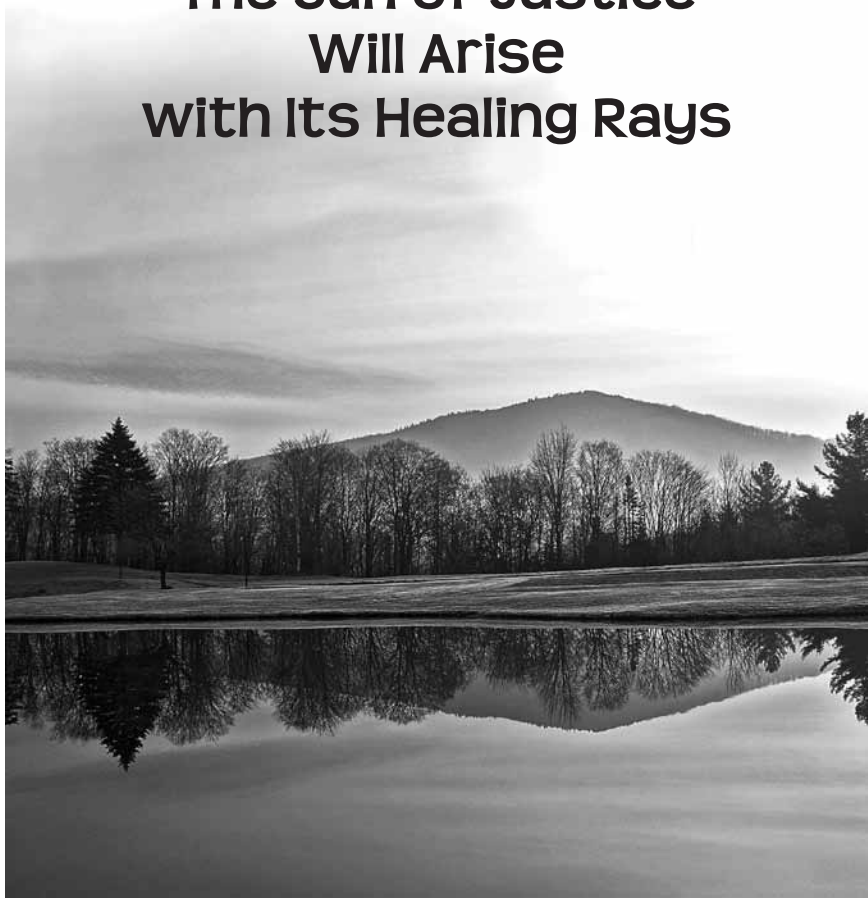


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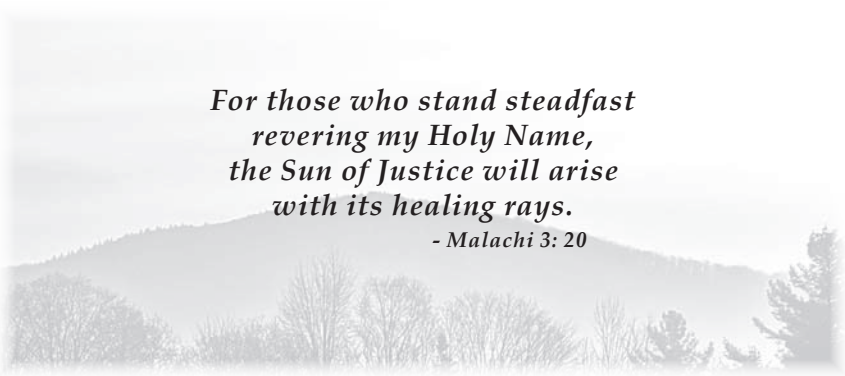
FALL/WINTER 2013



**The Sun of Justice
Will Arise
with Its Healing Rays**



BULLETIN



*For those who stand steadfast
revering my Holy Name,
the Sun of Justice will arise
with its healing rays.*

- Malachi 3: 20

ON THE LONG WINTER NIGHTS THE HALF-MOON gracefully shimmers in the sky, and frequently we can see the dark shadow outlining its hidden yet emerging other half. The moon reflects the sun's rising or setting in the distance and awakens the hope that the healing power of a new day is close at hand. The mutual embrace of light and darkness in life draws us forth toward the wholeness of God's unfailing mercy and love.

