



“Without Words”

—brother Mark

OUR MONASTIC LIFE ENCOURAGES US TO RECOGNIZE that we, as human beings, are but one aspect of this created world that God has birthed. In this context we experience the setting of our home in the midst of the Green Mountain National Forest, which sustains a great variety of plant and animal life, to be a profound and privileged gift.

With this gift ever before our eyes and informing many of our community reflections, the community decided almost 10 years ago to incorporate the care of a variety of animals into our daily experience. Joining our two pigs, which have been a consistent feature of our life for many years, were a small flock of sheep with their llama guardian, chickens, and a few breeding rabbits.

The rabbits, in so many ways,—without words—witness to the life we seek to live. Their tranquil demeanor is a constant reminder of the stability of spirit that we vow as Benedictine monks; their patient waiting for us to provide them with food and drinking water challenges our own impatience with each other and with God; and their ever gifting hospitality with everyone who comes to their home, especially children, is certainly a powerful reminder of Benedict’s instruction that his monks welcome all guests as if they were the Christ. ■