



Mount Saviour Chronicle

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Dear Friends of Mount Saviour:

On October 11, the feast of the Maternity of Our Lady, the very day on which in 1950 the papal decree for the foundation of Mount Saviour was signed, Pope John XXIII opened the Second Council of the Vatican. A council is a manifestation of the inner unity of the Church. Its celebration arouses in all of us a deeper awareness of the fact that God has created the hearts of men to be united. It was with this thought in mind that I spurned the amenities of Acapulco this past Spring and set out instead to visit the three cradle cities of Christian unity: Jerusalem, Athens, and Rome. It would be quite impossible to give you in one short Chronicle an adequate account of this memorable trip, which took me first to Cairo, where I was received at the Melkite Patriarchate by the Patriarchal Vicar, Archimandrite Jean Chiniara, with the greatest kindness; from there to the Arab part of Jerusalem, where I felt much at home with the wonderful community of Benedictine nuns on Mount Olivet, and again had contact with the Melkite Church through Bishop Au Saada. Then I slipped through the Mandelbaum Gate into Israel and enjoyed the hospitality of Abbot Leo at the Abbey of the Dormition in Jerusalem and at the little monastery of Tabgah on Lake Genesareth. Then followed a visit with the Greek-Catholic Exarch in Athens, Monsignor Gad, with whom I celebrated Holy Week in the Byzantine Rite with great joy. Finally came Rome, where I spent many happy days which were crowned by an audience with the Holy Father, so human, so lovable and so simple that it makes one deeply happy to be one of his sons. However, of all the places I visited this time, Jerusalem had priority, so I would like to share some of my experiences there with you.

In the Jewish section of the city is situated the Abbey of the Dormition, the 'see' of my dear friend, Abbot Leo Rudloff, who had invited me to visit him. Through conversations with him I had begun to appreciate the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine as an event of truly apocalyptic character. With it the long period of the dispersion of the Jewish people has come to an end. Israel has a home again. Free in their own country, the Jews are in a position to obey their own law. In terms of their own tradition this means more than political independence. The freedom of God's Chosen People is freedom under God, for God, the freedom of a priestly race. It is freedom to serve as an instrument of reconciliation between God and the whole of mankind. A word current in Jewish tradition says: "The country of Israel is in the heart of the earth. Jerusalem is in the heart of Israel. The temple is in the

heart of Jerusalem. The ark of the covenant is in the heart of the temple, and next to the ark is the cornerstone of the world."

The last part of this saying refers to the rock upon which the altar of burnt-offering was placed in the temple that Solomon had built. I never dared hope the day would come when I would see this rock, the 'corner stone of the world', with my own eyes. But in April of this year I was there, on the 'Haram-el-Sherif', the 'place of awe', as the Arabs call the enormous square constructed by Herod the Great for the splendid new temple through which he replaced the older and smaller second temple that had been built after the time of the Babylonian exile. Now that temple has disappeared and the center of the square is occupied by a mosque commonly called that of 'Omar' but in reality erected in the reign of the Calif Abd el Malik at the end of the seventh century A.D. It is an octagon surmounted by a big dome which has just been gilded at the expense of the king of Saudi Arabia. On entering it you find yourself confronting the sacred rock, sacred not only for Jews and Christians, but also for the Mohammedans who say that it is the place from which their Prophet ascended into heaven. Therefore, the golden dome; therefore, the octagon as symbol of the heavenly world; therefore, the rich white, blue, and yellow pattern of the tiles with which the entire outside of the building is covered; inside, golden light from the windows playing on the mosaics, marble columns, capitals, and arches surrounding the famous rock with all the imperial splendor of Byzantine art. One realizes that this is, to the Mohammedan world, the 'Gate of Heaven'.

For the Jew, too, this is the place where heaven and earth meet, but in a different sense. Here King Solomon had the temple built as an image of a world restored to peace through obedience to its creator. Here God and his people would meet, the people praying, God listening. "When a man knows the wound of his heart and spreads forth his hands in this house, then hear thou in heaven, in the place of Thy dwelling, and forgive . . . for Thou alone knowest the hearts of all the children of men." (I Kings 8:38-39) Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple was answered by the solemn assurance: "I have sanctified this house which thou hast built, to put my name there forever, and my eyes and my heart shall be there always." (I Kings 9:3) Here the heart of God would meet the hearts of men; this is the reason why this rock is, to the Jew, 'the cornerstone of the world'.

