

Mount Saviour Chronicle

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR

P. O. BOX 3066, ELMIRA, NEW YORK

NUMBER 17

CHRISTMAS, 1960

Dear Friends of Mount Saviour,

"Welcome hither, as spring is to the earth!" We don't say it in so many words, but this Shakespearean greeting expresses the attitude of heart with which we receive the good number of young men who recently have come to live the monastic life with us, or who have settled for a later date for their entering the monastery, or who 'innocently' come for a visit, but with the intention carefully hidden in their hearts of 'sniffing at a vocation'. This 'lions' den increase came at a time when the community's growth in numbers seemed to have come to a stand-still. It looked for a while as if winter had settled on our hill, driving the sap out of the branches and causing some leaves to fall. But the more important aspect of winter is that it is the time for the sap to gather in the roots and to prepare for a new spring. And this probably was the meaning of the 'creative pause' which now seems to lie behind us.

With this Christmas Chronicle I would like to greet all our 'young people', not only the nine who at present form the novitiate group and have been installed at S John's, but all those who are with us in spirit, our Oblates and our friends. You are 'young' because you join the men of Good Will who, at the hearing of the Glad Tidings, hasten to Bethlehem to greet the Divine Infant.

The young people who are with us make us realize what a tremendous responsibility it is to be a custodian of youth. There are those, parents as well as teachers, who for this very reason do not cherish the idea of young people joining a monastery. "Poor fellows," they say, "what do they know about life? How can they go to a monastery, and especially to a 'contemplative' monastery, only to be lost to the world, and to be buried alive?" To me, this attitude is not unfamiliar, because there was a time in my own life when as a young student I thought the same way. Sacristies and rectories were the last places I felt attracted to, and even less did I have any taste for monasteries. I thought of them as sad and dingy places, from which a young man with any sense of humor should keep away. It was in the winter of 1920, when "the night was in the midst of its course", it happened that Your Almighty Word, O Lord, leaped from His heavenly throne, took me by the hair like another Habakuk, and placed me right in

the lions' den—the monastery of Maria Laach in Germany. There I found myself in the company of many Daniel's, wise and happy youths, who, with their arms lifted up to heaven, were singing hymns to God's glory. The 'lions' within them and around them were, under the influence of such soothing melodies, gradually losing their former rapacity and were turning into lambs. How glad I was to join the Daniel's and to sing together with them, from a grateful heart: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction, Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." (ps. 102)

Forty years have passed since then. All of them were spent in the lions' den. Ten of them, here at Mount Saviour. I don't have the feeling that I have been buried alive during these years. Nor do I have the impression that the world has lost anything worthwhile by my becoming a monk. Some things have been lost, it is true, but I ask myself whether the world is worse off without them. Is it the world's gain to keep lions at liberty? What do the people of the world really long for, if not for security and peace? For this reason they welcome dens and Daniel's, to change more lions into lambs. Ever since I came to this country, where a good strong breath of new air is sweeping so many of the old prejudices off the stage of public opinion, I have found that there are more and more people who realize that contemplative monasteries, far from being graves, are rather places where the sap of life returns into the roots to gather strength for a new spring.

It was with such thoughts as these in mind that I decided to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our foundation as a monastery—the decree of the erection of Mount Saviour bears the date of October 11, 1950—by giving the annual retreat to the community. With the exception of our Fr Martin Boler who, after his ordination to the priesthood this summer, had returned to S Anselm's Priory in Washington to complete his last year of theology, we were all together for the first time in our history. The last of our 'Romans', Fr Benedict and Fr Basil, had returned