Small communities of brothers/sisters living together in hope; standing steadfast in justice through their love and service to one another, especially on behalf of the poor of this world, breathing God's spirit of peace and forgiveness upon the earth are the emerging signs of the unimaginable reign of God in our midst. Rainer Maria Rilke writes that "the undefended heart" and "the child [in us] of an infinite union absorbed in play" radiate to the world the mercy and reconciliation for which we all long. (Sonnet to Orpheus II, 9)

It is the season of Advent and Christmas. As the year of our 60th anniversary celebration draws to a close, we remain humbly grateful for the light that illumines and blesses our monastic journey. The reflections in this bulletin share through story, poetry and song the gift of persons and experiences that bless us with new hope.

We remember our brother Philip this Christmas Eve, the fifth anniversary of his new life in God, and we offer a personal reflection from his writing. We also remember our long-time friend and recording-engineer, John Quinn, who passed to new life this past September.

For us it is a joy to see the House of Sabbath guest facility transition into a safe and hospitable refuge for our neighbors struggling with the dehumanizing effects of homelessness. This evolving journey is recounted by two friends whose dream became incarnate in founding Neighborhood Connections: Delores Barbeau, a physician, and Gloria Dawson, a social worker/program coordinator.

Also we relate how on our April trip to Mexico our Benedictine Sisters marked our 60th anniversary with a surprising and delightful

celebration; and about the visit we made together to friends at the indigenous village of Amatlán, outside of Cuernavaca.

We are grateful for God's unfolding presence enfleshed in our community life and prayer and in so many of you, our friends. This is Christmas! It is incarnation! Amidst the silence and darkness of night, Oh so holy, may our listening together spur our imaginations and sharpen our senses to respond with courage to say "yes/let it be" to the Spirit's overshadowing embrace. God has become one with us, embodying our humanity, gracing our earth through the gift of incarnation. With Jesus we earnestly pray: "...May your name be held holy, may your kingdom come..." And the Sun rises with its healing rays. ■

A Clear Evening

- brother Augustine

On a clear evening, in early winter,
The warm sun, with its brilliant
Reflection upon the first snow,
Has set, — and left
An orange-red glow
Above the stilled trees,
As if to speak of what has passed,
And more, — to hold our hearts
In waiting for what is still to come.



The Slow Stride of Incarnation

- *brother Peter*

I THOUGHT MY SPANISH WAS PRETTY GOOD UNTIL I TRIED to listen to a news broadcast in Mexico. The news anchor spoke so breathlessly fast, one item tumbling out after another, that I barely got a word. Back home in Weston, fresh from this experience—though I had not noticed it before—I found when I paid attention that our English news broadcasters are just as fast, cramming without pause as many items as possible into the minutes allotted. A non-English speaker would be hard put to comprehend a word.

I have been impressed at times in watching some nature videos using time-lapse photography to see all four seasons in a given scene condensed into a few minutes' span of time. The speeding up of so many human experiences of encounter are facilitated now with so many technologies: Fiber optics, Broadband, Tweeting, Texting, Social Networking, and Smart Phones. Along with this, we have come to crave instantaneous and unlimited access.

A contrasting approach to human interaction arose recently when I accompanied brother Robert to an audiology exam. The doctor underlined the importance of speaking slowly and with face to face communication for someone with a hearing impairment. Diminished and distorted sound can be improved with visual clues and enough time for the brain to make the connections between the sound of words and the meaning of words.

Our common prayer at the priory benefits from such an approach. In a monastic setting, either in choir or sitting in a semi-circle, we face each other for prayer or reflective exchange. We try to discipline ourselves to

pause and listen, to be aware of each other and the environment of the moment. At our Morning Vigil Prayer, for instance, we begin in a darkened chapel with the playing of drums, of a rain stick, and of a wooden flute, and the lighting of one large candle in the center of our prayer space. We are surrounded by the sounds of earth—the heartbeat of the world, the falling rain, a gentle bird-song—and embraced by the coming of light. The readings and psalmody are unhurried and calm. There is a mantra-like meditation song interspersed with melodious humming and simple guitar interludes—the words are few and softly repeated. The ambiance invites us to receive and interiorize the experience of presence to each other and to God. Our senses, our hearts and our minds are fully engaged in this peaceful, timeless moment of human contact and prayer.

