



# Mount Saviour Chronicle

NUMBER THIRTY-FOUR • EASTER 1969

Dear Friend of Mount Saviour,

At the beginning of the Easter Vigil, after the blessing of the new fire, the celebrating priest turns to the blessing of the Easter candle. He cuts into it first the sign of the cross; then the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, alpha and omega; and finally he cuts the numerals of the current year into the four corners of the cross. He accompanies this ceremony with the words: "Christ yesterday / and today / the beginning and the end / alpha and omega / his are the seasons and the centuries / to him be glory and dominion / through endless ages. Amen."

It may surprise us to find that a New Year rite is part of the celebration of Easter. We do not realize that it was only in the year 1582 that the reform of the calendar by Gregory XIII established January 1 as New Year's Day for Latin Christianity. It replaced March 25, which up to then was celebrated by the greater part of Europe as the beginning of the year because it was considered to be not only the first day of creation, but also the day on which Christ was conceived in Mary's womb, and further, the day on which he died. This significance of March 25 is still retained today in the East, while the Latin Church celebrates on this day only the Annunciation. Only a few people are aware that it is also the feast of St. Dismas, the Good Thief, who entered with the Lord into paradise on Good Friday.

The oldest tradition, however, held that Easter, the passing of the Lord through death into life, is the "head of the Year." Among the fathers of the Church it is especially St. Zeno of Verona who in his brief but concise proclamations on Easter Day expounds this. "The glorious Day, the Father of the centuries, is here!" By way of explanation he adds: "This Day carries the image of the Lord's mystery of salvation, for, at its setting it reenacts the Lord's passion, and at its rising it celebrates his resurrection. Thus Christ gives life to the centuries, creating out of his very setting, again and again, a new beginning . . . . With him the candidates for baptism enter into their life-giving death by being immersed into the holy font. From there a new day makes them rise again, to lead them to the glory of eternal life."

His "Pascha" places Christ at the center of human history, because it is only through his leaving the world (his death) that he is truly and fully man, and only through his return to the Father (his resurrection) that he is "the First and the Last. I am he that lives, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1,17-18). Through the free acceptance of his death in the service of the Father's saving love for man, Christ penetrates into the very heart of human history and turns its end into a new beginning. Since he died for us, we can only live for him.

To celebrate Christ's Pascha at Mount Saviour in 1969 means that this universal event, the key of all history, enters into the life of the specific group of men and women who were gathered in our chapel at this specific moment of history, April 5/6, 1969. This Day, "evening and morning," through his setting and his rising, has become the "Father" of the entire year. From hour to hour, from day to day, from season to season, we are going to live, as children of this Day, in the power of the Resurrection, until the Lord of history appears on the clouds of heaven; or, if he should tarry, until once more the first full moon after the spring equinox brings back to us the sacramental celebration of the Pascha. It is our task, as Christians living in 1969, to channel the creative power of this year's Easter celebration into our day-by-day existence.



LUDWIGA ALBRECHT, the "Hausfrau," lighting the candle at Mass at St. Gertrude's on Easter Monday.

Let us then remember some of the things that happened to us in those momentous three days of the Lord's Pascha.

All through the year the receiving of guests is an integral part of our life as a monastic community, but Holy Week is, in a very special sense, "the hour of the guests"; and of the days of Holy Week it is Holy Thursday which enacts, as it were, the *mystery of hospitality*. The arriving of guests at the monastery always contains an element of uneasiness. As a community we are a closely knit group, and the guest cannot help but feel an "outsider." To the outsiders our life appears to

be rather severe, and the general atmosphere of silence provokes in the new arrival frequently a vision of boring or frightening emptiness. The sudden stop of the busy life men live in the "world" produces a kind of shock, and there are those who feel like running back to the noises of the world after the first half hour in the silence of our "desert." In reality there is, beyond the alternative between a "busy life" and an "empty life," what one may call a "full life," full in the sense of having depth, meaning, weight. Since man's heart is restless until it rests in God, his life has depth, meaning, weight, if it is lived in the presence of God. Beyond busy hours and empty hours we experience *solemn* hours. They are solemn through the presence of God.

