



# Mount Saviour Chronicle

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR  
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Dear Friends of Mount Saviour, rejoice with us, for the glory of Easter rises over Jerusalem, as Christ the King comes forth from the tomb like a bridegroom to celebrate his wedding-feast with his Church. Rejoice with us, because our two brothers, Elias (Neil) Mandell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Mandell of Scarsdale, N. Y., and Peter (John) Leinenweber, son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Leinenweber of Joliet, Ill., will be united to Christ through their monastic consecration in the Holy Night of the Lord's Resurrection. After five years of preparation they pronounce their final vows and are received into the community as full-fledged monks. Together with Christ they celebrate their wedding-feast. May this Chronicle help that all of us, monks, oblates and friends of Mount Saviour, may share wholeheartedly in their joy.

A wedding is usually an occasion for general rejoicing among the relatives and friends of bridegroom and bride, but unfortunately the blessed and solemn moment when a monk binds himself to Christ as the bridegroom of his soul, does not always meet with general enthusiasm. How few will even consider it in the light of a wedding-feast, as a triumph of love! There are many who in a certain mood of compassion sympathize with the poor lad, who for the rest of his life is locked up in the monastery never to have a good time again. There are others who complain: "Too bad to lose him. The world needs a good fellow like him." Reactions like these are very understandable whenever the monastic life is being considered as a kind of spiritual cruising in outer space of contemplation, while the mission of the Christian layman is seen exclusively in his launching out with a big creative "yes and amen" into this visible world and the tasks it offers. If this were true, monk and layman would indeed belong to two different worlds. Their mutual association could result only in confusion. The monk being distracted by the layman and the latter losing his sense of reality under the influence of the former. You know that our view of the monastic life here at Mount Saviour is a different one. We have always main-

tained that there is only one clear "class-distinction" in the Church and that is the distinction between the layman and the priest, and that the monk as monk belongs to the laity. The monastic consecration has nothing to do with the sacramental ordination of the priesthood. The latter confers a distinct supernatural "character". It places the one who receives it in a definite rank in the hierarchical structure of the Church, gives him power to perform the sacraments, invests him with authority. He ceases to be a "mere" layman by becoming a priest. Nothing like this happens at the solemn profession of our two brothers. They remain laymen. No powers are given to them that any Christian layman does not possess through his baptism and confirmation. The way of life to which they vow themselves is not essentially different from that of every baptized Christian. They want to love God with their whole heart, with their whole bodily life and with all they love. They want to achieve unity and wholeness in God. The traditional language of the Scriptures and the Church calls it "perfection". But this perfection consists in drawing out the lines of a spiritual profile which basically has been given in the grace of baptism and is indicated in the baptismal vows. It is precisely for this reason that the monastic consecration has been called a "second baptism", not that it would be another baptism on top of the first, but because it is the most total free and conscious realization of what has happened in baptism. One of the monastic fathers, Philoxenus of Mabbagh, explains clearly what is meant here when he says: "Although through baptism we have put off the old man with the new, we have not personally experienced these changes, because it was grace that accomplished them both. The mystery has been fulfilled in us only by the "hearing" of the faith. But now (in the monastic profession) it is a question of willing to lay aside the old man and of being aware, by our labor and our fatigue, that we have done so, instead of passively leaving this to the hearing of faith. Now it is a question of becoming conscious through experience, by our suffering and

tears, by love of God and pure prayer, by continual petition, by wonder and contemplation of the majesty of God, as the inner man runs swiftly towards the Lord." The monks are then not something different from the laity but rather its flower. What is deepest in the Christian layman finds an expression and witness in them.

