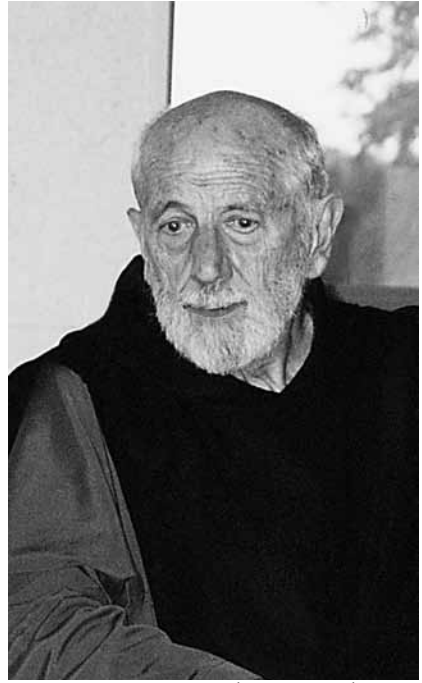


LIVING WATERS

- *brother Michael*

Love makes us give ourselves as far as possible to our friends.

- Thomas Aquinas



Father Martin Boler, 1989

AS ONE OF THE YOUNGER BROTHERS I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED, “How do we (‘youngsters’) create our own events that we have not historically participated in?” I have never wished to be born earlier, and certainly not later! In my reflections I turn to our shared brotherhood with Father Martin Boler who passed to New Life last year.

Our community was born a year or two later than Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira, New York. Abbot Leo Rudloff and Father Damasus Winzen, the founders of each community, were German monks who came to America at the behest of their original communities. Both became enthralled with the possibilities that the American culture contained. Father Martin became Prior of Mount Saviour after Father Damasus’ death, and by the time I met him, he had grey in his beard and a smile that reflected the gentleness held within his eyes.

My first encounter was during his stay, with Abbot Luke Rigby of St. Louis Priory, for our Visitation. Visitations usually happen every four years at each monastery in the Benedictine Confederation, and I saw it as a kind of “Final Test” that one must pass or be banished



l to r, brothers Augustine, Michael, Mark, and Father Martin , 1989

forever into the outer darkness. He communicated with his words and actions that he came as a brother to be among brothers for a time of inter-community exchanges, conversation and prayer.

On this particular visit he wanted some exercise. At Mount Saviour they wear their tunic and scapular more regularly outside of prayer time, and when he used our stationary bike his scapular got entwined in the chain. I knew how to use a sewing machine and hemmed the scapular, losing about ten inches of material in the process. A scapular of these dimensions was normally the garb worn by novices.

He was so happy with the repair and boldly walked into Vespers with this “new scapular.” His being at ease with himself taught me a deep lesson in monastic living. This same spirit permeated our community gatherings over the years, although these grew less frequent as both communities aged.

The gift that Father Martin brought to our community was the gift of his person, of his being a brother among us. This is reflected in the way we practice loving one another. When we love each other it is like drinking Living Water from a deep well. The source of water is unseen but that one glass of cool water tastes so good. So it is with all authentic sources and authentic persons. We are not simply connected through factual knowledge or our limited personal experiences. We are connected as the well is to the ocean. We are connected by Spirit. In this we rejoice in our own authentic being. ■