



# Mount Saviour Chronicle

NUMBER THIRTY-FIVE • EPIPHANY 1970

“WE ARE SERVANTS OF YOUR JOY” (II COR. 1:23)

## THERE IS A TIME FOR EVERYTHING . . .

At the close of his Canonical Visitation to Mount Saviour in September, Abbot Rembert Weakland, Primate of the Benedictine Confederation, told us:

“Reverend Father Damasus’ request to be relieved of his burden as superior, I will in a spirit of deep gratitude accept . . . If it is a charism to recognize the *kairos*, the moment for action, it is also a charism to recognize the moment for repose. Later historians will not only narrate the struggles, sufferings, and especially the constant vision that brought Mount Saviour into existence, but will also relate the wisdom with which Father Damasus perceived that the fledgling community had the cohesiveness needed to take its own course. Frequently he will see the community making changes with which he might disagree. He may even think at times that they are betraying him. But only the longer view of history will point out the continuity from the beginnings through the present of Mount Saviour to the future and how the germs of future changes were already planted by himself. His example, not only to founders but to all superiors, must be publicly mentioned. For the grace of wisdom and discernment that God has given him, you should be grateful.”

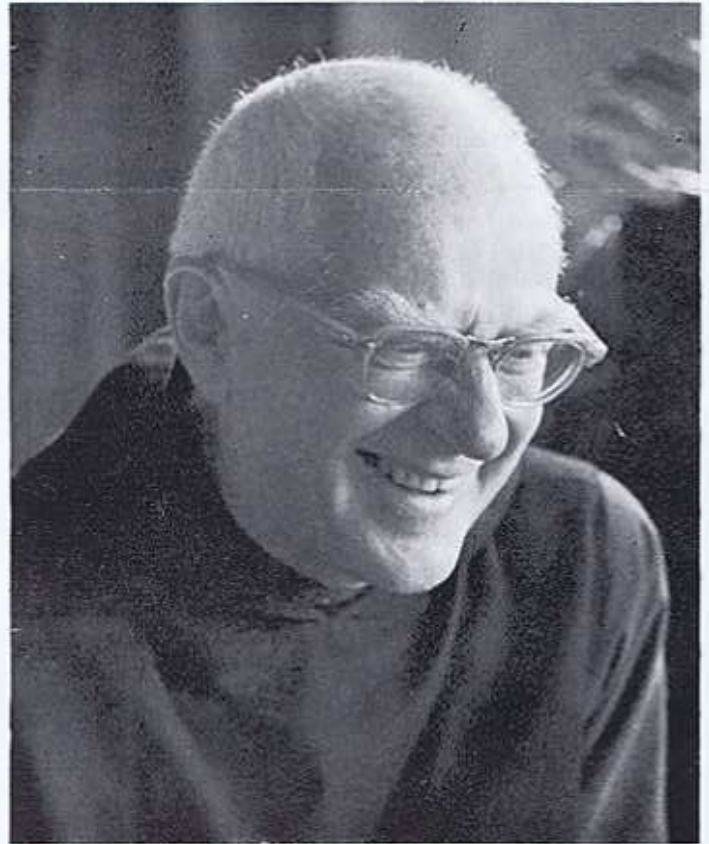
## THE JOY OF A VISION FULFILLED

On October 29, 1969 we elected on the first ballot our Father Martin Boler to be the new Prior of Mount Saviour. After the result of the election had been announced by Father John Hammond, the Prior of Weston, who had been named by the Abbot Primate to preside at the election, Father Martin knelt down. All gathered around him and prayed over him as the Spirit prompted each one. It was a kind of informal “ordination” of the new “Abba” by the old “Abba” and by all his brothers in Christ.

It was a great joy for me to see the community now standing on its own feet and taking the important step from the period of foundation into that of maturity. Since you, our Oblates and friends, might be concerned about the opportune-ness of this change it might help you to understand our decision better if I quote to you from the letter which I wrote to the Abbot Primate about my desire to resign:

### *Reasons for Resignation*

“ . . . Because we had to start from practically nothing, the first years of our beginnings were very difficult. They did not pass without affecting my state of health. In 1952 I suffered a nervous breakdown which took a year for recovery. In 1957 a severe heart attack forced me to abstain from any serious work for more than six



REVEREND FATHER DAMASUS enjoying his new freedom.

months. A spinal operation which I had to undergo previous to my appointment as Prior, still periodically limits my mobility. As a result, at the age of sixty eight, after having served the community for more than 18 years, I find myself unable to live the full monastic routine together with the rest of the community. I also feel that it is becoming increasingly difficult for me to cope with the demands of my office, which are constantly growing with the growth of the community and its material framework, as well as with the special needs of our younger generation. All this is causing me a great deal of anxiety.