My thoughts were just on the point of getting lost in the Old Testament past, when a wave of tourists broke

in upon the 'place of awe', and brought me back into the reality of the twentieth century. The wheels of their curiosity were evidently humming at top speed, and yet somehow they seemed to be bored. They were not 'engaged'. Noting their detachment I began to wonder about my own reactions, as a Catholic and as a monk. I knew that after the coming of the Messiah, Jesus, the old question whether people should pray on Mount Garizim or in the temple in Jerusalem had ceased to be a matter of dispute, because the hour had come for true worshippers to worship the Father in spirit and in truth (cf. John 4:23). Does this imply then that my attitude to 'the place' is as detached as that of the modern tourist? The more I thought of it, the more it dawned on me, how much the Lord had loved the temple. When as a boy he got lost in a crowd here he answered the anxious question of his parents by saying: "Could you not tell that I must need be in the place which belongs to my Father?" (Luke 2:49). Consumed with jealousy for the honor of his Father's house (John 2:17) he cast out all that had made the house of prayer a den of thieves. He loved the temple, because it was a figure and shadow of the Son, the Word made flesh. He himself was the temple. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up," he said to the Jews, and St. John adds: "He spoke of the temple of his body." Through his Death and his Resurrection he has become the chief corner stone. In him the whole structure is closely fitted together and grows into a temple holy in the Lord. In him we are all built together into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. (cf. Ephesians 2:20-22) Christ loved the temple, because it was also an image of the Church, his Bride, and I, though being a 'gentile', saw myself brought near in Christ, grafted onto the old olive tree to share the riches of Israel. I was not untouched by the 'magic' of the place. Here, at the cornerstone of the world, I wandered along the paths of God's merciful dealings with men in the course of history. In the light of Christ I was able to see that the One God and the one people and the one temple of the Old Covenant were fulfilled in the One Father and the One Son and the One Church of the New. At the site of the temple I thanked Him who through His blood had brought me into His Father's house. "I was glad when they said unto me: We will go up to the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem that is built like a city, a compact whole."

In these days Jerusalem, the city of peace, is divided between Arabs and Jews. The Old City belongs to the Arabs, and the site of the temple is inaccessible to the Jews. The closest they can get to it on their side is the elevation to the northwest of the temple. Here Dormition Abbey was built in the early part of this century on a place that once formed part of 'the Holy Sion', the famous church which at the time of Constantine the Great had been erected on the site where the Last Supper took place, where on Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, and where, according to the local tradition, the Mother of the Lord 'fell asleep' (whence, Dormition) and was assumed into heaven. I had been looking forward very much to my stay in the Abbey with Abbot Leo. As it turned out, I had the good fortune of being able to celebrate Holy Week there. Our Easter coincided with the Jewish Passover this year. On Wednesday evening Abbot Leo and I were invited to the home of Professor Werblowski, teacher of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University, to participate in the Passover meal. We began at 7 p.m., and returned toward 2 a.m. Yet we did not feel tired. The hours had passed in a flash. The kindness of our hosts, the remarkable competence of Dr. Werblowski, the father of the house who had to preside and explain each new phase of the meal, and most of all, the ceremonies, lessons and

songs accompanying it, made us realize that here we were at the roots of Christianity, deeply engaged in God's loving dealings with men. Like the Mass, the Passover is a memorial meal. Every Israelite is requested to take part in it as if he himself were one of the refugees from Egypt. The deliverance of the People from bondage again becomes present in the minds of all, while at the same time the thought of the future is also alive. During the entire meal the doors to the dining room are kept open in expectation of another guest, Elias, the forerunner of the Messias. A special cup filled with red wine is kept standing on the table, waiting for him. When the meal was at its end without his coming the cup was passed around and all partook of it.