Our world has immense possibilities, undreamed-of technological advances, and fast access to all we need. We can be thankful for all the gains of contemporary life. Yet nature has its measured, time-bound processes which have their own profound joys and wisdom. Prayer is not enhanced in being speeded-up. Our monastic prayer can be beneficial in slowing us down to a more human and humane experience of life and communication with others, with nature, and with God. Our senses and our spirits need enough time to see and appreciate the nuanced features of nature and of persons, to hear musical sounds interplay with each other, to deliberately taste and enjoy the food we eat, to sense the gentle breeze and the warmth of a summer day or the cold of winter on our skin, and to breathe in the fragrances of the seasons as they unfold organically over their natural span of time.

The Advent and Christmas seasons of the church's liturgical year invite us to just such an unhurried pace in our prayer and reflection on the events of Christ's life. One morning at our Vigils Prayer a section of the reading of the day from the letter to the Romans stood out for me:

... the gospel concerning God's Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord . . .¹

It was at the completion of Jesus' human life, lived moment by moment in the faithful love of God and his brothers and sisters, that he was "declared to be Son of God." The Word was made flesh, was incarnated, over the duration of Jesus' lifetime. Jesus embodied the presence of God through the full extent of his human life, from the time of his birth through his crucifixion and resurrection. He was recognized as the Son of God at the conclusion of his earthly life. The experience of Incarnation cannot be accelerated.

At Christmas time we are invited to engage the slow stride of incarnation, to embody the presence of Christ from moment to moment through the length of our lives until the end. ■

¹ Rom. 1: 3-4

Morning Practice

- brother Michael

We speak often of taking our time. These are the words to our Morning Vigil prayer as the time of Advent draws forth. It takes many mornings to let the words become one with our hearts, for all of our prayer is a practice just as each new day is a gift.

Morning Star, light of hope.

North and south, east and west, we gather as one.

Morning Star, light of hope.

Sky and earth, stars and streams, keep vigil with us.

Morning Star, light of hope.

Trust and faith, hope and love, awaken in us.

Morning Star, light of hope.

Word of life, gospel of truth, lead us to you.

Morning Star, light of hope.

May we live, lives of light: gentle and kind.

In Remembrance of Brother Philip

Christmas Eve, 2013, will mark five years since our brother Philip's Pascua or Passage to New Life. The grace of his life among us is still deeply present and gifting.

Recently, a personal reflection he wrote in 1992 surfaced serendipitously. The excerpts from it on the following page speak eloquently of the experience of Incarnation in his life and challenge us to a profound thanksgiving and praise for the grace of Christian life in community.

This brief schema of brother Philip's life experience sets the context for his reflections:

- *The struggle and pain of self-acceptance.*
- *The suffering and challenge of illness and bodily limitation.*
- *Lost his mother as a child, then his father; orphaned as a young teenager and raised with his sister, Margie, in a difficult extended-family living situation.*
- *As a young man, exaggeratedly polite and deferential; in community, he matured into a self-affirming, confident, self-giving and loving person.*
- *Physical limitations and diminishments: epilepsy, excessive blood iron, both hips replaced, back surgery, ankle fusion, progressive and aggressive arthritis, ALS.*
- *Challenged in body coordination, yet a good dancer; a lover of books; a gifted writer; had a beautiful singing voice; a composer of poetic lyrics for the community's music and prayer.*
- *Attuned to justice and peace issues; sensitive to prejudice of any kind, especially racism, homophobia, and towards persons who are challenged, disabled, or overweight.*
- *Amidst it all, a wonderful sense of humor.*

Excerpts from Brother Philip's Personal Reflections

*Remember the struggle of becoming,
how we grapple with the substance of life,
waiting for a ripeness that lies in far-off autumn.¹*

Catherine de Vinck

THIS IS NOT REALLY A TEXT TO BE READ, BUT AN ACT *of praise and thanksgiving*. It is more like a song to be sung. It is not a song of accomplishment, though, but a melody sung in the middle of the journey. It makes no sense apart from the path.