from their long stay in Europe and were settling down to our life here at Mount Saviour, which differs in many ways from the one they had lived or seen at S Anselmo and in other European abbeys. Present with them was a good nucleus of fifteen full-fledged monks and a group of a dozen 'juniors'. (This vague label comprises, in this case, all those who are not yet in perpetual vows.) But in reality the whole community is composed of 'juniors', and I was the only one whose head has turned white. I was reminded of the time years ago when, as a young novice at Maria Laach, I sat at the feet of my abbot, Ildefonse Herwegen. Rooted firmly in the classical tradition of the Church and of monasticism, he kept the eyes of his mind wide open, scanning the horizons of the future to give scope and direction to the many young men who joined his community. Those were the days of the 'liturgical spring', and Abbot Ildefonse was one of the first to realize the tremendous implications and potentialities of this creative return to the roots. He was deeply convinced that we were entering upon a new era, and he considered it his most serious obligation to equip the new generation, listening to him with such eagerness, with all that is essential and lasting and sound and promising in Christian tradition. This he did in such a way that under the impact of his teaching we felt enabled — to adopt a word of Elizabeth Barrett Browning — "to shoot our souls' full meaning into future years, that they should lend it utterance, and salute Love that endures, from Life that disappears."

The example of Abbot Ildefonse showed the kind of teaching needed to build up a monastic community. According to S Benedict the strongest kind of monks are the cenobites, those who live together as a family. To surround people with a fence of 'rules' is not sufficient to fuse them into a family. "A hot temper leaps over a cold decree." The young man who joins a monastery realizes immediately that his monastic family is not drawn together by the bond of blood, nor by the natural kinship of souls which unites friends in a common affection (nor by common affection which unites kindred souls). To his 'hot temper' the monastery is apt to appear as a 'cold decree'. This experience may produce the first crisis in the soul of a young novice. It is the basic crisis of the monastic life, and it presents the greatest challenge for monastic teaching, which seeks to build up a family, and so cannot suppress the powers of love in man but must rather purify them, channel them, and help them to reach their fulfillment. The Rule of S Benedict is not a 'cold decree'. "In founding this school of the Lord's service we hope to ordain nothing that is harsh or burdensome. But if, for good reason, for the amendment of evil habit or the preservation of charity, there be some strictness of discipline, do not be at once dismayed and run away from the way of salvation, of which the entrance must needs be narrow. But, as we progress in our monastic life and in faith, our hearts shall be enlarged, and we shall run with unspeakable sweetness of love in the way of God's commandments." (Prologue) These words of S Benedict truly shoot the full meaning of a monk's soul "into future years, that they should lend it utterance, and salute Love that endures, from Life that disappears." Monastic teaching should open up this glorious perspective to the young man who leaves his kindred and his father's home to join a monastic family. Neither fear or contempt drive him away from the world, but Your Almighty Word, O God, leaps from His heavenly throne, dispels the mist that hangs between his eyes and the brightness of Your truth, melts away the ice of his sins and bids him lift up his arms in the form of the cross and sing the

new canticle of the Lamb as one in the great choir of those who are 'redeemed from the earth'. (Apocalypse 14:3)

The thoughts we dwelt upon during the retreat shall, God willing, receive a wonderful confirmation in the Solemn Profession of our Brother Thomas Jakubiak, which is scheduled to take place during Mass on Christmas Eve.

Brother Thomas hails from the distinguished town of Barberton, Ohio. His parents raised six children, three brothers and three sisters. One of the brothers is now a priest in the Society of the Precious Blood. The other is a Christian Brother. Two of his sisters are Dominican nuns, which leaves poor little Bernadette the only one still roaming at liberty, but as much a lamb as those already safe in the lions' den. I am sure you will remember Brother Thomas, his brothers, his sisters, and last but not least his parents when you celebrate on that Holy Night the birth of the Divine Child. "The Lord will give goodness, and our earth shall yield her fruit." This promise of the First Sunday in Advent has found a most marvelous fulfillment in the Jakubiak family. For Brother Thomas the Solemn Profession is a new birth in the perfect likeness of the Almighty Word; the Word Who, in the Holy Night, leaps from His heavenly throne to be born from a virgin, to be bound in swaddling clothes, to be laid in a manger, obedient even unto death, only to be raised again from the dead and to become the Prince of life to all who obey Him. But remember that you take part in the same mystery. The Father in heaven cherishes affection toward you who have fled to Him. Having begotten you again by His Spirit, He knows you, He loves You, He aids and fights for you, and therefore bestows on you the name of child. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so also shall I comfort you," says the Father of the Word made flesh, whom Love has made your mother.

Fr. Edmund Winzen, O.S.B.