The Last Supper was such an hour of solemn presence, our Lord glorifying his Father by laying down his life for his friends. This reality is the whole mystery of hospitality, and on this Easter of 1969 we experienced it in a special way. As a community we realized our own poverty, our limitations of number, of voices, of speakers, but for this very reason we became deeply aware of the fact that our guests were our riches. More than ever did they take an active part in our worship. For the Easter Vigil the chapel was packed, all joining in the singing. At the recessional Sisters took over, and all of us responded, until we were gathered around the rejoicing Queen of Heaven, singing the Easter antiphon in her honor, and then the whole crowd turned to one another in the Kiss of Peace.

By this time we had made the step from the "busy life" into the "full life." The same Lord who, on Christmas, had begun his life in this world of ours by being born in the stable, because there was no room for him in the inn, had now arrived in his Father's home and had brought us into the many mansions, with him as our host.

It was a triumphant victory over all things that separate us, the things that turn the "world" into an inn and make everybody a captive of his own four walls. I mean all the hostilities, open or latent, all of the self-centeredness with its lack of understanding, and all the alienation they cause among men. To overcome these barriers in the power of Christ's Pascha is certainly our main task in 1969. Unfortunately it is not only the "world" which we find torn by so much strife; how many faithful are saddened and suffer from the lack of unity they find in the Church. Easter 1969 makes us realize that the mystery of hospitality should fill the whole life of the Church. Christ is our host, gathering us around the table in his Father's house and giving us his own body and blood for our food and drink. But he also kneels down before his guests to wash their feet, and it is of this specific service that he said: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you" (John 13, 14-15). This then is evidently the principal function of the common priesthood of all the faithful: mutual forgiveness, not mutual accusation. Let us act accordingly all through 1969.

If the mystery of hospitality should fill the whole life of the Church to overcome the feeling of alienation that is spreading far and wide, we monks should be aware of our own obligation as hosts. Monastic life is generally considered to be a selfish life. While from a theoretical point of view we cannot agree with this judgment, still we should be aware of the practical dangers

of a collective selfishness that can easily develop in a monastic community, and that can be overcome only by collective hospitality. In our situation of 1969 it seems to us that the two groups within the Church that are in need of being received under a friendly roof are the diocesan clergy and the sisters. Both are hit very hard by the general unrest in the Church.

### *The Sisters*

Unrest always springs from a lack of inner security. The feeling that the Church is a haven of peace has been to a great extent lost because of all kinds of changes. The general feeling of unsettledness which results from this situation hurts the woman more than the man. However the spirit of the Risen Christ turns all wounds into springs of life. "Houses of prayer" are being organized by sisters all over the country. An opportunity opened up for us to offer, for one year, our guest-house, St. James', and the annex that belongs to it, to the Buffalo Province of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. It was a happy occasion to all of us to celebrate with them the blessing of their new home as well as the installation of the Blessed Sacrament there. A great number of sisters from other communities are using the facilities at our guesthouse for ladies and at St. Peter's to make retreats. It is our hope that 1969 may find us brothers and sisters of Christ helping one another in the Spirit that makes us children of the Resurrection.



SISTER CONSTANCE is shown preparing for Mass dedicating St. James' as House of Prayer of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur. A house of prayer is a house of joy.

### *Priests*

The difficulties that are besetting the diocesan priests of this country manifest a similar need to open our home to our brother-priests. This spring we have been busy renovating our guesthouse for men, St. Joseph's, in order to make it more of a home. The lower floor of this house had been standing empty ever since the community got settled in the new buildings and no longer

needed the refectory and the kitchen at St. Joseph's. Now the refectory has been remodeled and divided into two sections: one serving as a room for reading and writing, for listening and discussing, the other for eating. Because of these renovations we did not schedule any specific retreats. We leave to the priests to write to the Guestmaster when they would like to come, and if they prefer a private or a group retreat. Then we arrange conferences and discussions according to their wishes. Our retreats are more geared to participation in the worship of the community, and the conferences try to help the priests today to stand on the firm ground of Christ's love for us which he has been sent to share with the People of God.