It is true, the monk leaves the world and enters the monastery, but is this something so unusual? Is it not taken for granted that every wedding-feast ends with the departure of the bride and the bridegroom? Nobody minds if man leaves father and mother to cleave to his wife, because a new love needs a new home and every home has its enclosure and its order of life, so that husband and wife may be free to live for one another. Let us realize that the monastic consecration is the monk's wedding-feast with God that the monastery is not an "institution" but a home where he lives the law of his love. Then we shall understand also that the enclosure is not a prison-wall but that it ensures the freedom the monk needs to live for God alone. It separates him and protects him from the pressure with which the world, in this state of fallen nature, tends to interfere with our love of God by forcing upon us a pattern of life, which, although it may at best leave some room for Christ, it is yet primarily geared to the survival, the success and the perpetuation of man himself. The monastic enclosure is a means to enable the monk to establish an order of life, of which Christ is the actual center and Lord, down to the last detail. It wants to protect the freedom of the Holy Spirit who is sent to us by the Risen Saviour. He transforms, not only the inward man but our entire being according to the measure of his grace, filling some with the desire to be undivided and wholly his. Why should a liberal world like ours begrudge this liberty of the Spirit? Moreover, why should a Christian layman not rejoice when he sees a brother in Christ responding so fully to the same Spirit that also dwells in him, puts to death all the base pursuits of the body, and lifts up his heart to sing and make music to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Let us then rejoice together at the wedding-feast of our two brothers. They are God's gift to us. Let us make them our gift to God so that through thanksgiving we may all share in the fulness of the Spirit that is their happiness and ours.

The very fact that Brother Elias and Brother Peter celebrate their wedding-feast in the course of the Easter Vigil, makes it clear that the monastic life blossoms forth from the same Spirit that is given to all Christians through baptism and confirmation, and that it is consummated in the same festive meal in which we all participate. The Holy Night, in which the Son of God made man passes through death into life, is our common mother. We celebrate it as a "Vigil", as a night without sleep, spent in waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom, impatiently anticipated by reading, singing and praying. It begins when the sun of the day is setting and the lamps are kindled. It lasts all through the night and ends with the rising of the new day. Going through the various phases of evening, night and

morning, the vigil becomes in itself a summary of Christian life. It is the celebration of "the Day that the Lord has made." Man's day begins with the morning when "he rises to go to his work." (Ps 103) The new day that Christ has made is a day of God's grace, not of man's doing. For this reason it begins in the evening when "the day expires and the shadows lengthen," (Canticle 2:17) when man stops working and returns home to allow his tired body to rest under a roof. Christ, the Sun of Justice, entered into man's evening when he took our weakness upon himself, handed over his spirit and died for us on the cross. But this setting of the Sun of Justice over Golgotha was not an end. It was the beginning of the new day of the Resurrection, the day that the Lord has made.

The first interior step we should take together with our two brothers is to realize that the Christian's day like the monk's day, begins in the evening, because it is a day of grace, not of human accomplishment. The glaring light of pride, of self-complacency, of success, power, wealth and all kinds of material satisfaction has to fade away before the transitoriness of human happiness. The sorrow for our sins, the readiness to humble ourselves appear like lengthening shadows on the horizon of our hearts. This is the Christian evening. But it does not envelop us in the darkness of despair, because it is brightened by the kindling of a new light, a weak little candle-light, yet a quiet, kindly, irresistible light. It takes up the fight against the terror of darkness as David takes up the fight against Goliath. Those who behold it, greet it with joy: "Hail kindly light!" This light that brightens the night of the Christian is the Word of God made flesh. It is not kindled by the will of man, but by God, who, in the beginning of the world's day, spoke that light should shine forth from darkness, and now, in the evening of man's day, causes light to shine forth from the face of Christ Jesus. Proceeding from the Father's bosom and dwelling with us as our brother, obedient unto the death of the cross, the Son of God made man carries the light of God's mercy into the night of our sin. This kindly light is shown to us in the Easter candle, when the deacon exclaims: "Light of Christ!" Full of joy we answer: "Thanks be to God!" Our answer is our faith, the reflection in our hearts of that infinite divine love that conquers the darkness of sin in us, because it is our reconciliation and our peace with God. Now, when the procession forms and we follow the Easter candle together with our two brothers, we experience that deep inner solidarity of all God's poor ones, on our common flight from Egypt and our common search for a home, where "justice and peace kiss each other." Together we run while we have the light of life, that the shadows of death may not overtake us. Together we return under the guidance of the gospel in the labor of obedience to the one whom we have left in the sloth of disobedience. Again and again we stop to turn anew to the light of Christ that leads us on, and we turn to one another to kindle our candles, that the light of Christ may spread. By the time we reach the sanctuary the night is changed into day, and the deacon bursts out

