

Chronicle: June to November 2019

The Local Church

THERE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A SPECIAL FEELING of being a part of the Church which spans the whole world. When we think of all the people of earth who pray the Gospel each day, there is a feeling of humility and gratefulness that fills our hearts.

Yet the universal is contained within the local. In our visit with the Bishop of this Diocese, Christopher Coyne, we could sense that Vermont as a whole is connected to the beautiful pastoral direction of Pope Francis. Compassion and gentleness are an authentic way forward for the Church of today.

That was echoed as we gave thanks for the Sisters of Mercy who are closing their motherhouse in Burlington. The feeling again was of a Church that is moving forward, through their associates and the ongoing vision of mercy offered to our suffering world.

The local Church continues to be faithful to the calling of Jesus, "Go, and proclaim the Gospel to the nations." We freely offer all that we can in the sharing of our lives. ■



Bishop Christopher Coyne (second from left), Burlington priests, Weston brothers and Mercy Sisters

Abuelita Marianna



Elena Ixcot with Marianna McGuffin

ON SATURDAY, JUNE 29, THE BROTHERS CELEBRATED a memorial for Marianna McGuffin of Weston who died on November 23, 2018. She was a longtime friend of the Priory and a close friend and supporter of the Ixcot family who were in sanctuary at the Priory. The Ixcot family considered her their "abuelita" (grandmother) – a mark of respect and endearment and a sign of Marianna's care and support of the family. Elena Ixcot; Juanita and her husband, Jim Conroy; and Maya (Inesita, who was 8 months old when the family arrived) and her fiancée, Ronin,



Juanita

were with us for the occasion. Juanita spoke with the brothers that evening about her ongoing work with indigenous issues as the executive director of the International Maya League/USA, based in Washington, DC. ■

See a video on *YouTube* about the work and mission of the Maya League/USA: <https://youtu.be/DVlvS30dOtl>

A Trustworthy Friend

Whatever town or village you go into, ask for someone trustworthy...

– Matt. 10:11

MEETING FRANK McCAFFREY IS TO HAVE MET SOMEONE truly trustworthy. Throughout his life in family, friendships, and career, Frank left all of us inspired by his genuine love and concern and faithfulness.

Frank died October 27, 2018, and on a fine, early summer day – Saturday, June 1, 2019 – we celebrated a Thanksgiving for his life. The greater community

of family, friends, colleagues, and members of the Vermont Judiciary gathered for a morning Eucharist at the Priory. With much gratitude and laughter, we remembered the deep friendship, love and wisdom Frank lived throughout his life

and ministry as advocate and judge. We celebrated Frank's great gifts that he freely gave to all of us. On November 1, 2019 the Rutland, Vermont, District and Family Courthouse was renamed in his honor: the Francis B. McCaffrey Courthouse. ■



The Francis B. McCaffrey Courthouse, Rutland, VT



Frank McCaffrey

Care for Our Common Home

POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL "LAUDATO SI" IS A BEAUTIFUL encouragement to expand our sacramental understanding of Creation and to make a conscious choice in how we relate as stewards with others, both human and non-human, and ultimately with God!

After our own country had already signed and committed ourselves to the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, we are in the process of unilaterally withdrawing from it. It is now up to us as Christian communities in North America to offer a prophetic response to this evasion of responsibility and relinquishment of our call to stewardship.

During our festivities around the Feast of Saint Benedict we had a public showing of the documentary *From Paris to Pittsburgh* that celebrates how Americans are demanding and developing real local solutions in the face of



Solar Panels at Weston Priory

climate change. The documentary unfolds in order to elicit a conscious concern among the general public.

For us brothers our response has emerged to install an array of photovoltaic solar panels. They are already generating enough electricity to address our needs. Also, through the offer of economic incentives we have purchased a fully electric car. A time of crisis has become an opening for new beginnings, and we look to the future like Pope Francis, with hope! ■

A Miracle Every Day

THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE in the number of monarch butterflies at the monastery this year. We'd like to think it has something to do with the planting of new perennials of the milkweed family, attractive to the monarchs.



Monarch chrysalis

In September we noticed monarch caterpillars chewing the leaves of the milkweed plants. Then chrysalises began to appear on surrounding shrubs and on our split-rail fence. Two of the chrysalises began to show signs of inner activity. Eventually a monarch butterfly emerged, clinging with its front legs to the rail fence. Within ten minutes it started to unfold its rear legs and then its wings. Soon it began to move its wings. Minutes later it flew off. Suddenly several monarchs began fluttering around me.



Empty chrysalis and Monarch drying its wings

I whispered: "Thank you!" Thank you for letting me experience a miracle of life today. ■



Weston Brothers with Mount Saviour Brothers

Visit to Mount Saviour

IN AUGUST, BROTHERS RICHARD, JOHN, Daniel and Nhan travelled to Mount Saviour Monastery in Pine City, New York. Our two communities were founded in the early 1950's by Benedictine monks from Germany, sent to the United States by their abbots in the early 1930's as the threat of the Nazi Regime grew in their native country.

The friendship between brother/Abbot Leo and Father Damasus has lived on among the monks of our two communities long after our founders passed away several decades ago.

This recent trip was an opportunity to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood with the vision of a renewed monastic life that both brother Leo and Father Damasus passed on to us. The paths continue to evolve in unique ways for each monastery, yet the gift of friendship, respect, and genuine care for each other and the "good zeal" of brotherly love abide.

Our visit was reciprocated in late October, when Brother Mark of Mount Saviour came to Weston for a few days. These visits are true times of grace... and our hearts are grateful! ■

A Rabbi's Prayer

IN EARLY OCTOBER RABBI ARTHUR GREEN came to the Priory for a rich and meaningful visit. His gift of love and trust as well as his insight into the Neo-Hasidic renewal movement within Judaism made for a lively exchange.

Our common search for God was most beautifully expressed in a moving time of singing the psalms together – a gift that originally comes from our Jewish brothers and sisters. During our Morning Prayer, after we sang each psalm in English using our contemporary melodies, Rabbi Green sang the psalm in the original Hebrew with the traditional melody of the Synagogue. It was a poignantly moving experience for all of us!



Rabbi Arthur Green

The exchanges with Rabbi Green touched on faith, values, vision and our own experience. We recognize Rabbi Arthur as a true friend to our community, indeed a brother to us! ■
