



# Mount Saviour Chronicle

NUMBER THIRTY - ONE • ADVENT 1967

Dear Friends of Mount Saviour,

Who would not love Advent: the season of the longer evening, the season of longing, of busy preparation for Christmas with its gifts; a time of beautiful texts in the liturgy, of being filled with heavenly desire for the birth of the Christ child. Advent also reminds us of the fact that Christ is still coming, that we are still seeking, that the "rest" is still a promise. It reminds us that we are still groaning with this whole creation for the Saviour, who delivers us from bondage and leads us into the land of perfect liberty.

Advent transfers us into the age of the prophets of old who saw from far away the first dawn of salvation. With St. John the Baptist we stand on the banks of the Jordan River and look towards the Promised Land, salvation. We ourselves feel so far away from salvation. We look at ourselves, at the world; we feel our helplessness. This is a good disposition because it opens the heart for the salvation coming from above. "Drop down dew, you heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just one; let the earth be opened and bud forth a saviour." Salvation is needed; it comes from the Lord. It is through his love, grace, mercy that God fulfills the promises he made to the chosen people in the Old Testament.

The Word of God, our salvation, comes down to us. This Word wants to enter the depths of our heart. It calls us to conversion, to a new life. It does not want to overwhelm or destroy us but to become one of us, to make us children of God. It is for us to say with our Lady, "Let it be done." In this simple response is faith that gives fulness to our life. We must never drown out by the noise of human existence the voice of the Father's mercy-carried by the angel to Mary.

In the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Advent, John the Baptist announces the coming of the messiah: "Prepare the way of the Lord." Quoting Isaiah 40:3-5, he announces that "all mankind shall see the salvation of God." But the Hebrew word *yachdov*, "together," is not translated in our texts. It is this "together" which signifies the special characteristic of the Advent season, of this time of preparation and patient waiting. Like our Lady we wait in faith, hope, joy — for the coming of Emmanuel. Through faith in love we are open to the One who comes. And more, we are open to one another, to renewing our bonds of friendship and love. It is this "together" which underlies our exchange of tokens of appreciation. With this *Chronicle* we reach out to share with you something of our life and hope. In these pages we express our gratitude to God for those who went before us on this hill; we share our thoughts on liturgical music and the news

of our Brothers in New Mexico. United in our common expectation of the Saviour, we await our salvation together.

*Fr. Almarin Witzum, O.S.B.*

## THE PEACE PLAQUE BLESSING

On the Southwest corner of the farm house we named after St. Peter, there is a bronze plaque which we blessed and fixed there last summer. Many of you know the stone house with its wooden additions. The original stone portion is 103 years old. But a full century has elapsed since a family first settled permanently where our buildings now stand. In 1858 Melchior and Conrad Nagel, immigrants from Germany, purchased 181 acres and proceeded to clear the land. Some of the thoughts we shared with those who gathered for the blessing of the bronze Peace Plaque seem worth sharing with you this Advent.

As monks we witness to the divine dimension in all things. And there is a divine dimension to the bronze plaque and the stone house. By joining those enduring elements of stone and bronze we witness to all who see them that this house has made a permanent impression on our hearts. The lives of those who came before us on this hill have been written indelibly in our minds. We see in the advent of the Nagels and Hofbauers more than building skill and craftsmanship. The house and the land they worked reveal to us the loving care of men for their families, their hope in a future under God, and their trust in one another. This confidence in nature, in themselves, and in God is what we bless and make permanent here.

## MAN AND TIME

The revelation of God is accomplished through man in Time. We believe the Nagels and Hofbauers had a share in that revelation. It would be well to say a few words about what we mean by "through man in Time." Our Father has given his Son Jesus Christ the task of reconciling man to God and of revealing God to man. Our role as ambassadors of Christ in this reconciliation is so familiar to us that perhaps we overlook the role we share with Christ in the revelation of God. If the Church is the extension of the Incarnation in time and space, then it is through those of us who are living that this mystery receives its "time dimension." The promise of Christ to abide with us until the end of time does not excuse us from using all our human energies and ingenuity to give that promise historical reality. We will give an example of what we mean from the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, but first let us consider how Time is a central factor in all this.