### *Life Together*

A third form of hospitality should be mentioned here, and that is the course which we call "Life Together." Our first experiment was made last year. The idea springs from the realization that "contemplation" is not reserved to monks and nuns but is inherent in the new life that every Christian receives through baptism and confirmation from the fountainhead of Christ's Pascha. The fact that Easter is the feast of feasts and the father of all Christian days and seasons and ages means that practically all the days of a Christian, his whole life, is a celebration. In order to celebrate one has to rise beyond the "busy life" into the "full life," from the world of purposes into that of meaning, from using things to enjoying things, from work to play — and further, to the heart of all play, which is worship. To help Christians of our times in this task of integrating their lives in the contemplative spirit which the Word of God made flesh has given to us, is the purpose of "Life Together." The course lasts for twelve days, from Monday, August 11, to Friday, August 22. It is open to students and to professional men and women.

Easter is the hinge of history because on that day Christ brought light forth from darkness, day from night, a new birth out of death, a new beginning from the end. Out of negation rises a supreme affirmation. Our time consists of the constant rotation of day and night. Our life as human beings moves from birth to death. Human history is marked by man's free acceptance or refusal, his "yes" and his "no." The essence of "yes" or "amen" is love; the essence of "no" is hate. Hate has found its way into our hearts and has turned our life into "flesh." The end of all flesh is death. When Christ died for us, no hate was in him but only love. He is the "yes" and "amen," "no" is not in him. The year 1969, as far as time is concerned, will rotate between day and night; as far as life is concerned it will run from birth to death; as far as history is concerned it will be "yes" and "no," love and hate, blessing and cursing, joy and sorrow, life and death, good and bad. May those who celebrated Easter 1969 be "yes" and "amen," through mutual forgiveness, through the mystery of hospitality, "for none of us lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living (Rom. 14.7-9).

*Fr. Admar Wingen, O.S.B.*

## LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,  
Guilty of dust and sin.

But quick-eyed Love, observing me grow slack  
From my first entrance in,  
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning  
If I lacked anything.

"A guest," I answered, "worthy to be here."  
Love said, "You shall be he."

"I, the unkind, ungrateful? Ah, my dear,  
I cannot look on Thee."

Love took my hand, and smiling, did reply,  
"Who made the eyes but I?"

"Truth, Lord; but I have marred them: let my shame  
Go where it doth deserve."

"And know you not," says Love, "who bore the blame?"  
"My dear, then I will serve,"

"You must sit down," says Love, "and taste my meat."  
So I did sit and eat.

— George Herbert (1593-1633)

## FAREWELL TO THE ALBRECHTS

Maximilian and Ludwiga Albrecht have retired from their management of St. Gertrude's guesthouse at Mount Saviour to return to Portsmouth, Rhode Island. There they have a house close to Narragansett Bay, across the lane from the gates of Portsmouth Priory, their first home in the United States.

In 1960 the monastery acquired a farmhouse on top of the hill to the west of us, and made it into a guesthouse for ladies and married couples. On July 16, 1961, we blessed the house, fitted up with the Albrechts' German and Austrian furniture, pictures, books and music — and American flowers and cats — and put it under the patronage of St. Gertrude. In the intervening years the Albrechts and Miss Uli Schieffer have received and cared for countless guests of the monastery, "showing greatest care and solicitude," as St. Benedict wrote in his Rule, because Christ will say, "I came as a guest, and you received me."