“I have always considered my role as founder of the community as a provisional one which should end when the community was able to elect a successor from its own ranks. Now that adequate buildings have been constructed, the financial situation is sound, a solid nucleus of monks has been formed, I feel, with great gratitude to God and his unending mercies, in perfect peace of



heart, that my mission is accomplished, and that I could be of much greater help to the community if I would be relieved of the daily burden of office, to devote my time to a life of prayer and study . . . I explained these my reasons for resigning to the community, and it appeared that the change could well be made without disturbing the unity or the good spirit of the community. . . . I ask you then herewith officially to submit my wish to be relieved of my duties as Conventual Prior of Mount Saviour to the Holy See for approval . . ."

### *The Joy of Early Years*

At no time since Mount Saviour was founded in 1950 have I been filled with such a sense of gratitude and joy as now. "A woman when she is in travail has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she has brought forth the child she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." (John 16:21) This is I! Looking back now at the founding years of Mount Saviour, what stands out in my mind are the joys that accompanied our coming into being. There is first the glory of the *vision* that brought Mount Saviour into existence. Our life was rather austere in those days, but we as people were not very austere. I took tremendous delight in pouring into the eager, patient ears of the members of the community the spiritual doctrine I had received from Abbot Ildefonse and Fr. Albert Hammenstede of Maria Laach Abbey in the Rhineland. The words of St. Paul: "Not that we lord it over your faith, but rather we are servants of your joy" (II Cor.1:23) gave direction. What a joy it was to be a servant of this joy of Christ! To be able to sow the seed of glory into the hearts of young people who were willing to make it the basic theme of their lives! "We give you thanks, O God, for your great glory." This word from the Gloria has been a light on our way ever since, and we have experienced what St. Paul describes: "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (II Cor.3:18) To explain the Rule of St Benedict in all its soundness, its sense of order, its wholeness of life, its wisdom and balance, its optimism, realism, humility and charity, what a joy! To explain the psalms, other parts of Holy Scripture, the Masses of Sundays and Feasts, what happiness it was!

### *Openness to God's Love*

As time went on, more and more the true glory of Christ began to reveal itself to us as God's absolute love for us. "No one has at any time seen God. The Only-begotten Son, who is in the Father's bosom, he has revealed him." (John 1:18) He made it known to us by dying for us when we were still his enemies. Once we caught on to these glad tidings, a thousand redeeming, healing, vivifying, transfiguring perspectives opened up in every direction. The glaciers of perfectionism began to thaw in the warm sunshine of the Father's forgiving love. A thousand prisons of fear, anxiety, distrust, suspicion, envy, self-seeking stubbornness began to open up into a new freedom, the freedom of forgiveness, trust, generosity, affection, mutual respect, peace, and joy over one another. In this context our "withdrawal" into the "sticks" near Elmira made perfect sense. A priest friend who came to visit us in the early days was perfectly right when he said: "There is nothing there, nothing!" Still

there was much joy there, because our migration to the "desert" was not caused by a nostalgia for past rural ages. It was a conversion, a total and free affirmation of the whole man under God. Who could close his eyes to the fact that the "city" is a modern necessity? But who could deny the devastating effects which, at least under the present circumstances, the "secular city" has on those who have to live there? Our withdrawal was a protest against the pressures through which the organized mass of humanity in the "secular city" forces the helpless individual person to conform with body and soul to "standards" and "trends" which rise out of the blind necessity of collective whims rather than from the depth of the person in free and responsible decision. Our whole program is well summed up in a word of the Chassidim: "Make your body the throne of life. Make your life the throne of the mind. Make your mind the throne of your heart. Make your heart the throne of God's glory."