I have learned this song while walking, step by step. The song, at first, was very brief; but as the walking has continued, so has the song unfolded. Yet, neither the song, nor the journey, is done.

I have not composed this song alone, on my own, but have discovered it holding the hands of precious friends, brothers and a sister. For you, I am very deeply grateful. (You know who you are!)

The words are my own voice; the song has become mine; but it links me to every other person. We are *all* sojourners, wayfarers, journeyers.

Our feet provide the rhythm, our hearts the melody, our lips the words, our hands the strength. And God provides the way.



January 2007

Affirmations

As a human person, I have been created in the image and likeness of God, and to live *as* an image of God. I am called to bear God in the world. As a human being, and part of the web of creation, I am good.

As a human person, as an image of God, my continuing creation and unfolding is graced.

I have been called into life in order to *love*, in order to realize and fulfill my communion with all reality, and in a special way, with other persons.

¹ from Memorandum 66 in *A Time To Gather* by Catherine de Vinck, © 1967, Alleluia Press, Allendale NJ, p. 66

As a human person, and as an image of God, I am called to love in a way that is uniquely me, in a way that bears the gift of my *self* to others.

As a person created in love and called to love, I am *embodied* in order to fulfill that vocation. My particular body, in its mystery and its challenge, its joy and its pain, enables me to live humanly.

I feel like Jacob, who, in struggle and embrace, experienced the encounter with God in a very powerful, bodily way.

The night visitor said to him, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you strove with God and with humans, and prevailed." Jacob called the place Penuel, because, he said, "I have seen God face to face, and I have survived." The sun rose as Jacob passed through Penuel, limping because of his hip. (Gen. 32: 28, 30-31)

Jacob, a model of graced vulnerability, of vulnerable gracefulness!

As a human being, I accept the challenge of affirming the giftedness of who I am. I want to live out of God's free acceptance, affirmation, and love for me. Therefore, in response, I am self-affirming. This includes the responsibility to give voice to my own experience.

I am an adult, committed in mutual, loving covenant with my brothers, in this community. With them, I seek to be a follower of Jesus. I seek to be more freely self-giving, faithful, and other-enriching.

My Practice

... I begin to understand how the pain and personal struggle in my life have made it possible for me to develop virtues and strengths, which become gifts for others. My personal struggles offer me a God-given opportunity to experience life from a non-dominant position; to question assumptions; to care deeply about persons, and less about roles; to grow in empathy with others' pain and joy; to be able to listen; to be attuned to what unites, rather than what separates; to celebrate the unquenchable scandal of Jesus' table fellowship, rather than domesticate it.

And not only that, we boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Rom. 5: 3-5)

"Those who hold on to their lives will lose them."

As I respond to the grace of letting go, I am more certain, than of anything else, of God's word to me, "I have *always* loved you."

"The gift you have received, give as a gift." (Matt. 10: 8) ■

brother Philip
25 March 1992

Seasons of Grace

- *brother John* 8/29/13

Grace is a multifaceted experience;
the varied colors of its faces reflect
the gifted seasons of our lives.

In our childhood dreams it shines
with simple translucent purity
of Gift; that's what it is!
We celebrate our life as grace.

As we grow and mature in life
the black and blue of pain and joy
give way to vibrant green and ruddy red.
We sing and dance now gracefully.

And hopefully as we advance to ripe old age
grey hair proclaims the golden years;
more wise and kind and true
with gratitude we gaze on all; yes, graciously.



What Do You Do?

-brother Mark

AS OUR CHRISTMAS FEAST APPROACHES WE ARE invited into the deep and profound 'good news' of our God who refuses to be distant, choosing to be present in a way we can see and emulate as a human person: Jesus of Nazareth.

This feast offers a platform from which we can formulate a response to a frequently asked question: What do you do?