Maximilian Albrecht, a distinguished composer and conductor in Salzburg and Berlin before the Nazi regime forced him into early semi-retirement, has remained active in music, and in his 83rd year is still composing. This spring a group of his Lieder was sung at Mansfield State College, nearby in Pennsylvania; and in March his "Trauermarsch" (Funeral March, composed in Salzburg in 1954: "the contemplation of a terrible sadness in the face of so much death among soldiers and civilians which overwhelmed those left alive" the composer called it) was performed first by the Corning Philharmonic Orchestra in Corning and a few weeks later by the Elmira Symphony in Elmira. Mansfield College is planning a performance of his Requiem Mass, written at Mount Saviour, next autumn. Johannes Somary, director of the first New York performance in 1965, described it as a "liturgically oriented chamber cantata, a contemporary piece in which ephemeral egocentric considerations have been supplanted with far more noble and lasting theocentric ones."

Theocentric, God-centered — we will remember this of the life of Ludwiga and Maximilian Albrecht, their music and their hospitality, which they have lived among us during these years. And they carry with them our great gratitude, and best wishes for a happy life in retirement.

needed the refectory and the kitchen at St. Joseph's. Now the refectory has been remodeled and divided into two sections: one serving as a room for reading and writing, for listening and discussing, the other for eating. Because of these renovations we did not schedule any specific retreats. We leave to the priests to write to the Guestmaster when they would like to come, and if they prefer a private or a group retreat. Then we arrange conferences and discussions according to their wishes. Our retreats are more geared to participation in the worship of the community, and the conferences try to help the priests today to stand on the firm ground of Christ's love for us which he has been sent to share with the People of God.

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*Fr. Rocco Picarazzi, O.S.B.*



REMODELING at St. Joseph's guesthouse — enlarging a window in the new living room area. Rocco Picarazzi, who appears inside the window has been building and rebuilding at Mount Saviour since the earliest days.

For monastic profession does not separate us from the rest of God's people. It unites us all the more precisely because it is a way of entering more deeply into the mystery of Christ into which we have all entered by baptism, or to which we are all called by God's redeeming love.

Not only are solitude and silence explained and justified on the basis of a love which itself cannot be explained and justified; but poverty, celibacy and obedience find their only vindication in the inexplicable mystery of God's love. Our response to that love is, surely, and supremely, in the total commitment which they spell out. The beloved, however unworthy he or she may be, seeks the will of the lover, seeks to give himself or herself completely, to be bound to the lover, recognizing that nothing else really counts or matters. The religious vocation is, surely, *realism* in the most radical sense.

And so, if anyone asks: "Would you, in the light of experience, do it again?" I would only, *could* only say — Yes, indeed, by the grace of God, I would hope to do it more wisely, more maturely, far more generously. But that means, in the light of experience, with more conviction than ever.

And if anyone asks if the monastic vocation has "relevance" in the world and the Church of our day, I would reply that it is more relevant, and more needed than ever. Not only for those who in God's mysterious ways are called to it, but for the world and the Church. Not

4 MAY 1969

*A sermon by Father Gregory Borgstedt, delivered on the fortieth anniversary of his monastic profession.*

My brothers in the community know that my monastic profession took place forty years ago today. It came to me forcibly yesterday that I have vowed obedience when Reverend Father gently but firmly said I should be principal celebrant and speak about my profession.

On this occasion I would, of course, like to give the most perfect possible witness of my gratitude to God for the grace of my vocation, and for the grace of having thus far persevered, however imperfectly. The perseverance, like the vocation itself, is all God's doing, his gift. And when I say I want to thank him for the grace of persevering "thus far" these words contain no hidden implication of other plans for the future! Perhaps it is necessary to say (at a time like ours when it is hard for some not to be dubious, even cynical) that by the grace of God — which I am confident he will never refuse if I keep asking for it, keep trying to use it — I want to die in the monastic habit — even if its shape and color might baffle the abbot who first gave me the habit!