The visit to the site of the temple and the Passover meal focused my attention on the two outstanding symbols which the Old Testament gives us, the house, God's house, as the place where the heart of God and the heart of the people meet; and the meal, where the hearts of those who are united with God are joined together. Now Abbot Leo and I went up to Mount Sion, to the house where the Lord had celebrated the Last Supper, and where the Holy Spirit had descended 'to fill the whole house', the house that can rightly be called 'the mother of all the churches'. The figure and shadow of the Old Testament, the house and the meal, were fulfilled here. The presence at this hallowed spot of a community of Benedictine monks is full of the deepest significance and could be of the most far reaching importance for the inner spiritual history of our days, if only monks would wake up to it and come to the assistance of this small group of monk priests and brothers who, with constant heroic effort, hold onto this truly strategic position. The idea of some place being the cornerstone of the world has become very practical today. With modern means of transportation, people come here from all parts of the globe in a matter of hours. On Mount Sion the crossroads of the world meet. The rapidly increasing number of tourists and pilgrims show it. From all European countries they come by the thousands, as well as from North and South America, from Africa, from Australia, from Asia. The situation of the first Pentecost is repeated: "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia. Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene and visitors from Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians . . ." (Acts 2:9-11); but now it happens on a truly global scale. Here the cradle of the Church and of her liturgy is to be found. Here the New Covenant was established through the institution of the Mass. Here the Christian priesthood was founded when the Lord told the Apostles: "Do this in memory of me." Here the healing power of Christian community life was born when the Lord knelt down to wash the apostles' feet to give them an example of what they should do for one another. Here men were raised to the dignity of friends of God, when Christ said to his disciples: "No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15) Here is the home of Christian prayer. The Divine Office was started here, with Mary and the disciples 'all together in one place' (Acts 2:1). What a place for monks to give witness to the fact that all the gifts the Church received in this house from her Master and Bridegroom are still alive today, "that we have come to Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels, and to the Church of the firstborn . . . and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant" (Hebrews 12:22-24).

On Holy Saturday Abbot Leo and I went to En Karem, the little village of the Visitation, outside Jerusalem, where the Dames de Sion have a beautiful place commanding a wonderful view of the surrounding hill country. Father Marie Ratisbonne, a convert from Judaism and founder of the community, is buried here. A whole group of Christians of Jewish descent had assembled here to celebrate Holy Week according to the Latin rite, but in Hebrew. It was a great joy to meet these members of 'the house of Jacob', incorporated into Christ without losing their identity as Jews. A little later we visited the 'house of Isaias' where two Dominicans had started a little center of Jewish-Christian studies. We were deeply impressed by the truly monastic simplicity and poverty, by the striking beauty of their little chapel, and by the spirit in which they approached their task. They told us about their experiences during a study week on religious questions which they had attended at Beer-Sheba at the invitation of the Jewish government. At this stage, while the main effort of the people is concentrated on the material end of things, religion does not seem to be too much in the foreground in Israel. A little joke was making the rounds which could be taken as indicative of the general atmosphere. "What is the difference between Ben Gurion and the Messiah? 'Ben Gurion refuses to go, and Messiah refuses to come.'" There seems to be a lack of religious leadership, perhaps as a result of the inner dilemma inherent in the very fact of the return of the People to the Promised Land. The letter of the Old Testament demands that the Law of Moses should become public law in a Jewish state established in the Holy Land. Because this is not possible in the twentieth century, religion and reality clash, and the pious Jew withdraws from the public scene. Religion in Israel suffers from the paralysis of the Law.

Remember from the Gospels the description of the healing of the paralytic: how the four men carried him, and unable to get close to the Lord on account of the throng, they removed the roofing where he was, and through the opening lowered the cot on which the paralytic lay. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic: "Son, thy sins are forgiven." But at that the scribes, the 'lawyers', began to object: only God can forgive sins. They were right. But in this instance the Saviour was also the Creator, Son of God, and son of man, and he said to the paralytic: "I say to thee, rise up, take up thy cot, and go home." (Mark 2:3-11) All this can be applied to Israel today. I shall never forget that Easter morning when suddenly all the bells of Jerusalem began to ring. Like a mighty chorus their voices rose from the Old City, and swept over the walls into the Jewish part, where the beautiful bells of Mount Sion answered them. Our good Brothers pulled the ropes with all their might, and their message rang forth over Israel: "Rise up, take up thy cot, and go home!"