### *Our Life Rooted in the Country*

Let us give thanks then for the *country* that God has shown us, which has indeed in so many ways become for us a throne of life through sweat and toil, through barrenness and fruitfulness, through summer and winter, through night and day, by ploughing and sowing and harvesting, through sunshine and rain, in weeping and feasting, in faith and hope and prayer. It has allowed us to sink our roots into the soil, offering us a basis for continuity. It enables us to watch in awe the mystery of birth, and growth and death.

We thank God for the *home* which he has allowed us to build. Ploughing is fulfilled in building. Remember St. John's with its three chairs, remember the novices' tent in St. Peter's barn? Remember our first chapel in the Hofbauers' dining room where we celebrated our first Christmas and our first Easter? The basic pattern was already there, with the altar in the center, the benches along the walls.

### *Friendships*

One could fill pages with happy memories, not only of the saga of our material buildings, but even more of the people, the living stones, those who formed the community, and those who as Oblates and friends helped us from year to year. What fun we had! Remember the "canning ladies" of the earliest days, who under the patronage of St. Scholastica made apple sauce in the kitchen of St. John's, under Fr. Placid's effective management? Remember our campaign to convince the housewives of Elmira and Corning of the excellence of yogurt? It was a dismal failure only because we were way ahead of our times. Remember our first D-Days, running mostly on the steam of Fr. Gregory's irresistible charm, our Scripture circle, our fund-raising campaigns, and our initiation into the mysteries of farming? That so much closeness of heart was possible in the context of founding a monastery in these days of general alienation, is in itself a hymn of praise to God's eternal mercies. Let us thank God for our faith, for our good will, and even for our naiveté and our ignorance, because they helped us to keep the vision. Let us give thanks to God for everyone of us, for those who stayed with us and those who left, for those who died and those who are still with us. As to the wounds caused



by thoughtlessness, forgetfulness, laziness and carelessness, if they have not yet been forgiven or forgotten, now is the moment to bury them in the peace of Christ.

## The Future

The question has often been asked: Do monastic communities have a future? Usually the question is prompted by a rather narrow idea of "monastic" and of "monks" as being a relic of the past, stuck in dead ritual, introverted, closed to the needs of modern man, suspicious of anything new. What could be worse at a time when the rest of mankind moves irresistibly on the wings of evolution into ever more glorious states of achievement. It would certainly be unwise on our part not to be on our guard against the tendency of any group, nation, civilization or religion, to rest on the laurels of the past and to get bogged down in traditions and customs, which although conditioned by time and circumstances, end up by being considered essential. It would be equally foolish, however, to join the march of those who uncritically equate change with progress. In both cases we would lose our identity as monks and as Christians. For it is not the Spirit of Christ but human emotions which throw us into the periphery where accidentals are played up into essentials and essentials are considered as accidentals.

The Prophet Isaias has outlined the way to future sound growth: "Enlarge the space of your tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of your dwelling. Don't be timid. Lengthen your cords and fasten your stakes." (Isaias 54:2) The "cords" stand for the factor that provides space for growth; the "stakes" signify the element of stability and unity. They have to be hammered into the ground, into the very depth of the heart. Only integral and solid faith is able to provide unity and continuity. This solidity of faith comes from our awareness of God's everlasting love for man as it has been manifested to us in Christ Jesus, and which has been poured out in our hearts by the Spirit. The Spirit provides the space for expansion. He fills the whole world, and at the same time moves our hearts, not by violence from without, but sweetly from within. It has always been the mission of the monastic movement to witness to unconditional surrender in the poverty of faith, to the infinite liberty and wealth of the Spirit. For Mount Saviour this calls for the deepening of our faith in God's love to the point where it ceases to be just a private conviction and begins to permeate and sanctify our community life as such, through the power of the virtues of humility, loyalty, reverence, obedience, devotion to service, mutual forgiveness, virginity, love and joy, all of which spring from faith in God's love. These are not specifically monastic virtues; they belong to the very essence of Christianity. By no means do these force the person into a loss of identity, but they open the way to re-birth in the power of the resurrection.