When one wants to give, on such an occasion, the most perfect possible witness to one's gratitude for, and faith in, the monastic vocation, one is immediately seized with an overwhelming realization of the impossibility of articulating it. I never felt as much like St. Leo, or my own patron St. Gregory, whose words we hear on great feasts, declaring that the subjects on which they are supposed to preach are ineffable. Why? Because they want to declare the incarnation, or the passion and resurrection, or baptism, or the eucharist. And these are *mysteries*. But monastic vocation is also a mystery — a mystery like the incarnation, passion and resurrection, baptism or eucharist, or marriage. For monastic profession, all religious profession, is but a way (not a "better way" except for those called to it) of entering further into the mystery of Christ, into which we have all entered by baptism, into which we are all further led by the eucharist — by all the sacraments. And what, in the last analysis, is the mystery of Christ but that *love* in which we believe, that love we ever strive to know, to experience more deeply, that love which is beyond all knowledge. Love is *the* mystery. God is love. This infinite love which takes flesh for us, dies and rises for us, communicates itself to us in word, in sacrament, in the Spirit, which singles each of us out in our several vocations, which so amazingly honors us as to ask our fidelity and which gives us the grace to be faithful. This is the love, the mystery of Christ, revealed in so many ways, among which is the religious vocation. And it is so great, so deep, that one can neither fully grasp it nor explain it.

No one truly in love can analyze or explain his love, can convince another of why he is in love, or why this one and not another is his beloved. And so a monk can only realize, more deeply as time goes on, that this mystery is too deep for words, that the *silence* he learned (still tries to learn) as a discipline is really a necessary expression of reverent love, and that the material *solitude* entered is, finally, the only realistic position for him. Only there can he enjoy God's unique love and best become aware of the love which binds him to his brothers and sisters, to all men and women.

## FALL FESTIVAL

The long-standing tradition of celebrating the anniversary of the dedication of the Chapel of Our Lady Queen of Peace (hence the old name of Dedication Day) will be continued in a Fall Festival. The date this year will be September 21. That may seem like a long way off, but we are preparing for it now through an executive committee headed by Mr. and Mrs. William Drohan and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Wingert of Elmira.

You also can help us prepare for the Festival by sending us S & H Green, Triple S Blue, and Yellow Family Stamps during the next month. June 29 is the deadline for sending them in, and all contributions, even small ones, will be gratefully received. Just put them in an envelope, with your name and address on it, and send them to

TRADING STAMPS  
Mount Saviour Fall Festival  
Pine City, New York 14871.

We recommend to your prayers the following friends who have died:

Jean Begg  
Timothy Cronen  
Josephine Dickinson  
Anthony Fusare  
Frank Grajek  
Sister Herman Joseph, S.S.J.  
Sister Johanna de Deo  
Grace Marr  
Sister Mary St. Peter, S.H.C.J.  
Gabriel Muir, monk of Valyermo  
William O'Brien  
Ethel S. Philo  
Polycarp Sherwood, monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey  
Mother Teresa Hill, R.S.C.J.  
Marjorie Williams, oblate Sister Mafalda

May they rest in peace, alleluia!



MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK  
E CITY, NEW YORK 14871

because monasticism stands in contrast with the condition of the world and Church. Contrasts do exist; but monasticism too, and rightly, shares in the present turmoil. But because in the opportunity for silence, for distance, men and women who share in the monastic life (not only as monks and nuns but as visitors) can gain the perspective so urgently needed; they can have such a great and unique opportunity to discover not only God and themselves, but their brothers and sisters, in all our common sorrows and joys.

If monks were to abandon their practice of silence, their degree of solitude, if they were to eliminate a deep spirit of worship, of prayer (however much some forms may be changed in an effort to deepen prayer) — if monks abandoned these things they would be terrible traitors, not only to their tradition but to the Church, to society.

May this very small and poor witness to the monastic mystery, just because it is so small and poor, serve to unite us all in offering our lives more than ever to proclaiming the love of God, and in thanking him for it as we celebrate the Eucharist, and in praying for one another. For it is not simply *my* anniversary that we celebrate; it is *our* experience of the love that passes all understanding.

## LIFE TOGETHER

The community is again undertaking to share with a limited number of guests certain elements of its life: common prayer, study, manual work, recreation, etc. This summer the period will be August 11-22, and we are asking \$50.00 for board and room. Men and women wishing to take part should write

LIFE TOGETHER  
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THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK  
POSTAL ADDRESS: PINE CITY, NEW YORK 14871