Dear friends of Mount Saviour, we are 'engaged' in this story, too. The sick man needed his four friends to carry him on his cot, to get him through the crowd of those who were only interested in their own health, pull him up onto the roof, loosen the shingles, and lower him to just the place where the Lord was sitting. We should be those four men. Thank God for the monks on Mount Sion, for the Dominicans at the house of Isaias, for the brave Benedictine nuns on Mount Olivet, the bishops and priests of the Melkite Church, the Little Brothers of Jesus, all the religious and layfolk trying to do this all through the Near East, fighting against overwhelming odds, suffering under all kinds of political pressure. But most of all let us pray for our Holy Father in Rome, that the deepest intention of his heart may be fulfilled, that he may find

in the Fathers gathered in the Council eager helpers to carry the sick to the Lord, to take off the shingles, and to open the roof of the Church, through which they may be lowered down right to the spot where the Lord is waiting for them. Let me conclude, then, by addressing to you at this solemn hour of the opening of the Second Vatican Council the words that once could be read in the baptistry of the Vatican, where St. Peter's Chair was kept: 'Go where the Spirit calls: seek unity, and all his gifts are yours.'

F. Damien Wignm, O.S.B.

NEWS

Among our summer guests Mr. Theodore Marier, choirmaster of St. Paul's, Cambridge, Mass., in addition to visiting Mount Saviour for the first time himself, ingratiated himself till the end of time with us by bringing as visitor Dom Joseph Gajard, choirmaster of Solesmes. It was a reunion for several of the community who had met him, and in some cases, studied with him, at Solesmes. For all it was the occasion of a charming chant class: Dom Gajard, with all the vast mildness and wit of which he is capable, considerably flattering us into singing as we should, Mr. Marier translating the words from French into English but allowing Dom Gajard's chuckles, grimaces, and eloquent eyes to speak for themselves.

It is perhaps a little inexact, or at least a bit unusual, to classify a retreat-master as a welcome guest. To be sure, he is always welcome, but sometimes, by way of afterthought, more as purgative than as fuel for a fire already burning. Dom Jean Leclercq, of the Abbey of Clerveaux, Luxembourg, proved the contrary. During and after the retreat there could be no way of conceiving of him other than as welcome guest and deeply loved brother. In private he admitted that he sometimes disguises his book or lecture titles in a way that will discourage all but the most serious from paying much attention to them. But in public conference and in conversation his deep Christian humanity was impossible to disguise. If the dates of September 15 to 21 blur in our memory as the exact time of the retreat, the experience itself will remain vivid for years to come.

We have tried to send personal thanks to all who contributed to 'Dedication Day', September 23 this year, but wish to reiterate the thanks we have already tendered and extend them to all we may inadvertently have passed by, as well as to the several hundreds of friends who came to make or renew their acquaintance with Mount Saviour.

On August 9 Mr. Ronald Roseman, a guest, gave us an oboe concert. Mr. Roseman apologized for the absence of the four other members of the quintet he plays with, but no apologies were necessary, because his solo concert filled the novitate scriptorium with beautiful melodies. A few weeks later, on August 19, Mr. John Steczynski gave a guitar and folk song concert that was such a success he had to give another on the 20th.

Among summer departures was that of Reverend Father Damasus, on August 31, for Saint Louis where he gave the retreat to the community of Pius X Monastery in Pevely, Missouri, and attended the consecration of the new and unusual monastic church of the English Benedictine Priory of Saints Mary and Louis. On September 8 Fathers Placid and Basil went to Waverly, not far from us, to represent the community at the blessing of the Carmelite Novitiate by his Excellency Bishop Kearney. One sign of the friendly competition that has already grown up between us is that now when one refers to 'the monastery' in Elmira or Corning it is no longer merely a question of guessing between the Benedictine monks and the cloistered Dominican nuns! This is the first opportunity we have had of welcoming the friars to the southern tier of New York, our home country. God give them long life and many vocations! We should also thank our brother monks of the Russian Orthodox community of Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N. Y., who welcomed Fathers Gregory, Aelred, James, and Laurence to their celebration of the vigil and liturgy of the Exaltation of the Cross, on September 21.