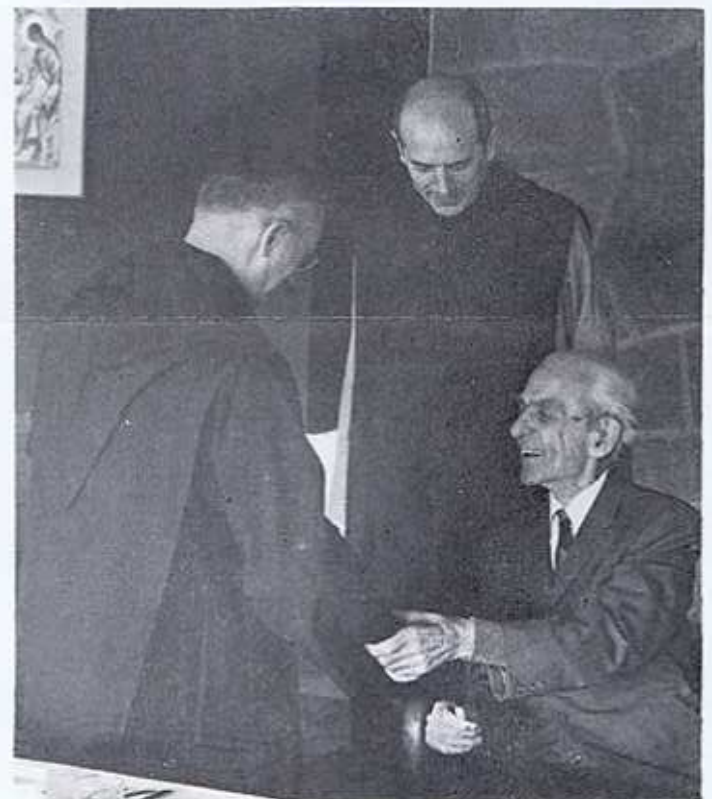
These virtues are the stakes, which then allow us to lengthen the cords of the Spirit and give space to the tent of our community life. Thank God the Rule of St. Benedict allows for such expansion by never considering uniformity as the key to unity. It wants to help the monks to live their life really and truly in the fullness of the Spirit. The cloister, solitude and silence are not, in the mind of St. Benedict, ways of turning in upon oneself, but means of encountering the Father's all-

embracing wisdom and love. Here I see the future of Mount Saviour. As a young community we are free to join in the great effort to transcend "tribalism" and to gather the seeds of the word sown through the ages all over the globe. In this attempt, which is reflected in this year's study program on the spirituality of world religions, faithfulness to the Spirit of the Risen Saviour will prevent us from ever selling out to the idols of the times past, present or future. Ever exploring what is latest, we should never lose sight of what is last. Let the altar always be the center of our life, as it is of our chapel. It is the nest that God's love has built for us, that we may find ourselves as individuals and as community, in our true identity as children of God and citizens of the New Jerusalem. In the strength of an unshakable faith in the Father's love for us may Mount Saviour become "a hiding place from the wind, a cover in the tempest, a spring in the desert, a rock that gives shade in a weary land." (cf. Isaias 32:2) May its life be peace. Come, Lord Jesus!

*Reverend Father Damasus Winzen, O.S.B.*

## THE CALL OF MY BROTHERS

I am happy for this opportunity to share with the wider monastic family and friends the joy of being elected Prior of Mount Saviour. At the same time it enables me to ask you to continue your prayers for us and to join your prayers with ours for all mankind. This union of hearts in prayer and trust is so beautifully expressed in Psalm 19 (20) "May he give you your heart's desire and fulfill all your plans."



THREE FATHERS on the Day of Election, Abbot Alban Boulwood of St. Anselm's Abbey, Father Martin, and his father Doctor Boler.



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## SERVANT OF THE LORD'S GLORY

Joseph Sanford Shanley  
Architect, Oblate of St. Benedict  
entered Eternal Life December 8, 1969

Into a Missal which Joe Shanley once gave to our Brother Christopher Claas he wrote these words: "The Lord will make the glory of his voice be heard in the joy of your heart." They are taken from the Introit of the Mass of the Second Sunday of Advent, the last day of Joe Shanley's earthly sojourn. On that morning his soul heard the glory of the Lord's voice in the joy of his heart. This should not be considered as a mere coincidence but as a sign. Deep in the heart of Joe Shanley lived this longing for the Glory of God. Why did he become a builder of churches? Because he loved the beauty of the house where the Glory dwells. Why did he become an Oblate of St. Benedict? Because he understood that it is the worship of God's Glory that makes the monk tick and under this aspect he knew he was one of us. Why did he become a member of the Quilisma Club? Because the love of God's Glory has to sing. It was this love that arranged the meeting between Abbot Leo Rudloff and Rev. Fr. Damasus with Joe (not long after their arrival in this country). It was this love that spurred them on together to search for a place in New Jersey in 1940 and 1941.