Christ is the fullness of the Godhead corporeally. But does he have the fullness of the Eternity of God? Yes, certainly, but he has chosen to have it and manifest it in conjunction with other men. One of the reasons he established his Church was precisely to manifest the Eternity of God. What we call Eternity in God can be expressed by continuity of time in man. Continuity, duration, and history are synonyms in human language for a reality of Time that corresponds to the mystery of Eternity in God. An example may help here. It is not sufficient to say that animals continue their species by natural instinct. A tree doesn't seed and reproduce itself simply because of nature. Something of the Creator's Eternity is reflected in all creatures. They manifest his Eternity by their continuity. Their striving to maintain their species is at one with their striving to manifest his Eternity. Ultimately, continuity in nature is evidence of the Eternity in the One whom it praises by its being.

Time itself is one of God's creatures. It is the result of an act of God which enables us to be and to be able to manifest him. This is why Time is so precious. It affords a medium in which the infiniteness of God can be expressed in human terms and grasped by man. Time thus conceived has two functions: it serves to reveal something of God, and it is instrumental in his coming to us and our going to him. But Time must be continuous if it is to manifest the Eternity of God. If we call this continuous Time history, then history enters into our salvation and becomes part of it. Albert Einstein expressed this well when he wrote: "A hundred times every day, I remind myself that my inner and outer life depend upon the labors of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure that I have received."

We are now in a position to say something about the role of man in the revelation of God in Time. We reveal or manifest God as individuals since we are created in his image and likeness; but as a community of persons we also mirror the Holy Trinity. When we honor the Nagels and Hofbauers, we recognize the role they played in both these ways. The same is true of us as a community of monks who will maintain this continuity in Time.

There is a reciprocity between the efforts of the individual and the group in Time. Sacred Scripture is a record of the reciprocity between the individual and the community revealing God. A parallel can be drawn between the promise of Christ to remain with us until the end of Time that we mentioned earlier, and the promise of God to send a redeemer and messiah. We can gain the best idea of our role in revealing his presence among men in Time by examining the history of the earlier promise.

#### THE GENEALOGY OF CHRIST

The two genealogies recorded in the Gospels emphasize different aspects of the human lineage of Christ. We learn from them how much ingenuity, courage, and faith we must supply so that God can work in history. St. Luke's genealogy covers the whole range of salvation history. St. Joseph is son of Eli, son of Japheth, son of Nathan, son of Levi, son of Shem, son of Noah, son of Lamech, son of Methusaleh, son of Enoch, son of Seth, son of Adam who was son of God. The point is not so much the accuracy of the names, but that without a continuity of individuals, Christ would not have been born. The

fact that God expects our utmost in human ingenuity and courage rarely occurs to us. But this is strikingly shown by the women in St. Matthew's genealogy of Christ. In order to give historical reality to what God had promised to bring about, Tamar had to resort to intercourse with her father-in-law; Bathsheba went counter to a successful political coup which had the support of the army, and re-couped it; Ruth although excluded by divine law from the assembly of God, managed to marry into it. This is the hope and confidence and love we must have if God is to accomplish his designs through us. This kind of a person is worthy of bringing forth Christ. This determination to succeed is required of us if we are to reveal God in Time.

When we are about to celebrate the birth of Christ, the revelation of God accomplished through men in Time, we consider these things anew: the fidelity of God to his promise and his great love for us, the fidelity and love and hope of those who followed him. As monks of Mount Saviour we recognize, we bless, and make our own all that God and man have done in the mainstream of history and humanity. We are at one with God's work in Time, forever old and new, in which he is calling all things to himself through us who are his Son.



AT THE BLESSING OF THE PEACE PLAQUE on August 6. Marion Rhodes of the Chemung County Historical Society, John, Owen, and Clement Hofbauer, sons of Joseph and Katherine Hofbauer were among the hundred who attended. Fr. Martin Boler spoke and gave the blessing. John Gottfried (not pictured), great-grandson of Melchior Nagel, represented the Nagel Family.

## MUSICAL MUSINGS

One evening about two years ago, three of our Brothers walked into the recreation room, one of them thoughtfully strumming a guitar. We had begun some weeks before to recite the psalms of Compline in English, and the need for singing these beautiful texts was beginning to make itself felt. That evening at recreation, the sung office of Compline was born. It was an almost accidental discovery — almost, but not quite, since the Brothers who strolled on the scene "just happened" to have with them music they had been working on and experimenting with for some time. Nevertheless, the music they came up with had a certain freshness and spontaneity about it, the kind of surging impulse that always marks the coming of new life. It was not original music; the psalm tones were those composed by Fr. Joseph Gelineau, S.J., which are rather well known. They had been used with only limited success at Mount Saviour in the past, but the combina-

tion of these particular melodies and the gentle, undulating quality of the guitar accompaniment gave them an entirely new quality. We have been using them ever since, and have added another group of psalm tones by Fr. Lucien Deiss, C.S.S. — about whom more in a minute. Our office of Compline remains one of the most satisfying discoveries, both spiritually and musically (and for us the two have a very close connection) to come out of the renewal of the Liturgy.

