

A Beginning, Yet a Fullness

Brother Alvaro

You clothe us in a mantle of joy,
enfolding our lives with compassionate love.

PSALM 30 [1](#)

Simple vows. Yes, but when I think about the experience of that day, the day of my first monastic profession at Weston, there are other words in addition to simplicity that come to my mind: fullness, beauty, and joy.

The beauty of the day: beginning with a cold early morning, the air was clean and crisp, no clouds in a deep blue sky. *The beauty of the liturgy:* beautiful in its simplicity, the simplicity of speaking and praying what is essential, meaningful, and necessary. It was necessary to promise publicly that we-the community and I-were ready to commit ourselves, for three years, to live together in the spirit of the Gospel, with the tools of Benedictine life, for the building of the Reign of God.

This first monastic profession is not an ending; it has much more to do with beginnings, and still there was fullness in that moment. Personally, it has been a long journey, a long search, and the opportunity of my profession of vows brings to me a dimension of synthesis. It is the time for a choice, for choosing a specific *way* of life, and a specific *community* of life. All that I have lived until this moment, every person I have met and loved, have a place in helping to make this choice possible. A sign of this was the presence among us of some of my Brazilian family for these days.

This brings me to another word: *joy!* To see “my people” from Brazil, together with my brothers from North America, and with friends from Central America: in the happiness of this meeting was an unpretentious yet strong example of the joy that can happen when we open our borders to encounter the other.

Yes, simplicity, beauty, fullness and joy. Those are good words to convey what fills my heart following this experience of the Profession. It is a beginning, and we know that challenges are also on the way. But I am happy to be engaged with these brothers in the monastic life-a life that we hope to live, not only for ourselves, but also in service for others; for reconciliation and peace; for the deep human vocation to encounter others, to encounter God. ✝

1. Refrain of Psalm 30, “Mantle of Joy” © 1998 The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc. This psalm was sung during the profession liturgy as brother Alvaro was clothed with the back scapular.