OFFERINGS AND KINGS

On the Feast of the Epiphany we commemorate the Lord's first public showing of Himself, and that offering of splendid worship by the wise and great kings from the East. We are impressed by its outward richness, by the frankincense and the myrrh and the gold, but we know that what they were doing was to offer themselves, to gather up their belongings, their belief, their wisdom, to lay all before the helpless, swaddled King who was Himself the great offering of divine Wisdom to men. And perhaps we delight in the play of contrasts: rich Kings and a poor Child; they giving brilliant 'nothings' to One who gives everything—hiddenly. Like all feasts of the Christian year, this is a feast of offering and of giving. This year we shall celebrate Epiphany with a special offering, because on that day Brother Joseph Palmer will make his oblation — which means his 'dedication', his 'donation' of himself to God. Having completed his year of novitiate, he will become a Regular Oblate of Mount Saviour. Of course every monk makes an oblation of himself when he takes his vows. But a Regular Oblate, who does not pronounce formal vows, still makes a gift of himself. Our community, united in the single spiritual ideal of the Rule,

has implicit place for men who, while living close to the heart of the communal life, while feeding from the sources of monastic vitality, find their vocations in a more flexible relation both to the outer world and to the monastic horarium. And so we look forward, for Brother Joseph's sake and for what his oblation means for the community, to the Epiphany, when Kings offer gifts, and the Lord shows Himself, and the world in its new year looks forward to spring.

CUBA AND "MODERN COLONIAL"

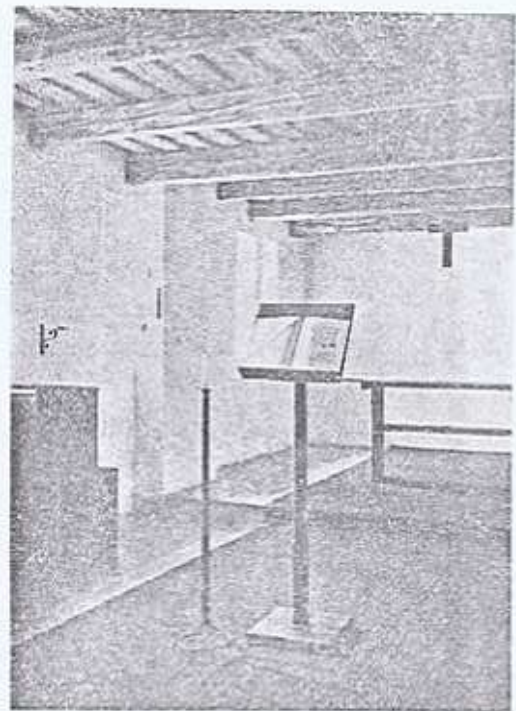
Recently the community enjoyed a lecture by Mr. Emilio Junco, a native of Cuba and now a citizen of Canada where he lives with his wife and children. Mr. Junco is an architect and spoke to us of his concept of a genuine Cuban architecture, the expression in contemporary terms, using contemporary materials, of Cuba's indigenous tradition — the Colonial. In thus expressing traditional forms and spirit in a modern vocabulary, Mr. Junco rejects the extreme theories propounded by the over-cautious — who perhaps hesitate at the freedom with which he makes use in his houses of materials previously considered suitable only for commercial buildings — and by the radical — who denounce him as reactionary for his loyalty to the old forms in which Cuban tradition is enshrined. In fact, the vigor and continuity of "Modern Colonial" grows out of its fidelity to the family spirit of early Cuban homes, the unadorned exteriors of which concealed a whole world within; an interior designed for privacy and intimacy, in which family life flourished, at once protected from a too-casual exposure to outside influences and, at the same time, stabilized in a vivid, creative environment. In such an architecture, the home reflects what is most vital in the society and serves to shape the spirit of succeeding generations.

It was, as you can imagine, an exciting evening for us. In fact, Mr. Junco's visit to Mount Saviour was not professional but social, for he came to see a friend and fellow Cuban, our Brother Galbán, who used to work in Mr. Junco's architectural firm in Havana. Brother Galbán, who has been with us since last June, is the first Cuban ever to enter a Benedictine monastery. To him we are indebted not only for our new friendship with Emilio Junco but also for another friendship.