St. Paul's Priory in Keyport, N. J. was founded with his help and the chapel there was designed by him. Through the long years that followed it was this love of God's Glory that held the group of Benedictine Oblates together. This love led to the establishment of Regina Laudis Monastery in Bethlehem, Conn. a foundation of Benedictine nuns from France.

Then came Mount Saviour, where Joe built the chapel, an octagon with the crypt of the Queen of Peace beneath. We are probably biased, but this crypt is the most perfect expression of what was deepest in Joe Shanley's heart; gentleness, warmth of devotion, simplicity, and dignity. Now Joe rejoices in the vision of God's Glory, and just for this reason has not left us, who here on earth continue to give thanks to God for His great Glory.

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### FALL FESTIVAL — 1969

The haunting reality of cars without end lining the Mount Saviour Road, and of people by the thousands winding their way through our monastic buildings, has faded away. We were too tranquilized at the time by the spirited and pleasant greetings of a seemingly happy crowd to be fully aware of the magnitude of our problems. But strangely enough, it was a happy crowd. Anyone standing by the parking lot to say "Goodbye and thanks for coming to the Festival" was pleasantly surprised to hear in reply, "Thanks for letting us come."

Of course, in the last analysis, all we did was to provide an occasion for friend, neighbor, and stranger alike to come with their families and celebrate a day with us at the monastery. Yet we ask ourselves, what drew such a crowd (variously estimated at five to ten thousand people)? Was it the monastery, the liturgical dancing, the young singing groups, the arts and crafts display, the excellent publicity of television and the local papers, or the good will of so many of our friends and



Although only the Chapter members could vote, those in temporary vows and members of the novitiate were also present at the election. In this way all were able to experience the ancient monastic tradition of electing one's own superior, that mystery of men acting in freedom in union with the Holy Spirit. Their presence made us aware of the many oblates and friends who are united with us in various bonds of affection and affiliation. Fr. John Hammond, Prior of Weston, presided, and in this way made present for us the Holy Father, the Abbot Primate, and the monks of his own community whom we know so well.

After the balloting I knelt on the Chapter room floor and my brothers prayed silently or aloud over me each in his own way. I will always remember Fr. Damasus at that moment with a profound sense of awe and reverence. How tremendous it was to receive that portion of his spirit and those graces which he prayed would be given me. I was deeply conscious of the power of the Holy Spirit, the mystery of the Church, and of the reality of that part of the Church which is the Mount Saviour community. As I knelt there I compared in my mind this election and blessing with the election and blessing of ordination nine years earlier. Now the call of my brothers in Christ, then the call of Bishop Kearney speaking for the Church of Christ; now the confirmation of that vocation by Fr. John Hammond for the Church and the laying on of hands and prayers by my brothers, then the imposition of hands and prayers of all the priests who were present. Nine years ago the sacrament joined the powers of Orders and Jurisdiction with the Charism of the Spirit, now this sacramental joined the power of Jurisdiction and the charism of the Spirit. In each case it is for the building up of the Body of Christ: Sacramentally conformed to Christ on the one hand and on the other, to hold his place in the monastery. (Rule of St. Benedict, Ch. 2)

It was a blessed day for my parents also, who are living in Elmira. Although my mother was in the hospital at that time, my father was able to rejoice with us, or rather one should say, radiate his own joy to us. The joy and enthusiasm of Fr. Damasus was especially precious to me. And everyone should know how his greatness of soul, his wisdom, and graciousness has made the whole process so easy and natural. The presence of Fr. John Hammond and Abbot Alban Boulwood of St. Anselm's Abbey in Washington, D. C. meant so much to me. Besides the blessing of their personal friendship they made me aware of all who follow the Rule of St. Benedict and especially the fellowship of Abbot Rembert and the Benedictine Confederation. There was the happiness of receiving the encouragement of so many friends by phone calls, telegrams and letters. I want to say that it is not only my heart, but the hearts of all the monks that are open to all of you. But we do ask your help as St. Benedict did of "the bishops, the neighboring abbots, and the faithful" (Rule Ch. 64) that we may keep Mount Saviour a House of God. It is God whom we continue to seek, with whom in a mysterious manner we do dwell, and whom we continue to find here as do so many of you. Christ who did not leave us orphans (John 14:18) is still the Father of the community and may his Holy Spirit continue to guide us that in all things God may be glorified.