Reflecting on our Benedictine monastic life in the light of our Christmas celebration we recognize that all of our daily tasks and practices are aspects of a more profound work: that of living out together the lifelong communal discipline of giving flesh to (incarnating) what Jesus announced as the Kingdom or Reign of God.

Abbot/brother Leo Rudloff, in the earliest years of our community's existence, perhaps flowing from his experience at the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem, reflected on the monastery as an 'Embassy of God'. This comparison became a seed of the community's understanding of its life and mission as a witness to the Reign of God proclaimed and described by Jesus in the Gospels.

During the more than 60 years of our existence as a monastic community the brothers have engaged in many different works in order to express our values and to maintain the community life, our hospitality and outreach. The basic view of the monastic life at Weston has been focused on embodying the communal nature of Jesus' teaching; reaching out to the world in a unified way, and welcoming others to share in our life and prayer in varied ways. The Word made flesh! ■



Gratitude for a Dear Friend, John Quinn

WITH THANKFUL HEARTS WE BROTHERS REMEMBER John and the gift he has been for our community over many years of friendship. He came to know the brothers here at the Priory from the beginning years of our foundation. John was a frequent guest who assisted and worked with us on the innumerable chores and projects of the initial days

John was by profession a very gifted recording and sound engineer. In the years following Vatican Council II, as we began to compose music for our prayer and liturgy, John offered to bring sound equipment and record our music for distribution to the many people and church communities who were requesting it. He continued faithfully and generously to record our music over the years.

John was a creative person who was sensitive to convey the beauty of the simplest sound of voice and instrument. He was an inspirational man who listened deeply to the voice of God calling and inviting us to a generous service to our world. And more than anything, he was a person who loved others and bore their joys and pain with deep respect and compassion. His love for his wife, Ann, and their love for each other has been a beautiful sign of God's fidelity and presence in our lives. Together they gave birth to eight children who now with their spouses grace the family with ten grandchildren.



Ann & John

We can only say in a humble way, "Thank you, John. We know you live in the heart of our God; and we rely on your prayer and presence with us as we continue our life's journey until that day we are all united together in everlasting life." ■

Three Poems

- *brother Columba*

When trees shed their leaves
and leave
us
wondering.



Colors so brilliant, so fragile,
a gift of joy —
Alleluia
to the Creator of all!

Standing in the sun
feeling its touch
warm our earth
and lift our hearts
so generous, so free.



Autumn shuffles in —
a youngster hoping for surprises.
Puffed-up billowing clouds
sliding over harvested fields
blessings to be shared.





front l to r, Gloria Dawson, Delores Barbeau; back 2nd from l, Carol Olstad; with staff & brothers at Neighborhood Connections, January 2010

... the gift of hospitality

- Delores Barbeau and Gloria Dawson

Neighborhood Connections

IT'S WHAT SO MANY OF US, FOR WHOM WESTON PRIORY is our "grounding place", have felt: the welcome, the warmth, the questions, the listening ear...and the challenge to grow, to become whole, to connect again to ourselves, to each other, to this God with whom we walk.

For a few of us, a bit over four years ago, that challenge led us to open the doors of Neighborhood Connections in Londonderry, down the road from Weston. We were a couple of social workers, a physician, a mortgage broker. We had lived and worked for years in these neighboring towns, well aware of the uniquely Vermont way "we watch out for our neighbors", but also aware of the problems that come with living in a rural economy, where distance is measured in time and work is often seasonal...and where people do not advertise their needs.

What we have tried to do from the beginning is to listen, to meet people where they are when they call or come in—for fuel assistance, for housing, for food or work or transportation, with health problems and family crises—and to walk with them until they are no longer in that situation.

This has meant work with budgeting and time management; offering education seminars and mental health counseling; helping file taxes and filling out applications; and planning senior trips. But we hope we have listened and supported and advocated for others when systems and family dynamics may have seemed overwhelming.

We have tried very hard not to fill immediate needs only, but to connect people back with their community and their lives.

