

Mount Saviour Chronicle

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR
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EASTER, 1954

Dear Friends of Mount Saviour,

"Rejoice, O daughter of Jerusalem, behold your king comes unto you, lowly and riding upon an ass, and He shall announce peace to the heathen." (Zacharias 9:9/16) On Palm Sunday we have seen Him entering His city; but Jerusalem did not know the things belonging to her peace. On Good Friday He died "outside the city". Through His death He abolished all enmity and reconciled all in one body by the Cross. (Ephesians 2:15/16) Now, on Easter Sunday the Risen Saviour greets His apostles with the blessed words: "Peace be unto you." Easter is indeed the Feast of Peace for the New Jerusalem.

We wish you, dear Friends of Mount Saviour, that peace which the world cannot give, but which Christ the Prince of Peace breathes into the hearts of those who share in His life-giving Sufferings. "Peace" is the watchword of the monks of St. Benedict. This Easter Chronicle may, therefore, be a fitting opportunity to tell you more about the idea of Benedictine peace, and especially about the chapel which we have dedicated to the Queen of Peace, and which expresses so beautifully the kind of peace which, in the power of the Risen Christ we hope to establish here at Mount Saviour.

ROME, ATHENS AND JERUSALEM

There are three cities in the Mediterranean world which have made essential contributions to Christian civilization: Rome, Athens and Jerusalem, and each of them represents a different aspect of Christian peace. The heart of Imperial Rome was the Palatine Hill from where the Emperor ruled the world which he had subjected to the Pax Romana through the power of his legions. Athens was the city of the Academy, of free development of human learning and human art, symbolized in the Parthenon, the dwelling place of Athena, the virgin daughter who was born out of the head of Zeus. Jerusalem was the city of the Temple where, by day and by night, sacrifices were offered to God, Who had established a covenant with His people. The Roman "Pax" (derived from 'pangere', to fit together) is a political order agreed upon by contract and maintained by the power of arms. It is based on the authority of the Emperor and the obedience of his soldiers. The Roman colonel in the Gospel is its classic example: "I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes; and to my servant, Do this, and he does it." (Matthew 8:9) While this Pax Romana is, therefore, more a virtue, a constant effort to maintain discipline, the Greek idea of peace (eirene) is more that of a status of repose, of quiet and calm which gives to man the chance for free and harmonious development of everything that makes his life truly human, gracing it with abundance and beauty. The Hebrew idea of peace (shalom) is not like that of the Greeks centered upon man; it is God's gift. It is God Who "will speak peace unto His people" (Psalm 84:8, and the above quotation). It is He Who "blesses His people with peace" (Psalm 28:11). Enmity against God is the destruction of peace (Isaiah 48:22), while the hearkening to God's commandments would make the peace of Jerusalem like a mighty river (48:18). The peace of Jerusalem is not an order imposed by the right of the stronger one (Rome), not the free development of undisturbed human nature (Athens), but the blessing by which God gives fullness of life to those who serve Him. The classical symbol of this idea of peace is, therefore, the altar which Gideon erected at the place where he had received the divine greeting, "Peace be unto you", and which he named "Peace of the Lord" (Judges 6:24).

THE PEACE OF CHRIST

It is easy to see how these three aspects of peace are fulfilled in Christ Who "is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14). In Christian antiquity He used to be represented as a *Roman Soldier* carrying the cross and treading upon a dragon, because through His "obedience unto death, the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8) He conquered the powers of rebellion against God. A more popular representation of the peace which Christ has brought is the figure of the *Good Shepherd* which we find so often in the Catacombs to remind the faithful of the peace which the lambs enjoy who heard the voice of the shepherd and followed it and died in the kiss of peace. He Who laid down His life for the sheep gathers them all in one fold where the Good Shepherd knows His own and they know Him. (John 10:14) How well these two pictures correspond and fulfill the idea of the Pax Romana and of the Greek "cirene". It is already clear that this peace of Christ is God's doing with man. But as if He wanted to state explicitly that His peace was also the fulfillment of what the Old Testament had contributed, the Lord said to His disciples at the Last Supper when He was promising them the coming of the *Spirit*: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you." (John 14:27)

BENEDICTINE PEACE

"Seek after peace and pursue it" is the invitation which St. Benedict extends to his disciples, and the three vows which guide the monk on his way again reflect the three aspects of peace which we have explained before. The vow of *obedience* makes the monk a soldier of Christ. The way in which St. Benedict describes the practice reminds us of the colonel in the Gospel: "As soon as everything has been ordered by the superior, they receive it as a divine command and cannot suffer any delay in executing it . . . Immediately abandoning their own affairs and forsaking their own will, leaving unfinished the work they were engaged in, with swift obedience they follow up with their deeds the voice of him who commands them". (Holy Rule, ch. 5) St. Benedict is indeed "the last Roman". However, his idea of prompt obedience is not a means to impose the right of the stronger one, but to lead the monk back to his Heavenly Father Whom he has left in the sloth of disobedience. Therefore, obedience is a powerful means to conquer the rebellious self-will and pride through which the devil exercises his dominion over fallen human nature. Instead of following the ways which seem good to man but lead in the end to destruction. Obedience establishes the monk in the peace of that order which God's holy will imposes upon him.