Before coming to Mount Saviour, Juan Galbán had become actively interested in the newly developing liturgical movement in Havana. One of the leaders of the movement was a young man named Guillermo Romagosa, who had become interested in the liturgy while still in school, had later traveled widely in Europe to become acquainted with liturgical centers and leaders, and had eventually returned to Havana to "announce the glad tidings". As a result of their friendship, Guillermo came to Mount Saviour in the course of a visit to the United States last summer. When the troubled political horizon darkened in Cuba and it seemed inadvisable for him to return, he received the permission and blessing of His Excellency Monsignor Evelio Diaz y Cia, Coadjutor Archbishop of Havana, who had long lent encouragement and support to Guillermo's liturgical apostolate, to stay on at Mount Saviour to begin his studies for the diocesan priesthood.

Thus the wintry wind that blows through Cuba these days, bringing so many leaves to the ground, also helps prepare for a new spring. As our friends look to the future they realize that the clock cannot be turned back. In politics, as in society and in art, and even more in the religious

and spiritual life, "Pure Colonial" is a dead ideal. But a future divorced from the past, severed from its roots, cannot pretend to be life-bearing. "Unconditional Modern" is without benefit to those whom it pretends to house. It is of course in the Church that the future of Cuba lies; but a Church at once true to tradition and vitally responsive to our era, at once protecting her children from a too-casual exposure to outside influence and at the same time stabilizing them in a vivid, creative environment; a Church in which the Cuban family gathers as one around the altar, even as it has customarily gathered as one around the patios of its homes. "All her beauty is from within." A Church-house in Modern Colonial.



O PIONEERS

Unhesitatingly the circling seasons follow one another; seed time and harvest, so different, both bear within themselves the promise of the other. And so with every living thing: the early shoot grows, flowers, bears fruit, and returns to earth, to live on when spring returns. It is wonderful to remember the oak and its acorn as moments of the same living nature.

A recent visitor to Mount Saviour has been Brother Pachomius, of the Austrian monastery of Erlach. Brother Pachomius has told us much of interest concerning his life there; we cannot help feeling that when monasticism came first to Austria, more than a thousand years ago, it must have been like those eager new shoots struggling up through a thick forest floor beneath frosty skies. Slowly the monks established themselves. The pioneers cleared forests, then became farmers, and, ultimately, landed-proprietors. They built great abbeys and in them entertained kings. As time passed they immersed themselves in parish work or in teaching and turned the focus of their lives away from the round of the divine office, reading and manual work. Now in the twentieth century there is left to their countrymen little memory of the monks' simple beginnings. The abbeys are like great oaks whose dignity and age establish them as landmarks. But there is the first shoot of a monastic spring in the tiny monastery of Erlach. There, four or five men

live S Benedict's Rule with devotion and in such simplicity as our holy Father himself may not have envisioned. In farm house recovered from ruin, they live, celebrating their vernacular office in the simple chapel you see pictured here. Hours of work are of necessity long, through daylight into the night. The monks observe a rigorous fast, taking one meal a day, although at times there has scarcely been food enough for that. They are burdened by the high rate of interest on their mortgage and by heavy government taxes. (One example: purchase tax on the farm: 6-2/3%.) Vacations are slow in coming, but there is, particularly among university students and the members of one or two vigorous parishes in Vienna, a strong, small stirring of interest. Visitors are fairly frequent, some (among them Protestants) staying on to share for a time the hard beauty of the life.

We in America have pioneering in our blood. We have yet to cross our last frontier or conquer our last wilderness. We follow with our prayers our Austrian brethren who have discovered, by a return to the roots of their ancient tradition, renewal — the unvarying sign and expression of life.