We are only able to do this because we have a great group of volunteers and a gifted, supportive Board, and because we have strong connections with individuals and agencies and volunteer groups who work and live in the larger community of towns we are privileged to serve...and because of the extraordinary support of the brothers and of the members of the "extended priory community" who are our neighbors and companions on this journey.

House of Sabbath

One of the most pressing challenges we have seen over these last years is the concrete need for hospitality—not just for a welcoming office or a warm smile, but for a place to live. In the last months 27 people looking for a home have walked through our doors:

- A family of four who have lived in their van for months
- A 17-year-old who had hitch-hiked all over the state for weeks, carrying everything he owned in a small backpack
- A mom with a 2-year-old, "couch-surfing" with whoever would take her in, desperate for a job and for education
- A 52-year-old, long estranged from his family, living in his truck, looking for a shower
- A 40-year-old mom of 3 who had just taken in a homeless 17-year-old girl, and who now needed to get out of her own abusive situation.

Sometimes, to walk with these people, we have to find more than just an overnight shelter. Sometimes they need a place where, for a time, they can put their things down, be home and feel safe.

The brothers, who have been sustaining supporters from the first, heard our frustrations and our dreams, and offered us the chance to provide this hospitality. As of January, we at Neighborhood Connections will be able to offer Sabbath House to some of those who walk through our doors.

Our dream: to have a place where people—individuals and small families—can be for a while, where there is an offering of support, healing and re-connection.

We have been meeting with people from the community and with others from around the state (and as far away as Virginia!) who work in this type of housing; we are learning to be responsible caretakers of the gift that has been offered.

We hope to use Sabbath House as a home—and as a community center for education, for gathering, for growth and celebration. We hope that it will be, in the deepest sense of the word, a place of hospitality. ■

Incarnation

- brother Alvaro

We were in Mexico,
to be with our Benedictine Sisters,
We knew we would celebrate together
our 60th anniversary,
We knew it would be a good visit,
it always is.

But the encounter went beyond that:

Celebration became prayer,

Prayer became song,

Friendship made us dance,

Song made us sing,

Love incarnated in pure joy.



Doña Julia's Seeds

- brother Daniel



A MATLÁN DE QUETZALCÓATL IS AN INDIGENOUS VILLAGE sheltered by Mexico's Sierra Tepozteca Mountains. This native community has inhabited the rugged landscape for thousands of years and the myths about its origins seem to be as old as these sacred mountains that surround it. Time in such a setting feels grounded to the soil itself, anchored in the roots of the *amate* trees or the even more ubiquitous maize. The warm days go slowly, and conversations are never hurried—there is always time in this land!



We brothers were a bit tired after spending a very full day with Lucio Pérez and his family. On our way out we stopped — quickly we thought — at Doña Julia's simple home. She is an elderly woman with dark wrinkled skin and youthful eyes that seem to smile as she tells stories slowly in her charmingly imperfect Spanish. There is wisdom

in her stories; and she invites her listeners to learn, not to be entertained.

Doña Julia's home is furnished with plastic chairs stacked in the corner of her yard. Since there are not enough chairs, she offers us some buckets that when turned upside down become fine seats for the occa-

sion. All the while her short fingers are separating grains of corn. The grains either go to a bucket or fall on the tarp spread at her feet.

As she feels and chooses the corn seeds, some will become tamales and tortillas to be eaten, and others will be planted right before the rainy season arrives. When I offer to help, she retorts: “you don’t know one seed from the other!” She has an intimate knowledge of her seeds.

She takes her time, slowly sharing the memories of this beloved landscape, just as her seeds, her life and her community abide in the same soil. As the singsong of her words shares the yearning for blessing in her people’s future, a hope for the well-being of this land is carried in her fingers as they playfully caress each seed she sorts.

The sweltering heat, the length of the day, and the lateness of the hour compel the brothers to share with her that we must move on. We thank her for the wisdom she has offered to us. She is free with her gift; she is not upset that we could not stay longer. God willing there will be another time. She simply smiles and says farewell. The maize seeds in her hands remind me of prayer beads.