into the praises of both, the light and the night, the light of God's love and the night of man's sin. God's redemptive mercy turns, through Christ's death and resurrection, night into day, so that the night becomes illumination to the unspeakable joy of our hearts. Born in the night, rising in the night, Christ shows to us that he is the day of the Father's mercy that triumphs over the night of our sins. To give witness to this basic aspect of our Christian faith and life is the meaning of the vigil, so frequent in former days, but now, for the Christians at large, limited to the Paschal Night. If the monks keep up the old custom making it a part of their daily pattern of life, they preserve a common Christian heritage: the impatience in which the "children of the light" anticipate, by watching and praying, already here on earth, what they shall one day be: the eternal Day of Christ, that knows no evening.

The light of the Easter candle falls on the pages of Holy Scripture, while the quiet of the night disposes the mind, freed from the impressions and preoccupations of the day, to listen to the Word, that now again, as in the Paschal Night in Egypt, leaps from his heavenly throne, while the night is in the middle of her course. In the light of the beginning of all beginnings, the Word that in the beginning was with God, through whom all things came to be, we look back in four lessons from the Old Testament to the creation of the universe and of man, to the birth of Israel through the escape from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea, to the day of the Messiah and of Jerusalem, and to the last exodus of God's people into the Promised Land. Seeing these beginnings in the light of the Easter candle we realize that now, in this Holy Night of Christ's death and resurrection, they are being fulfilled in us, and in a special way in our two brothers, Elias and Peter. To become a monk means to become fully man, in that fullness which God's redeeming love bestows upon him. Through the vow of obedience he becomes fully a son of his heavenly Father. Through the vow of stability in the community he becomes fully a brother in Christ. The vow of conversion of morals turns the night of his old self into the day of the new man, so that in largeness of heart he turns with unspeakable sweetness of love in the way of God's commandments.

The reading of the prophecies has prepared our faith for the sacramental initiation which begins with the baptism of the neophytes and ends with the celebration of the Eucharistic meal. The bridge between "Word" and "Sacrament" is formed by the singing of the litany of the Saints. The pilgrim-Church here on earth joins the communion of saints in heaven. From the expectation in faith we pass into the realm of union in charity. Since our chapel, not being a parish church, has no baptismal font, the baptismal part of the sacramental celebration is limited to the blessing of Holy Water and the renewal of the baptismal vows by the congregation. We renounce the devil, all his works, and all his pomps, and pledge our allegiance to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This renunciation and this profession are in themselves a "pascha", our per-

sonal passing from the kingdom of the Prince of this World into the Kingdom of God.

Although the monastic vows are made by our two brothers only later in the course of the last part of the Easter Vigil, the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, we do well to speak about them right here, because it is in the baptismal vows that they are rooted. An age that is centered so much on man as ours is, will be inclined to reject altogether the idea of a vow, especially that of a perpetual vow. It is indeed true that neither the baptismal vows nor the monastic profession can be made on the basis of human feelings, for they are part of a pact made with God. Man could never "make" such a pact on his own initiative nor carry it through on the strength of his own will. They are not mere human resolutions to do this or that. They can only be the public expression of an interior grace, of a bond of love with God, mysteriously established in the depth of the heart by the Holy Spirit. These vows are an act of faith, the echo of a pledge made first by God, the true and faithful God, who established a new and eternal covenant with us through Christ, the High Priest. In this very Easter Night Christ our High Priest "offered himself without blemish to God, a spiritual and eternal sacrifice". (Heb 9:14) In this night "he has entered heaven to appear before God in our behalf". (Heb 9:24) In this night "we have been consecrated through the body of Jesus Christ once and for all". (Heb 10:10) Christ has in this night of his death and resurrection forgiven us all our sins. He has cancelled the bond which stood against us. He has annulled it, nailing it to the cross. On that cross he discarded the powers and authorities of this world . . . leading them captives in his triumphal procession. (Cf. Col 2:13-15) What Christ has done for us in this night, enables us to break the old pact with satan while renouncing him publicly. Our profession of faith makes us partakers of the new covenant which does not consist of another set of laws to be observed, but exists in the risen Christ himself. Our pact with Christ does not rest on the shaky ground of promises made by us to do this or that for him. Its true nature is best expressed in the symbol of the white garment which the newly baptized receives. The act of baptism is our being clothed with the risen Saviour.

