover the gift we are meant to be. It seems easier to stay where everything is familiar, where we know how things work, a comfort zone where the energy expenditure seems reasonable. However this is not our calling.

We are invited to follow the One who cries out to the disciple community: “I am the Way. I am Truth. I am Life.” We are invited to follow but we must not expect the journey to continue as it was or as we imagine it might be. The way forward changes according to our openness of heart, our ability to listen in new ways, our faithfulness, our honoring our questions, and our trusting those who have our best interests at heart. The way forward leads us into a future bathed in mystery. God's creative Spirit persistently reminds us to remember the future. ■