Later, singing our Evening Prayer I am struck by the psalms’ strong rootedness in the experience of the land of Israel as a spiritual place, a gift of God, and the yearning for a better future. A sacrament of God’s love! Now, as we prepare to celebrate the Feast of Christmas, we rejoice in the Sacrament who is Jesus. In him we recognize the Divine Mystery incarnate in our humanity, and indeed assuming all of creation as a humble son of the land, from a lowly birth yet gifting all that is with God’s redeeming blessing!

I reflect on Jesus’ own rootedness in his native land and his use of seeds from soil to share wisdom about life, the love of God and to comfort or challenge his listeners. Jesus would refer to this “Good News” as a seed that a farmer scatters in trust. He even identifies with a grain that will have to die to give abundant fruit. We as disciples have heard the call to follow Jesus in this humble path.

As I remember Doña Julia in her sunny yard, I recognize that we too are held in God’s own hand. We have been anointed in Divine Hope as our lives unfold yearning to take root in the Gospel. There is time. *Incarnation is both a gift and a task!* ■



Life Together in One Heart



SAIN**T BENEDICT BEGINS CHAPTER 35 OF HIS RULE FOR** monks with this injunction: “Let the brothers serve one another in love.” Service is the “leitmotif” of our lives as monks and it brings us to the realization of what it can mean to live our lives to their full potential.

Pope Francis, from the very beginning of his ministry as the new bishop of Rome, has continually reminded us, as the Church, of our call to serve others, especially the poor and the marginalized, so that we might mirror the example of Jesus, the poor man of Nazareth. Forms of service vary in the unique lives of each of us. Our underlying commitment to be faithful in response to our calling is the leaven that makes each day a joyful celebration of life and a breaking open of our hearts as bread for others.

There are many ways in which to do this. The monastic tradition highlights: daily community prayer, inner reflection, manual work, joyful hospitality, and living lives marked by blessing and gratitude. The following chronicle highlights some moments of blessing that have come to us during the past several months. For all of these... we are grateful.

May

Two special guests from CHABHA (Children Affected by HIV/AIDS) spent an evening sharing with the community. Grace Muhimpundu, country director for CHABHA Rwanda, and Patrick Nimubona, project coordinator for Rwanda, explained the current work and projects being done in the east African nations of Rwanda and Burundi. Of the 16 million children to have been orphaned by AIDS worldwide, almost 15 million live in sub-Saharan Africa where CHABHA,



Grace



Patrick

through its many volunteers, focuses its energies and resources. The work of CHABHA is to create realizable opportunities for educational access, transitioning pathways out of poverty, and accessible healthcare and psychological care for children whose plight is largely ignored. CHABHA was founded in 2003 by Susanna Grannis of Windham, Vermont, who is the author of *Hope Amidst Despair*.¹ For more information about CHABHA: www.chabha.org

From May 27 to June 2 we welcomed Samuel Bauer of Cambridge, MA to the priory for our bi-annual Experience in Monastic Living. Samuel had already participated in a previous seven day Experience and wanted a further opportunity to pray, work, and share with the community. Times for reflection, study, mutual exchange, and conversation with brothers brought new growth in friendship and trust.

June

For a good number of years our brother Peter has used his photographic eye, as well as his camera, to capture vibrant images of the priory and its environs. Brother Peter has an attraction for photographing wildlife, butterflies, insects, fungi, wildflowers, and landscapes—especially priory landscapes—in all seasons. Gathering together a selection of these new images we produced three new series of cards for the enjoyment of our guests and visitors and for sale in our Gallery Shop: ten postcards including two aerial views of the priory; five butterfly note cards with individual botanical identification for each butterfly; and three landscape note cards with reflective/meditative photos.

July

On Saturday, July 13th, as part of our celebration of St. Benedict's weekend, Brayton and Suzanne Shanley of Hardwick, MA, gave a presentation in our Visitors' Center to a gathering of 100 friends from far and near. Their sharing was based on Brayton's newly published book: *The Many Sides Of Peace, Christian Nonviolence, the Contemplative Life, and Sustainable Living*.² Co-founders of the Agape Community, Brayton and Suzanne have been practicing Peace by leading sustainable living retreats and participating in nonviolent opposition to social and environmental injustice.