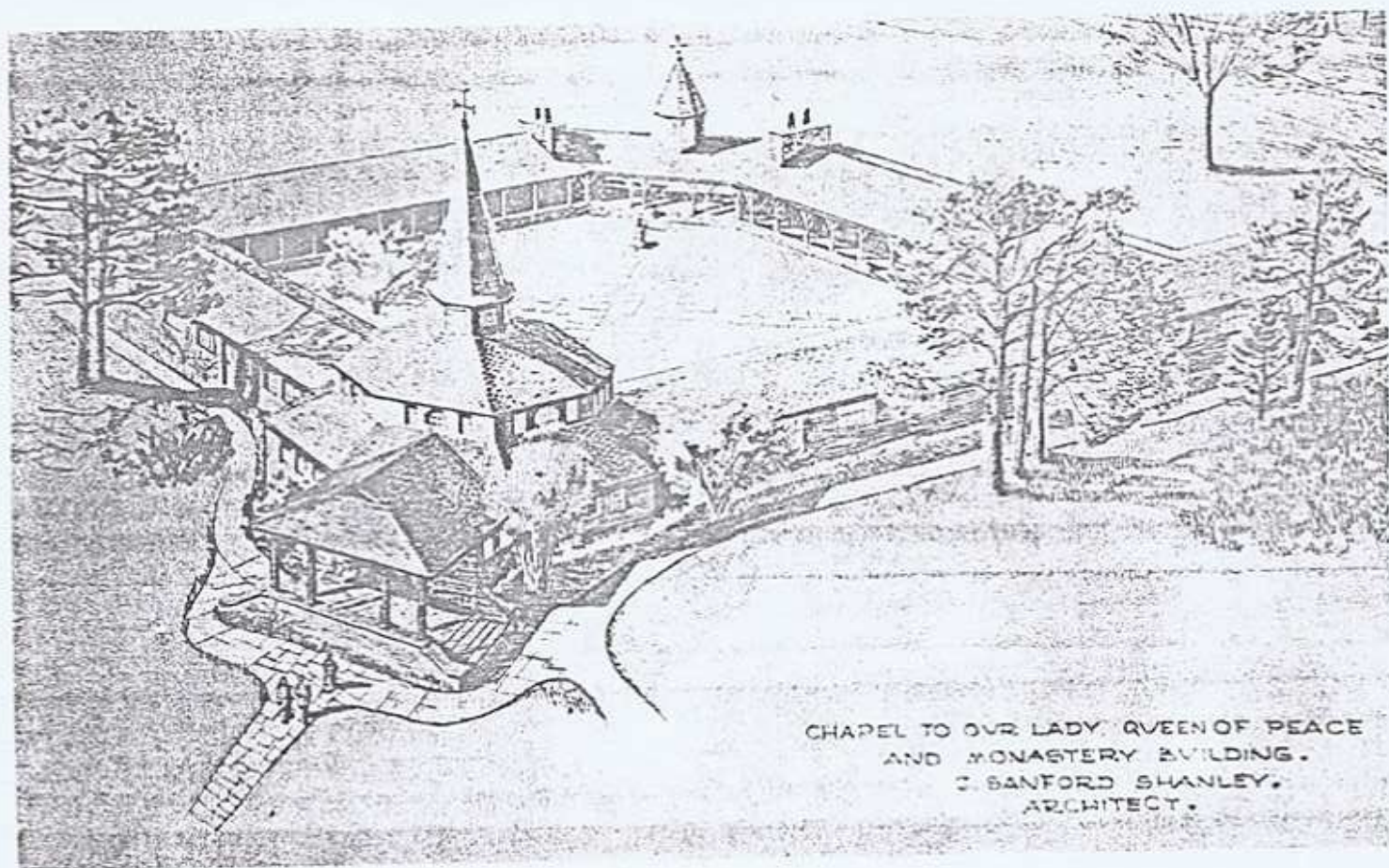
Through obedience the monk is adopted as God's child. The vow of *stability* binds him forever to the community of Brethren who belong with him to the same monastic family. Stability keeps the monk in the fold and enables him to grow under the loving care of the Good Shepherd represented in the Abbot, who is truly the

"pattern of the flock." (1 Peter 5:3) Stability is the enclosure wall which surrounds the monastery, separates it from the constant change of the times and fashions of men and makes it a "closed garden", a "sealed fountain", a haven of rest and quiet where that bond of intimate knowledge can develop of which the Good Shepherd speaks when He says: "I know my sheep, and mine know me" (John 10:14). The vow of stability gives to the monastery in a higher form the "cirene" of Athens.