But if this happy turn of events was to continue and bear fruit in other areas of our Liturgy, we realized, the first intuitive surge would have to give way to reflection, so that principles could be formulated which would guide our further efforts. There was certainly no lack of interest in the community, and this active concern, this zealous and constructive sharing of ideas has been a real stimulus and source of encouragement. Not that we have discovered all the answers, far from it. Perhaps we have only learned to formulate questions, but these have been a great help as we continue to work on a musical setting for the Office and Liturgy which is a reverent and beautiful expression of our community worship.

#### MINISTERIAL FUNCTION OF MUSIC

Perhaps the greatest stimulus coming from outside the community in recent months was the visit of Fr. Lucien Deiss, from Vauresson, France. A Scripture professor by vocation, he certainly has received a special charism (unfortunately still very rare) as an excellent liturgist-musician. In several conferences to the community, Fr. Deiss stressed the "ministerial function" of music as the Constitution on the Liturgy and the Instruction issued on March 5, 1967 describe it. We might summarize this "ministerial function" in the following way:

1. Sacred music should clothe the liturgical action which it is to accompany. Each chant has a specific function in the liturgy, depending upon whether it is to accompany a procession, a litany, an acclamation, or a response, and in order to be successful the music must express this action.
2. However the musical form should be chosen not only in terms of the objective liturgical action, but also in relation to the particular community, its abilities, the significance of the feast and all the many other human factors which contribute to any celebration.
3. Lastly there is the requirement common to all vocal music, that the music should be inspired by, and express, all the resonances of the text itself, and this is especially important with regard to liturgical music. If the music does not help man to pray, then it would be better to be silent and to offer instead the intimate prayer of the heart.

One practical result of our meetings with Fr. Deiss was the restoration of the Gradual psalm to an important place in the Liturgy of the Word, the congregation responding with a refrain after each stanza of the psalm. This fuller response to the Word of God and celebration of Christ's presence in our midst contributes a great deal to our Sunday Mass, and corresponds to one of the earliest customs of the Church.

#### SHARING AND EXPERIMENTING

We are still using and experimenting with Gregorian adaptations, finding in their simple but beautiful melodies

and light subtle rhythm, qualities which we would like to incorporate and preserve in our worship. But each piece has to be judged in the light of the points which we have just reviewed. Most of the difficulties with Gregorian adaptations arise from an attempt to fuse two highly developed traditions — Gregorian Chant and the English language — a juxtaposition rather than a real organic unity and inspiration. We are finding that it takes study and real work to extricate the simple melodic kernel of the Chant, and wed it to an English text.

This past summer Fr. Basil attended the music workshop at Manhattanville College, in Purchase, New York, to begin studies in modern music, and we are fortunate to have the help of Mr. Robert Finster, the choir director at Grace Episcopal Church in Elmira, this winter. Mr. Finster is helping us with the fundamentals of choral singing and in a most enjoyable way is acquainting us with the hymns of the Episcopal tradition.

Finally, in areas such as the Divine Office, where good music is not yet available. — "where angels fear to tread" — we are trying our hand at some original compositions; much of this is naturally inspired by Gregorian modality or rhythm. Others are in a more contemporary vein. We have learned that only from full cooperation between musician, liturgist, and community can we hope to achieve a form which is a beautiful and fitting vehicle for our prayer. We cannot help but be aware of our limitations, but we have the confidence, too, born of a sense of responsibility. In this area humility and enthusiasm make a great combination. Above all, there is the joy of knowing that we are able to make our contribution, however small, toward ensuring what Fr. Gelineau calls, "continuity in an evolution in which the same spirit will sing in other tongues, with other voices both new and old."



A MOMENT OF SUSPENSE — A Santos Crucifix is being hung in the Chapel of Christ of the Desert Monastery, our foundation in Abiquiu, New Mexico. Watching are Fr. Aelred Wall, prior, Fr. Gregory Borgstedt of Mount Saviour, Fr. Placid Corney and Mr. George Nakashima of New Hope, Pennsylvania, architect of the chapel.

