

# CHRONICLE

## December 2016 to April 2017

**I**N CHAPTER 66 OF HIS RULE FOR MONKS, SAINT BENEDICT PROVIDES FOR THE WELCOME THAT ALL WHO come to the monastery are to receive. The brother who is asked to tend the door of the monastery is given the duty to welcome all who come “as Christ” and to ask for their blessing with these words: “Your blessing, please”. St. Benedict recognizes that all who present themselves at the door of the monastery bring with them a blessing for the monastic community. We brothers have been richly blessed over the past several months by those we have encountered at the door of our home and at the door of our hearts.

### January / February

From January 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Abraham Goren of Brooklyn, New York, and Jack Workman of East Dorset, Vermont, to the seven-day Monastic Living Experience that we host twice yearly.

Most of our community were able to travel to Mexico from January 18<sup>th</sup> to February 1<sup>st</sup> to be with our Benedictine Sisters. We find it important to continually nurture and refresh the spirit-filled friendship that has joined our two communities over the past four decades by spending quality time and shared, focused energies with each other. Being in one another’s presence when we can share the joys, hopes, struggles, and challenges of our lives puts flesh on the love and care we have for each other. The many rich experiences that we shared together in that short period of time remind us of our connection with the larger world of the Americas and our responsibility to be in dialogue with those who live beyond our immediate borders. Faith in action, moral responsibility, and love without condition: these do not know artificial political boundary lines that are drawn on the surface of our planet.

Brother Richard represented our community at the annual gathering of Benedictine men’s leadership persons in the United States. This year’s three day meeting was hosted by Prince of Peace Abbey in Woodside, California, from February 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>. The main presenter for the twice-daily plenary sessions was Thomas Gaunt, SJ, of CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate). Additional presenters were Daniel Ward, OSB, and Elias Lorenzo, OSB, who presented case studies on monastic life.

We had the privilege of welcoming Sister Teresa Forcades from the Benedictine women’s monastery of Saint Benet in Montserrat, Catalonia (Spain) who came to spend a month with us beginning on February 27<sup>th</sup>. The four weeks were a combination of personal retreat and time spent in rich community exchange and dialogue. Besides being a vibrant member of her monastic community, Sister Teresa is also a medical doctor and a theologian, as well as being one of the primary catalysts for Catalonian independence. She is a social activist focusing on public health and has gained an international reputation for her criticism of the pharmaceutical industry. Having completed a two year medical residency at the University of Buffalo Medical School she then went on to Harvard University to receive a Master of Divinity degree.



l to r, Jack Workman and Abraham Goren



Sister Teresa Forcades



Sister Teresa with Weston Priory brothers

## March

Two good friends of our community, Kate Stevens of Northampton, Massachusetts, and Jean Carr of Ludlow, Vermont, gave a very personal and engaging presentation to a large number of friends and neighbors gathered in our Visitors' Center on March 4<sup>th</sup>. They were both part of a faith-centered delegation from the United States that went to Palestine in the autumn of 2016 in search of a greater understanding about the current situation of its people. *Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace* was a moving presentation that included photos, poetry, first-hand witness of non-violent demonstrations and passive resistance, as well as personal accounts of Palestinian women, men and children living under occupation on their ancestral lands.

## April

With much joy we celebrated the Oblation of twelve new oblates of our community on April 25<sup>th</sup>. This is the second group of interested friends and neighbors who want to enter into a deeper understanding of the Rule of St. Benedict, and the rich spirituality that flows from it, through study, group reflection, and prayer. A full year of preparation culminated in a mid-afternoon prayer and celebration of commitment. At the same time the six oblates who made their oblation last year renewed their promises for the coming year. A reception followed with cake and apple cider in our Visitors' Center, celebrating with all who came to share in the happiness of the day.

Brother Placid and brother Richard represented our monastery at the April 26<sup>th</sup> regional gathering of Benedictine and Cistercian nuns and monks from New England. The monks of St. Joseph's Abbey in Spencer, Massachusetts, hosted the one day event which was marked by news updates from each community and focused discussions in the areas of monastic integration and future growth. These twice-yearly gatherings are an opportunity to touch base with other communities and to renew our common bonds as sisters and brothers in the larger Benedictine family. ■



The first group of Benedictine oblates with the brothers



Twelve new Benedictine oblates of Weston Priory