



Life Together In One Heart

EACH SEASON OF THE YEAR BRINGS ITS OWN PARTICULAR AWARENESS OF blessings received, endeavors completed, growth nurtured, difficulties encountered, and grace surprising us in varied and unpredictable moments.

In these difficult times for people of our country and of our world, where fear has lately run amok, anxiety and cynicism have often been the common daily fare, the reality of war confronts us daily, and suffering seems ever present, it is comforting and strengthening to discover that HOPE is on the rise in so many hearts and on so many faces.

The fourteenth century mystic, Julian of Norwich, who lived as a hermit in Norwich, next to the church of the Benedictine community of Carrow, England, wrote of her meditation on God's eternal and all-embracing love.

With the desperation and loss of hope accompanying the Black Death as it swept through England, Julian penned these memorable words: "that all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well."

For us too, walking in faith and aware of the seeds of HOPE that have been planted in each of our hearts, we can trust in God's love and know that "all shall be well".

JUNE

Towards the latter part of June we welcomed two men as participants in our Summer Monastic Living Experience: Robert Ross of Hauppauge, NY, and



Participants in the Monastic Living Experience: (front, 2nd and 3rd from left) Alex Calhoun and Bob Ross, with several brothers.

Alex Calhoun of Manchester, NH. They brought an enthusiasm and a vibrant sense of exploration and personal search to discussions with the brothers and to participation in our community prayer and work.

Later in July, Derek Barchenger of Stillwater, Oklahoma, and then in mid-August, Agustín Borrazas from Uruguay, South America, came for similar week-long monastic experiences.

We found ourselves blessed by the presence of these young men among us. We wish them well in their lives ahead.

On June 28th we inaugurated a three and a half month exhibit of photographs and eye-witness testimony from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. The exhibit made palpable the unspeakable horror and devastating effects that the use of nuclear weapons has on people and their environment.

The hundred or more persons who gathered with us on that day were deeply moved by the personal testimony of Ms. Natsumi Nagao of Hiroshima who is a survivor of the bombing. She related the shock, horror and pain that she personally experienced as a fourteen year-old school girl on the day of the bombing. With emotion that seemed to come from the depths of her soul, she recounted the indelible memories of that day, the years of healing that followed for her, and the many corrective surgeries needed. She concluded by saying: "The abolition of nuclear weapons is the wish of the children of the



Ms. Natsumi Nagao speaking at the opening of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Exhibit.

world who hope for peace. I am continuing activities to recount my A-bomb experiences, praying that such a day will come soon."

JULY

For two weeks, including the annual celebration of the Summer Feast of St. Benedict, we were happy to have four of our Mexican Benedictine Sisters with us: Sister Adelina from the city of León; Sisters María and Carmen



Our Mexican Benedictine Sisters: Sister Aurora, Sister María, Sister Carmen, Sister Adelina; with brother Daniel (left) and brother Alvaro (right).

from Nayarit, and Sister Aurora from Emporia, Kansas. These annual inter-community exchanges are rich experiences of mutual support and encouragement.

On the Saturday of St. Benedict's weekend, the Sisters had the opportunity to meet and share with a large group of persons from both far and near who have come to know and love them over many years.

With the rising cost of fuel oil for heating, several brothers discussed alternative ways to help heat some of our buildings this winter. They brought to the community the suggestion to purchase and install four supplemental wood-burning stoves for different areas of the monastery. One of these is a large wood-burning boiler that we had installed to supplement the hot water heating system of the monastery. The other three are smaller wood burning stoves (one using wood pellets) to heat two outbuildings and the section of the monastery that was the original farmhouse. The wonderful smell of wood smoke coming from the chimneys is an added bonus to the reduction in our fuel-oil bills. There is also the benefit of using the available firewood bountiful on our land.



Receiving our new wood-burning boiler: (left to right) brother Augustine, brother John and brother Placid.

AUGUST

Each year our twenty or so sheep produce a large quantity of wool during the annual spring shearing. This year we combined two years' harvest of their wool and had it processed at The Spinnery, a cooperative in Putney, Vermont. The wool was washed and processed without the use of any chemical agents. It is available for sale in our Gallery Shop: 4½ oz. skeins in its natural fiber colors of gray and tan.



We have been very pleased to see the results of another conservation measure that we implemented in the early summer. We replaced both our twenty year-old top-loading clothes washers for new eco-friendly front-loading washers that are German engineered while manufactured in the United States. These clothes washers use significantly less water, less hot water, less laundry detergent, and less electricity. We find the clothes are dryer at the end of the washing cycle. Amazingly, our use of liquid laundry detergent (Seventh Generation 2X Ultra) has changed from one 100 oz. container every 2 weeks to one 100 oz. container every 2½ months—a substantial financial savings to the community.