The well-known Irish theologian from South Dublin, Fr. Dermot Lane, presented two lectures in the village of Weston on July 15th. The lectures were sponsored by Weston's Church on the Hill and



Brayton



Suzanne

¹ © 2011, Pluto Press, London, England

² © 2013, Resource Publications, Eugene, OR

the Center for Faith and Culture at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, VT. The morning lecture, *Interreligious Dialogue*, spoke to the new challenge for Christian faith in the 21st Century. The afternoon lecture, *Pneumatology: A Theology of the Holy Spirit*, opened up a new way forward in dialogue with other religions and the renewal of Christian faith. A number of brothers along with many friends, attended and were enriched by Dermot's engaging insights and expertise.



Dermot Lane

August

From August 5th thru 8th our community was blessed and enriched by the presence of fellow Benedictine and friend, Abbot Jerome Kodell, of Subiaco Abbey in Subiaco, Arkansas. Every five years the Abbot Primate of the world-wide Benedictine Confederation, currently Abbot Notker Wolf, requests the presence of a trusted

monk to make an official visit to our community here in Weston. The experience of Visitation has similar qualities to Mary of Nazareth's visit to her cousin, Elizabeth, as recorded in the gospel according to Luke: joy in one another's presence; abiding trust; a willingness to listen; and recognizing the presence of God in our lives. The community and Abbot Jerome came together as brothers in confidence and expectation: to celebrate the blessings of faithful living our monastic life; to affirm the on-going nature of monastic dialogue and obedience; and to identify strengths for future growth. We are grateful to Abbot Jerome for his wisdom, insight, and sense of humor.



Abbot Jerome

On the 17th we celebrated the annual remembrance of our brothers Leo and Philip at Evening Vespers/Eucharist. Our prayer included a procession to their gravesite on the beautiful knoll that overlooks the pond in front of the monastery buildings. This year we concluded the prayer singing one of our newest songs, Cantic of Creation, which was inspired by St. Francis' Cantic of the Sun. The song concludes with these verses:

Mindful of our sister death, receiving all, the weak and the strong.
As we journey along the Way, with hope and trust we greet each day.
Blessed are the pure in heart, children of God, children of earth.
We dance the dance of life with joy, responding to God with songs of praise.³

Our good friend, Jim Tomlinson, currently doing post-graduate work

³ Cantic of Creation © 2013 The Benedictine Foundation of the State of Vermont, Inc.

at Boston University, spent most of his summer with us as a volunteer. Jim helped with the work of the monastery especially in the garden and getting in the firewood. We are grateful for his generosity and friendship.

September

The town of Weston repaved Priory Hill Road. Over the past ten years the road surface had deteriorated and made travel unpleasant and precarious, especially in the winter months. The top-to-bottom reconstruction should make for safer driving for brothers and guests alike.

Both Bethany and Morningside guesthouses received some needed renovations over a period of five weeks. Bathroom remodeling, some new kitchen appliances, furniture and furnishings have brought new luster to these two well-used guesthouses. We trust that all who use them will have a more pleasant time of retreat.

October

We are happy to welcome Nhân Thế Nguyễn to experience and share our monastic life in these months. His search for God in prayer, his joyful spirit and his generous service to the community are gifts for which we are grateful.



Nhân Thế Nguyễn

The semi-annual meeting of Benedictine and Cistercian monks and nuns from New England was hosted by the Benedictine nuns of Regina Laudis monastery in Bethlehem, Connecticut. Our community was represented by brothers Richard and Elias. Representatives from eight of the twelve monasteries in the region met for the one day gathering. These meetings are held to foster on-going communication among the monasteries as well as to offer opportunities to share the developments, concerns, and insights of each community.

November

This month we welcomed again our friends from Dismas of Vermont for their annual retreat weekend. Dismas House is a supportive community for former prisoners transitioning from incarceration and university/college students who are also in transition with their lives. They have four homes of transition here in Vermont for persons who have left prison and who are seeking reconciliation with society. For more information: www.dismasofvermont.org

Also we welcomed a group of New England Lutheran Pastors who have been having their annual retreat with us for over 30 years. ■



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