PURSUE TRUTH IN CHARITY

The return of Fathers Benedict and Basil from Rome in September was a two-fold joy, because it also heralded the opening of our monastic 'school'. While the principal purpose of the new teaching program is to enrich the spiritual life of the entire community, it also provides the courses in philosophy and theology necessary for those monks who are preparing for the priesthood. The Rule of S Benedict establishes for every monk a perfect balance between prayer, holy reading and manual labor, which we try, as much as it is possible to do in our modern times, to keep. In S Benedict's day things were much simpler than they are now. A library of 50 volumes was considered more than sufficient for the intellectual needs of a monastic community, while our library at Mount Saviour already numbers nearly 15,000 volumes; too, farming has developed into a science; and although bookkeeping was surely not one of S Benedict's head-aches, today the financial administration of a monastery requires a whole staff of experts. The need for greater specialization, arising from a highly developed civilization, cannot be ignored by a monastic community. Therefore in our day the balance between prayer, study and manual labor cannot be mathematical,

but must be organic, just as the balance existing among the members of one body is organic; each member fulfills its special function, yet all participate in the life of the whole body. In like manner, the monk serves the whole with his particular gifts in the particular function assigned to him by obedience. But he never ceases to be a monk and as such to give practical witness to that wholeness of life which is an essential mark of his state.

Because we realized the necessity of a sound philosophical and theological training, a good number of our young monks was early sent to Sant' Anselmo in Rome, where they might be free seriously to pursue studies, away from the vicissitudes necessarily attendant on any new foundation. Now as we begin to realize the blessings of these years we would again like to express our gratitude for the generosity of those friends who, even in the days of our very precarious beginnings, and quite without any assurance of visible success, made such hard sacrifices to provide this solid training. For its result is the newly begun school and its good faculty, which includes Father Benedict as Rector and Professor of Philosophy and Theology, Father James as Professor of Theology and Church History, Father Augustine as Professor of Philosophy, Father Basil as Professor of Scripture and Theology, and Father Placid, who teaches such languages as French and Latin. This year the professed monks are studying theological anthropology under Father James, while other courses for those who are preparing for the priesthood are attended by Father Luke, Father David, Brother Thomas, Brothers Daniel and Joseph of Weston, and Guillermo Romagosa. It is for us an inspiration to see our brethren who teach — and who are particularly busy with class preparation this first school-year — helping with the daily chores in the kitchen, the house, and on the farm. With those who teach sharing the daily burden of manual labor, and those who are primarily engaged in manual labor taking part in courses on theological subjects, we strive to achieve in the life of each monk the right balance between intellectual and manual occupation. Already we are experiencing a deep unity in the Spirit: a community of many men, each trying to love God with all his heart, and all his soul, and with every resource at his disposal; each loving God with the peculiar combination of energies and talents which witness to the wonder of Christian personality, to the fullness of the Church, and to His goodness "Who filleth all in all."

ON THANKS GIVING

When the community went down into the crypt after Compline on Thanksgiving Eve we discovered that Father Andrew had placed a great 'bouquet' of autumnal fruits at our Lady's feet, a cornucopia of all the fruits of the year, it seemed. And it served a vivid reminder of the blessings poured out on Mount Saviour by our generous benefactors in the months just past. For all our benefactors, Mass was offered on this Thanksgiving Day, as it is every Thanksgiving, and while it is impossible to thank them all by name, we should especially like to mention our gratitude to all who sent donations for All Souls' Day, to Dr. Joseph Shortsleeve, for his generous and devoted care, not only of Reverend Father but of the community at large, to Henry Mann, for his especially welcome gift of a microfilm reader, and to the National Council of Catholic Men and the producer and staff of the television program "Lamp Unto My Feet", for their kindness on the occasion of Father Gregory's recent appearance on that program.

As we thank all our friends, we remember others who have died since the last appearance of the Chronicle: Oblates Louis Winiecki and Joseph Sturm, and our good friends Babe Crowley and Mary Preston — for whom, we remember, "life is changed, not taken away".

WINTER HORARIUM

Workdays	
4:00 a.m.	Rise
4:20	Vigils
	Lectio
6:45 ca.	Lauds
7:20	Conventional Mass (8:00 Sunday)
	Breakfast
9:00	Prime, Chapter
	Lectio/Class
	Terce
	Work/Classes
12:45 p.m.	Sext
1:00	Dinner
	Siesta/Lectio
2:35	None
	Work
5:20	Vespers (5:00 Sunday)
	Lectio
6:20	Supper
6:45	Recreation or Conference
7:30	Compline Reading,
	Compline
8:10	Retire