## LETTERS FROM ABIQUIU

August 16, 1967

Dear Brothers,

I am greatly impressed by what Fr. Aelred and the others have accomplished here. Fr. Aelred is extremely busy as superior, novice master, cellarer, and cook; he does well at all of these, and especially at the most important thing of all — the realization of monastic ideals and principles.

The adobe chapel blends into the natural beauty of this desert valley more strikingly than any picture has shown it. The permanent altar is now in place. The altar is made of native stone (shades of red, brown, gold) cut in rectangular shapes, various sizes, and beautifully patterned.

Very simple, and at the same time beautiful, objects of religious art and household furnishings (all of them restrained in quantity as well as quality) give the right human relief and balance to the adobe living quarters.

The goat farm seems a good thing, the right size operation. They plan to make cheese to sell; in the meantime there is a growing demand for the milk. The goats, Nubians, are very handsome.

Next to vocations, the 13 mile road leading from the highway to the monastery is the great intention to be kept in your prayers. It has been repeatedly washed out by the frequent and heavy summer rains, at times making the monastery inaccessible for days.

The monastery is well known and many wish to come to see it. It has, I am sure, enormous possibilities as a monastic center of spiritual, ecumenical, and cultural influence. The locality itself, with all it proclaims and suggests, makes silence, prayer, meditation and study, poverty and simplicity of life, and the celebration of the liturgy so many "natural" responses.

The setting is almost overwhelmingly beautiful. I wish I could describe the mountains, the cliffs, the color — but they are indescribable. The air is sometimes so clear at night that the stars seem detached from the sky, hanging in space, and some of them seem to be dancing on the edge of the cliffs. In these so austere and magnificently beautiful surroundings, one is somehow specially driven to concentrate on the basic things, the essentials. I don't think one could live in this beautiful solitude — and certainly it would make no sense to do so — without real faith and hope and love in and for God, and in and for man. The towering rocks erect a wall, an enclosure, which is at the same time so expansive and open, that it holds one out to God and his world as it holds one in his embrace. The river flowing through the canyon, the green growing things, the little community, even the livestock, serve to concentrate life in this vastness; so one has the joy of the oasis as well as the austere challenge of the desert. One is conscious here of somehow being at a center; and the very site gives the impression of being possibly at the center of the earth, but a center which opens out, ready to share all that is concentrated in it.

The way of life is a hard one — and a happy one. There is a great deal of demanding work — but work with a purpose to it, in inspiring surroundings, and with the motivation which the creating of a community contributes to such work.

Fr. Bernard Haering, C.S.S.R., and Sr. Corita Kent, I.H.M. of Los Angeles. Dr. Douglas Steere, chairman of the Friends' World Committee, again prepared and guided the meeting.

The members of the Institute were especially happy to meet at a monastery — a living community of prayer. They joined the monks at prayer, expressing their Christian faith, which was the solid basis of the meetings. Although there were differences of opinion in the discussions, owing to the various traditions, all flowered into a living experience of unity and friendship in Christ thanks to faith and prayer.

### OBLATES

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- Thomas and Joan Kelly of Jamesville, N. Y., Joseph and Mary Spadaro of Syracuse, N. Y., Mark and Virginia Stern of New York City, upon their marriage.
- Mr. and Mrs. Augustine Pape of Toronto, Ontario, parents of Brother Luke, upon their 60th wedding anniversary celebrated on September 11. Augustine and Angela Pape have exercised a parental concern not only for Br. Luke but for each one of us from the first days of Mount Saviour. Our rejoicing with the Pape family was turned to sorrow when Angela died two weeks after their Diamond Jubilee celebration. We extend to Augustine Pape (Oblate Br. Joseph) and his family our heartfelt sympathy on their loss and assurance of our prayers for their wife and mother.

We also ask the prayers of our readers for Ethel Chance Crimmins of Sparks, Md., who, although not an Oblate, helped to purchase the original three farms that became Mount Saviour, and whose generosity continued until the time of her death; and David Patterson (Oblate Br. John), of New York, who was especially close to several of the brothers. In his constant travels David faithfully remembered the community with postcards and greetings, and was always anxious to show hospitality to monks who were in Rome or in New York. He was a monk at heart himself, daily praying the whole monastic office.

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We recommend to your prayers the following friends who have died this summer and fall. Fr. Nicholas Lizak, Augustine Mandell, David Patterson (Oblate Brother John), Stephanie Burke, Amelia Duffy, Josephine Githler, Oma Leach, Angela Pape (Oblate Sister Monica), Mary Sloneker. May they rest in peace.