We continue to explore ways to be responsible and to respect our planet and environment.

Towards the middle of the month we were happy to welcome Sister Lupita Barajas, a Benedictine Sister of Perpetual Adoration from Tucson, Arizona. She had just completed her service as prioress of the Tucson community and was enjoying a mini-sabbatical, part of which she chose to share with us here at Weston.

It was a joy to renew our friendship and to have Sister Lupita come to know our monastic life in Weston. We had been together with her on several occasions for Benedictine meetings and exchanges in Mexico; but, until now, she had not had the opportunity to come to see and know us at home in Weston. We are grateful for her visit with us: she delighted us with her vibrant and enthusiastic personality; she inspired us with her generosity to help us in the



Sister Lupita meeting with some brothers.

chores of the monastery and the care of the summer garden; and she strengthened us by her faithful presence in our common prayer.

SEPTEMBER

During our September Extended Retreat/Quiet Time we had the opportunity to welcome Bishop Salvatore Matano to visit our monastery and our community. Bishop Matano, along with Father John McDermott, had been making a pastoral visit to the parish in the neighboring town of Ludlow, Vermont. They shared our Midday Prayer in the chapel, had some time for exchange with the brothers, and then went on a tour of the monastery buildings, including a visit with our farm animals.

Bishop Matano is bishop for the entire state of Vermont. We offer him the continued support of our prayer for his ministry.

OCTOBER

On Saturday, October 4th, we celebrated the eagerly anticipated solemn monastic profession of our Brother Alvaro José Mota de Oliveira.

Brother Alvaro is a native of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and our community met him when we were in Brazil. In 2001, as part of our community's 50th anniversary celebration, we made a pilgrimage/trip to experience the life, prayer, and ministry of a Benedictine monastic community in Goiás, Brazil.



Brother Alvaro (center) and the brothers during the dialogue of the celebration of solemn monastic profession.



Brother Alvaro signing the chart of solemn monastic profession.

Brother Alvaro was a long-term guest at this monastery. He became interested in visiting us and knowing our monastic life at Weston. In June 2002, he asked to join our community, and eventually made his first monastic profession in October 2005. This monastic profession was solemnized in a life-long monastic commitment this past October.

More than 450 persons came to share in our joy and to enhance the celebration with us. Among the special guests who came from Brazil were some



Brother Alvaro (front, 3rd from left) and several brothers with (front, left to right) his friend Manuel, his sister Marilia, his sister Lina and her husband Anderson, and his brother Aluisio.



(left to right) Our Mexican Benedictine Sisters: Sister Fidelina, Sister Miguelina, Sister Reyna, and the prioress, Sister Rosa.

members of Brother Alvaro's family: two of his sisters, Marilia and Lina; a brother, Aluisio; his brother-in-law, Anderson; and a best friend from the years of his youth, Manuel.

Four of our Mexican Benedictine Sisters came bringing love and greetings from all our sisters in Mexico: Sister Rosa, the prioress; Sister Fidelina, a former prioress; Sister Reyna and Sister Miguelina, members of the leadership council from the sisters' congregation.

We were also honored by the presence of Lupita Olavarrieta, the mother of our brother Daniel, who came from Mexico for the celebration.

It is difficult to put into words the emotion, gratitude, and joy that was so palpable during the monastic profession and the celebration of the Eucharist on this day. We know for certain that what we were about was larger than all of us gathered there. The generous and gifting grace of God brought us to that moment, filled us with gratitude and wonder, and renewed our energy to embrace the future as this monastic community of Weston Priory.

Our friends, Sean and Tom Dougherty, have filmed a video and taken some photos of the celebration that can be viewed from the [What's New](http://www.westonpriory.org/whatsnew.html) page at our website: www.westonpriory.org/whatsnew.html.



A very joyful celebration of our solemn monastic profession.

NOVEMBER

The autumn season has been simply magnificent this year! This is an exceptional year that will be long remembered for its many gloriously sunny days, measured but adequate rainfall, exceptionally vibrant-colored leaves, and pleasant warm temperatures. It is no wonder that this is the traditional time of the year to give thanks in many and special ways for life, for friends, for our home, for the land, for the animals, for all of creation, and for the presence of God among us.

DECEMBER

In the 2nd week of December we have the joy of welcoming Abbot Jerome Kodell of Subiaco Abbey in Arkansas and Father Martin Boler of Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira, New York.

Every four years we welcome wise and enabling brother monks from other monasteries of the Benedictine family to walk with us in our monastic life and observance for several days and to offer us their insights, reflections, and challenges. We have known the love and affection of these two brother monks over a number of years, and we are grateful for their taking time to accompany us on our monastic journey. ☒



The brothers of Weston Priory, October 4, 2008.