"You who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ". (Gal. 3:27) The monastic vows are of a similar nature. But evidently they suppose the baptismal covenant and grow out of it. For this reason they are being celebrated in the course of the Eucharist. At the moment when the gifts are being brought to the altar our two brothers take their profession charts and go to the side of the altar where the gifts have been offered. The celebrant and the deacon turn to them and while all stand in reverent attention, each of the brothers reads his chart aloud, shows to the celebrant and the deacon that he has signed it with his own hand, and places it on the altar which he then kisses. Returning to the side of the altar both sing three times, each time on a higher note the verse: "Receive me, O Lord, according to your word, and I shall live, and

let me not be confounded in my hope." The other professed monks repeat the verse each time, and then the whole choir sings: "Glory be to the Father . . ." At the conclusion of the doxology the two brothers prostrate before the altar and all pray in silence. The celebrant then blesses the monastic cowl and clothes the brothers. Both have gathered up in their vows their entire life, past, present and future, to hand it over to Christ. By the vow of stability they offered their being — in the name of the Father; in the vow of obedience their will — in the name of the Son; by the vow of conversion of life their every action — in the name of the Holy Spirit. Every vow is really a prayer, offered in the name of Christ: "Receive me, O Lord, according to your word!" A prayer, therefore, that carries with it its fulfillment: "and I shall live!" Where we as human beings are concerned it ends in the silence of absolute surrender, but God answers it with the creation of the new man.

After the two monks have received their places in choir the Mass continues. Their profession charts have been laid upon the altar, that what they have offered, may now "be consecrated by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ." (cf. Hebr. 10:10) With their whole being they enter into Christ's passing from this world to the Father. With Christ

they have died, with Christ they rise. With him they enter into the Kingdom. "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who made a marriage feast for his son." (Matthew 22:2) The voices of all God's people rise in a mighty wave of jubilation: "Alleluia! for the Lord, our God Almighty now reigns! Let us be glad and rejoice and give glory to him, for the marriage feast of the Lamb has come, and his spouse prepared herself . . . Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" (Apoc.19:7-19:9) With the Eucharistic banquet the glorious celebration of the Easter Vigil closes.

Risen with Christ we seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Are we not truly in heaven? Have we not all left the world with Christ, following through darkness the lead of the kindly light? Now that we have arrived at the home of the Father, there is no leave-taking anymore, no cloister-walls, no divisions, because we are all monks, all planted firmly in the garden of paradise in eternal stability, all clothed in the same habit, the Risen Christ, all celebrating the same wedding-feast with the Lamb.

— Father Damasus Winzen, O.S.B., Prior

## *St. Joseph's: Old Monastery - New Guest House*

For the past fourteen years, we have had to accomodate our guests in the farm buildings at St. James' and St. John's a half mile down the hill from the Chapel. The accomodations were quaint, to say the least, and not everyone knows that St. James' Annex was once a milking parlor. True, there was a certain romanticism in staying there, but not everyone enjoyed the long, uphill walk to Chapel. So, it was a happy day early last winter when our men guests began regularly living in the cells of St. Joseph's vacated by the monks who, in turn, moved to their new quarters. The monks themselves built a large portion of St. Joseph's, although it took them three years, from 1954 to 1957, and our dear, late Br. Christopher did all the contracting, personally. The monks occupied it from 1957 to 1964. Its kitchen and laundry served the whole monastery, over one hundred thousand meals having been served in its refectory.

Consequently, it badly needs refurbishing. To redecorate, repair and furnish it and St. Peter's will cost nearly fifteen thousand dollars. Although it would seem good business sense to charge a modest rate for staying in the guest house, we never have done it. Some of our guests simply cannot afford it, especially students. We think you will agree that it is particularly important that students feel free to come and stay with us, for the future of the Church depends so much on our Catholic students. We therefore turn to you for help, if you feel you can afford it. How can you help? By contributing:

\$ .50	to tile one square foot of kitchen floor
1.00	for a 10 lb. bag of nails
4.50	for one hour's wages for a craftsman
5.00	for a gallon of paint
15.00	for a chair
36.00	for a day's wages
100.00	for a desk
180.00	for a week's wages
700.00	for exterior painting