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Is there a real and sound purpose for creating this community? Does life in this remote canyon make sense? Yes. For here one is forced to face and enter into the basic realities of creation and the re-creation, of man before God. And how can man stand before God except in Christ, in the mystery of redemption, of the Cross and Resurrection. It is to this central reality that a specially dedicated little community living in faith and hope and love gives witness, especially in the giving of themselves to God in prayer and to their brothers in service.

September 30, 1967

Our little open house on Sunday, the 24th of September, was a great success. At least 240 people were here — the poor, the rich, Catholics, non-Catholics — "all sorts and conditions of man" as the Anglican Prayer Book puts it. We had invited benefactors, friends, the men who worked on the construction and their families, the many people who have been so generous and helpful to us.

The chapel was so full that the children had to sit on the floor so that grownups could use the chairs. Dominating the chapel was a beautiful old crucifix — a typical Santos — which had been donated this summer and restored by the Folk Arts Museum just in time for the celebration. Fr. Aelred gave a splendid sermon in which he expressed his gratitude for all that friends have made possible; he spoke of the meaning of the desert in every life, and reminisced about the monastery's first three years in the desert.

After the Mass there was a buffet style luncheon with typical New Mexican dishes — beans, chili, tomatillos, salad (vegetables from our own garden), and biscochitos, a specialty of this region, prepared and served by friends from Santa Fe. Everything was very much like a Mount Saviour D-Day in spirit. Perhaps it will become an annual event.

Your brother in Christ,  
Father Gregory

## NEWS ITEMS

#### THE COMMUNITY

Rev. Father Damasus attended the second session of the Abbots' Congress held in Rome during September, and has prolonged his stay in Europe to convalesce after a slight illness. Fr. Gregory is spending some months helping at Christ of the Desert as is related elsewhere in this *Chronicle*. Fr. Martin has been acting superior in the absence of Rev. Father Damasus and Fr. Gregory.

Fr. James Kelly returned to Mount Saviour this summer after four years of study and research in Rome and the Holy Land. Fr. James is making good use of his newly earned licentiate in Holy Scripture by giving a course at the monastery and in the Adult Theology Series in Elmira this fall.

We continue to gain much from the visits of various ecumenical groups as well as of non-Christians. The number of all kinds of people who come to share our life is a constant encouragement for our monastic life in this world today.

On June 10 we celebrated with a group of friends the tenth anniversary of the farm's coming under our own management. It has been an especially blessed year, with plentiful crops (except peaches and pears) thanks to the abundant rain.

#### ABBOT PRIMATE REMBERT WEAKLAND, O.S.B.

We are sure all our Oblates and friends join us in extending congratulations to our new Abbot Primate, Most Reverend Rembert Weakland O.S.B. Abbot Primate Rembert, formerly co-adjutor archabbot of St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pa., was elected at the Congress in Rome to head the worldwide Benedictine Confederation for a six year term. He is also Abbot-Chancellor of the International College of Sant' Anselmo, Rome. Mount Saviour belongs to the Benedictine Confederation but not to one of the many federations within it; we are directly under the jurisdiction of the Abbot Primate. Abbot Primate Rembert is the first American to hold this post. He is an expert in Church music and is chairman of the music advisory board of the U.S. Bishops' commission on the liturgy.

We assure the new Abbot Primate of our prayers and best wishes in this new service to the Church.



OUR 14TH ANNUAL DEDICATION DAY FAIR was held on September 17. The arts and craft show was well appreciated and here we see Fr. Nicholas pointing out one of the articles on display. The whole-hearted work of the D-Day Committee and friends, the many young families who come with their children, the spirit of gaiety and friendship which pervaded the day, all contributed to make the event memorable.

#### SPIRITUAL LIFE INSTITUTE

In last January's issue of the *Chronicle* Rev. Father Damasus described the meeting of the Spiritual Life Institute held in September 1966, at Pendle Hill (the Quaker center near Philadelphia), and anticipated the meeting of the Institute at Mount Saviour this fall. We were happy to be hosts for this ecumenical group, September 4-9. Sixteen Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox theologians met to present papers and exchange view-points on the topic, "Holiness in the World." Among the participants were our old friends, Fr. Godfrey Diekmann, O.S.B., Dr. John Oliver Nelson of Kirkridge Center, Pa.,

Fr. Bernard Haering, C.S.S.R., and Sr. Corita Kent, I.H.M. of Los Angeles. Dr. Douglas Steere, chairman of the Friends' World Committee, again prepared and guided the meeting.

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THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK

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