

# July 2020



In these days as we celebrate the feast of Saint Benedict, we would like to say simply and clearly that, "Black Lives Matter." Benedict always encouraged the monks to speak simply and clearly and as so many persons speak out and march, we would like to be a part of the movement. Having our guest houses closed does not mean that we have shut ourselves into a private, little world. The opposite may even be truer.

It may come as a surprise to many that in June we had two weeks of "Retreat." We change our daily schedule a bit. For instance, our first prayer is at 8:00 am rather than at 6:00 am. It's not that we sleep more, though sometimes we do, but that the shaking of the routine allows for new creativity and new ways of listening that can be surprising. But the most important dimension of the retreat is having time to reflect together and share on heart-felt, emotional levels how we are presently experiencing our life. Two main topics during the days included our response to the pandemic, and the other was Racism.

To be able to share on a feeling level keeps the community strong and healthy, and we encourage everyone to find ways to express what lies inside us. Psychological health is crucial during this time.

In our Refectory we continue to have reading at lunch and supper. Two very good books that we have recently read include: "Martin Buber - A life of faith and dissent" by Paul-Mendes Flohr. Martin Buber is the author of the book, "I and Thou" and to learn more about his life is very illuminating. Also, "Horizon" by Barry Lopez, the author of the famous book, "Arctic Dreams." This book is a way to travel around the world, including the Galapagos Islands and Africa, in the safety of a comfortable chair. Since we cannot physically travel this is a way to broaden our imagination. Before the pandemic we read Jim Wallis' book, "America's Original Sin - Racism, White Privilege and the Bridge to a New America" and we cannot recommend it highly enough.

We hold you in our prayer and remember you: "Our absent brothers and sisters."