The most solemn departure of the summer, and the saddest, from our point of view, was that of Father Raphael who returned to Maria Laach in Germany after having spent a year with us, working out simplification of our monastic ceremonies and introducing the community to the intricacies of a simplification of our divine Office. Thanks to the gracious permission of the authorities in Rome we are experimenting with a new arrangement of the psalms in our Office, an improvement over the previous arrangement that is coincidentally going to be of help when the construction of our monastic buildings begins, because of its somewhat shorter length. Besides these really unique services he performed for the community, Father Raphael left the memory of his sharp wit and decisive and adventurous spirit when telling stories in English at recreation.

To fill the gap left by Father Raphael we have clothed and named five new novices since the last time we were in touch with you. On August 5 Brothers San Fratello and Coffey were renamed Joseph and Philip; and on October 5 Brothers Oehl, Belden, and Lambert became Michael, Dunstan, and Bernard. We now have a grand total of nine novices, for which God be praised. But the postulate is almost empty at the moment; Brother James Turner is praying real hard, either for companions, or for the novice's scapular.

We bring you a message from our shop where Christmas cards, cards for all occasions, medals, rosaries, statues, books, etc., are available. In this season, it is featuring Advent calendars and creche sets. Afternoon shop hours: 1:30 to 5:00. The road really has been paved, since 1959; snow, when it comes, should not deter you, because the town of Big Flats sees to it that our road is as clear as a city street.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Church and the Council

Catholicism, by Henri de Lubac, S. J. (Sheed and Ward, 1958). Written some years ago this book is of perennial importance and of particular actuality at the present time.

The Council, Reform and Reunion, by Hans Kung (Sheed and Ward, 1961) An outstanding contribution to understanding the matters for discussion while the Council meets.

Progress and Perspectives, by Gregory Baum, O.S.A. (Sheed and Ward, 1962) By an acknowledged authority on Ecumenism, this is a book of information and a plea. 'The Catholic Quest for Christian Unity' is the descriptive subtitle.

Approaches to Christian Unity, by C. J. Dumont, O.P. (Helicon, 1959) A book of 'Doctrine and Prayer' by the director of the Ecumenical Center 'Istina' in Paris.

The Council, the Church and Christendom, by Lorenz Jaeger (P. J. Kenedy, 1962) A thorough study, more conservative than Kung.

The Christian in the Church

Prayer, by Hans Urs von Balthasar (Sheed and Ward, 1962) Profound study by a great theologian.

Early Christian Prayers, by A. Hamman, O.F.M. (Regnery, 1961) An invaluable anthology by a well-known authority of the riches of the first six centuries of the Church's prayer.

Spirituality of the New Testament, by W. K. Grossouw (Herder, 1962) A study of the authentic source and acute comparison of biblical with 'modern' piety.

Christian Holiness, by Gustave Thils (Desclee, 1962)

Introduction to Spirituality, by Louis Bouyer (Desclee, 1962) Important and practical studies of the spiritual life by distinguished masters.

ALL SOULS

We shall remember in our Masses on All Soul's Day and throughout November the names of the departed sent to us for this purpose. A list for the names is included. These lists will be placed under the altar for the month.

WINTER HORARIUM SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS

3:55 a.m.	rise
4:15	vigils, lauds lectio/low masses
7:45	prime
8:00	conventual mass breakfast
9:40	terce, chapter lectio
1:00 p.m.	sext dinner dishes, siesta
2:45	none lectio/walk/records
5:00	vespers
6:00	supper
6:30	recreation
7:30	compline
8:10	retire

WORKDAYS

4:10 a.m.	rise (3:55-3 Noct days)
4:30	vigils (4:15-3 Noct days) lectio/low masses
7:00 ca.	lauds
7:30	conventual mass breakfast
9:05	prime, chapter lectio/class (45 min) terce work/classes
1:00 p.m.	sext dinner lectio (thu & sat: dishes)
2:45	none work (thu: walk/records)
5:20	vespers lectio
6:20	supper (sat: 6:00)
6:45	recreation or conference
7:30	compline
8:10	retire