The last of the vows, that of "*conversatio morum*", has as its objective the life in the Spirit, "that in all things God may be glorified" (Holy Rule, ch. 57). It makes the monastery another Jerusalem, the city of the Law, where "justice and peace kiss one another" (Psalm 84:11), where in the Temple sacrifices are offered at the appointed times to the glory of God. The basic law of the "*conversatio morum*" is that "nothing should be preferred to the *Opus Dei*" (the "work of God"). It is this "Work of God" which sanctifies the day and the night through the singing of the Canonical Hours and the offering of the Holy Sacrifice that makes the monastic community experience that "peace of God which exceeds all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). This peace is a concrete reality in the Eucharistic bread and wine, through which Christ calls us into one body, and which we receive in the Easter Night praying: "Pour forth upon us, O Lord, the Spirit of your love and in your loving kindness make all those whom you have fed with these Paschal sacraments to be of one mind." Holy Communion is the "peace of Jerusalem" which Isaias had announced: "Thus says the Lord: Behold I will extend peace to her like a river; you shall suck and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolation; you will be carried on her lap; you will be dandled on her knees. As one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you, and you shall be comforted in Jerusalem." (Isaias 66:11/13).

BUILDING JERUSALEM

As the peace of God in the Old Testament had found its expression in the buildings which made up the Holy City, the "Vision of Peace", so it has always been one of the most important concerns of Benedictine abbeys to construct monasteries and churches able to present to the eye the strength of that peace which is embodied in the Rule of St. Benedict. However, it is not our ambition at Mount Saviour to compete with Monte Cassino or Fleury or Einsiedeln or any other of the great abbeys of Europe. There is no emperor who would put the treasures of the world at our disposal to build a vast basilica and splendid court yards in marble and gold. The friends who help us belong to the many among God's people who, in the midst of the unrest and the anxieties of these days of the "cold war", long for the warmth, the intimacy, the family spirit which only the peace of Christ can give. They help us build our little Jerusalem because they want to see their own "vision of peace" realized in the monastery on the hill. It is not a vision of grandeur, but of simplicity. It may be



CHAPEL TO OUR LADY, QUEEN OF PEACE
AND MONASTERY BUILDING.
J. SANFORD SHANLEY,
ARCHITECT.

small; it may be poor; but it expresses and conveys the spirit of the peace of Christ.

CLOISTER, CRYPT AND CHAPEL

The peace of the Benedictine family is built on the monk's three vows of obedience, of stability and of "conversion of morals". The monastery of Mount Saviour consists of three main units: the cloister, the crypt, and the upper chapel. Can we not say that each of the monastery's units represents in a certain way one of the three monastic vows? Doesn't a relationship exist between these two triads? (Don't laugh before you've listened please!) The *cloister*, usually a quadrangle with an open "Kreuzgarten" in the center, an ambulatory around it and the main community rooms adjoining it is the place where the monk lives his life as a soldier of Christ in obedience to his Abbot. This cloister at Mount Saviour is still a dream. In God's good time it will be built.

The second unit, the *crypt*, shares with the upper chapel the octagonal shape. Six steel columns in the center surround the 14th century statue of Our Lady, Queen of Peace which Mr. and Mrs. Otto Spaeth have given us. The Queen of Peace is the heart of the crypt. She stands there in the center as the pillar upon which the main altar and the choir above rest. The ceiling is like a bundle of rays bursting forth from her until they reach the six side chapels

which form the outer ring of the crypt. Who would not think here of the vow of stability which embodies the silent strength of charity which keeps the monk in the unity of his monastic family? Was it not Our Lady who kept in the silence of her motherly heart the words which revealed to her the mystery of her Son, the King of Peace? Was it not Our Lady who *stood* by the cross while the others had left, everyone going unto his own? Was it not precisely through this, her standing by the cross, that she became the Queen of Peace? Is not the whole virginal beauty of the Christian sanctity contained in her who is "full of grace"? Is she not our mother, the "mother of tenderness" whose love gives to her children the home in which their hearts can grow? You see, there is indeed a very definite relation between our crypt, the vow of stability and the "eirene" which once reigned in the Parthenon, until the temple of Zeus' daughter was changed into a church dedicated to the Virgin Mother of Christ.

