

CHRONICLE:

December 2017 to May 2018

December - Our brothers Placid, Michael, and Daniel were ordained transitional deacons by Bishop Paul Bootkoski, bishop-emeritus of Metuchen, New Jersey, and longtime friend of our community.

Our trustworthy 1976 Timberjack log skidder, which also did double-duty as a snowplow, after forty years of rugged and near constant use, was traded in for a large size Kubota tractor. Brother Augustine, who has ably managed our forest land over many years, finally signaled that a time for change had come. In recent years our focus in forest work has shifted from logging our wood lots to mainly providing firewood for supplemental heating of our buildings.



Bishop Paul Bootkoski.



Our new tractor.



l to r, Adán, Malenu, Ernesto, of the Environmental Group.



Chinampa at Xochimilco lake area of Mexico City.

January - The community traveled to Mexico to be with our Benedictine Sisters both in Mexico City and Cuernavaca.

During our two weeks together, among a wealth of intercommunity experiences we were enriched by two learning opportunities. The first was a visit to Xochimilco, the environmentally rich and beautiful lake area in the southeastern part of Mexico City, a remnant of the vast lake and causeway system that covered the valley of Mexico during the time of the Aztec empire. Now a group of dedicated and environmentally-conscious women and men are developing new ways to use the remaining **chinampas** (floating gardens) to grow food for the burgeoning populace of the city.

The second experience was a day's visit to the large town of Jojutla an hour and a half journey

from Cuernavaca. Our Benedictine Sisters brought us to this badly damaged town that took the brunt of the recent September earthquake. Over 300 homes, a number of schools, the hospital, and many commercial buildings were either flattened or left unusable. This is the town



Jojutla - La Merced Sister speaking to the brothers and our Mexican Sisters.



Jojutla - destroyed buildings.

where donations for earthquake relief, collected here at the priory, were distributed to those in need through the hands of the sisters of the La Merced community whose educational ministry and school was mostly destroyed.

February - Brother Richard represented our community at the annual meeting of Benedictine abbots and priors which was held at Saint Joseph's Abbey in Covington, Louisiana. The focus for this year's gathering addressed the topic of Monastic Culture and Vocations. The presenter was Brother John Mark Falkenhain of Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana.



Palm Sunday in our Stone Chapel.

The chapel was comfortably full and there were a number of positive reflections about the strong sense of intimacy that marked our prayerful gatherings in the Stone Chapel.

April - The semi-annual meeting of representatives of the Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries of New England was hosted by the nuns of Regina Laudis Abbey in Bethlehem, Connecticut, who welcomed all with their gracious and warm hospitality. Seven communities were represented and brother Richard and brother Placid represented us at the day-long meeting.

March - The weather during Holy Week this year was very cold with lots of snow. Three snowstorms, each bringing 18 plus inches of snow, covered southern Vermont with heavy blankets of wet snow that stayed in place because of the frigid air. Unable to get to our Barn Chapel easily and safely we focused all the celebrations from Palm Sunday to Easter in the Stone Chapel. The



l to r, Geshe Thupten Tendar and Geshe Lobsang Nima.

On the weekend of April 28-29 we were blessed by the delightful visit of two Tibetan Buddhists who joined us in prayer and conversation in our common monastic search: Geshe Lobsang Nima, a monk of Drepung Loseling monastery in India, and Thupten Tendar, also a Buddhist Geshe and a graduate assistant professor in the Non-violence and Peace Studies Center at the University of Rhode Island.



Weston brothers conversing with Mount Saviour brothers.

May - Brothers Augustine, Mark, Daniel and Elias made a visit to our monastic "cousins" at Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira, New York, for three days in mid-May. The founders of both of our Benedictine monasteries arrived together in the United States in 1938 as refugees from Hitler's threatening Nazi menace. After a number of years, Mount Saviour was founded in 1950 and Weston Priory in 1953.

Over 60 years our two monasteries have fostered our fraternal bonds with encouragement, support, and occasional inter-community exchange. ■