The crypt represents the silent depth of humble expectation, the motherly womb in which salvation is born. When you go up the steps and enter into the upper chapel, the Day of Christ surrounds you. Here the octagonal shape of the chapel reveals its true meaning.

The description which St. Gregory of Nazianzen gives of a church in his home town fits perfectly our oratory at

Mount Saviour: "With eight straight sides of equal length the temple returns into itself, while it rises high with beautiful columns. With the dome it radiates from above, surrounded with ample sources of light as if it were truly a miracle of light. Surrounding the inner center is an ambulatory repeating the octagonal shape." The dome full of light is a picture of the Risen Lord Who restores all things in Himself as the Head. With its eight sides the octagon gathers God's children around the family table, the altar in the center. The monks form the inner circle, their friends, Oblates and guests around them all one in Him Who gave His life that we may be one as He and the Father are one. In the "Work of God" which is carried on here, the "conversatio morum" (a phrase which could perhaps best be translated by "monastic life") reaches its fullness. Here is the "Peace of Jerusalem", the peace of the Upper Room where St. John rests at the heart of the Saviour, where Our Lady perseveres in prayer together with the Apostles, where now we are gathered together under the protection of the Queen of Peace.

In the joy of this Easter peace we turn to you, dear Friends of Mount Saviour, inviting you to help us in building Jerusalem. "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing is come. Arise, my love, my fair one and come." (Cantic of Canticles) This is Mary's Year. Come to Mary's Shrine and pray with us that the Queen of Peace may, through the days of the "cold war", keep us in the "Peace of Jerusalem".

H. Amerson Winzler, O.S.B.

A Clothing and A Profession

On Sunday, March 21st, before first Vespers of St. Benedict, Rudy Bernard of New York City was received as a novice. The Prior performed the ceremony of washing the candidate's feet which were kissed by all the community. The candidate was then clothed with the novice's habit and given the name of Anselm.

On Thursday, March 25th, the feast of Our Lady's Annunciation, at an evening Mass, Brother Augustine McGowan, of Oakville, Connecticut, made his simple profession. Before Mass he made his choice between the monastic habit and the garb of a layman. At the offertory he read the formula of the vows which he signed on the altar and sang thrice the words of Psalm 118: "Uphold me, O Lord, according to Thy Word and I shall live; and let me not be confounded in my hope". He was then clothed with the long scapular and the cowl of the professed. Among those who were present at the ceremony were Brother Augustine's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William McGowan.

PILGRIMAGES

The Shrine of Our Lady Queen of Peace will always attract pilgrims. During this Holy Year of Mary, and especially in Mary's month of May, we expect the number will be larger than usual. Men who come singly can as a rule find accommodations in our Guest House. Members of the St. Scholastica League in Elmira have kindly offered to provide or arrange accommodations for ladies and those who come in groups. For information please write to Father Guestmaster.

MEMORIAL GIFTS FOR THE CHAPEL

To give our friends an opportunity to "build Jerusalem", the City of Peace, at Mount Saviour, especially the heart of this Jerusalem, the Chapel of the Queen of Peace, we are enclosing herewith a list of gifts. We are happy to report that two benefactors have already selected the high altar and the tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament Altar.

It is suggested that the chapels in the crypt, as well as other gifts, may be the combined contribution of a family or of some society, or of a group formed expressly for the purpose of making the gift.

These contributions may be made over a period of three years, and like all contributions to Mount Saviour, are tax deductible.



CALENDAR

NOTE: The calendar lists only those feasts or events which have particular connections with the monastery or on which a special horarium is in effect.

- Sat., April 17—The Easter Vigil 10:30 P. M., followed by Mass at midnight.
- Sun., April 18—EASTER, Terce, Procession and Conventual High Mass 9:00 A. M. Vespers and Benediction 4:00 P. M.
- Mon., April 19—EASTER MONDAY, Terce and Conventual High Mass 10:00 A. M.
- Tues., May 4—Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Monastic Profession of Father Gregory Borgstedt, Sub-prior.
- Thurs., May 27—The ASCENSION, Terce and Conventual High Mass 8:50 A. M. Vespers and Benediction 4:00 P. M.
- Thurs., June 17—CORPUS CHRISTI, Terce, Conventual High Mass and Procession 8:50 A. M.
- Sun., June 20—Day of Recollection for the members of the Saint Scholastica League.
- Tues., June 29—SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, Terce and Conventual Mass 8:50 A. M. Vespers and Benediction 4:00 P. M.

On Sundays and great feasts Conventual High Mass at 9:00 A. M.; other days at 6:00 A. M. On Saturdays, Sundays, and great feasts and their virgils Vespers at 4:00 P. M.; on other days at 4:30 P. M.