*Father Martin Boler, O.S.B.*

that role with great zeal and professional competence, at no small cost to themselves in time and energy. And while we mention only Bill and Bette Drohan, we thank all the committee leaders and individual workers whose valued assistance enabled us to be hosts to literally thousands of people.

To all those who came to the Fall Festival, and to our many friends who responded so generously to our appeal for donations, for items for the Street-of-Shops, and for trading stamps; to each of you we say a sincere "Thank you, and may God reward you."

*Brother Francis McGuire, O.S.B.  
Chairman of Fall Festival*

## COMMUNITY NEWS

The big news is the election of Father Martin Boler as Prior, succeeding Reverend Father Damasus Winzen. (For the complete story, see the feature articles, above.) As Subprior, Father Martin has appointed Brother James Cronen. The Community also rejoices in the appointment of Msgr. Joseph Hogan as new Bishop of Rochester. Bishop Hogan is personally known to several of our members. We take this opportunity to extend best wishes ... *ad multos annos!*

Other community news: Br. James Kelly is teaching Scripture at St. Bernard's Seminary, Rochester, and Br. Basil DePinto languages at Our Lady of Providence Seminary, Warwick, R. I. Br. Peter Leinenweber is studying at Downside Abbey, England, with Dom Iltyd Trethowan as tutor, and Br. Elias Mandell is in the graduate theology program at Fordham. Fr. Gregory Borgstedt has returned to Christ-in-the-Desert Monastery New Mexico, having been here for the visitation of the Abbot Primate, while two other Brothers have returned here, Benedict Tighe from a month's stay in St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, following a bad fall, and Ansgar Kristensen from a several months' stay at Christ-in-the-Desert Monastery, where he had been helping out.

### Memorial

We single out the following names of deceased friends to recommend to your prayers:

Monsignor Donald Cleary	Benjamin Flynn
Reverend David Mattie	Mary Alice Madigan
Reverend Joseph Merkel	Mary McCunney
Reverend William Thomas	Frederick Reinicke
Eileen Collins	
Doctor Thomas Caulfield (Oblate Brother Luke)	
J. Sanford Shanley (Oblate Brother Ermenhold)	
Zoltan David Racz (Oblate Brother Martin)	

May they rest in peace.

JUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK  
CITY, NEW YORK 14871



neighbors taking advantage of the glorious late September afternoon? The answer is more than likely that all these things collectively produced the unexpected overflow crowd. What is less easily explained is the contentment and sense of gratitude people experienced and expressed in the face of some very evident shortcomings on our part in the organization of the festival.

The interest shown in the monastery and its activities expresses a serious appreciation for the authentic, be it a venture in the life of the Spirit or the enjoyment of the simple things of life. Shirley Letizia's liturgical dancing group presented the "sacred in space" in a way unfamiliar to our usual thought patterns and experiences. The teen groups (*Celebrate Life* and *Voyage of the Young*) expressed themselves in meaningful music and song. Both groups offered a very good image of youthful authenticity.

In this connection, the Arts and Crafts Show deserves special mention by reason of its size and quality, and the number of persons it attracted. The interest in arts and crafts today is not merely aesthetic, but again it is man's pursuit of authenticity. The creativity which man expresses through arts and crafts is a work of integrating the world of matter (his materials) and the world of the spirit (his ideas and insights) through disciplined work, a feel for color and an appreciation of the beauty of form. The inner reality of this creative drive forms an essential part of the life of every man and should be an operative factor in our growth as truly human persons.

A new setting for the Festival, north of the chapel, proved attractive and natural and won us many new friends. The trial by fire which we underwent this year had one saving feature: it showed us that the main problem was not a large crowd, but insufficiently detailed preparation. Plans are already underway to remedy our more obvious flaws, beginning with our traffic problem and specifically work on a new road, or at least improved two-way traffic on the present one.

That the Fall Festival realized a profit of \$10,000 this year says much for the generosity of our friends, near and distant. It says much too for the growth of the Festival in size and scope, the quantity and quality of the items sold and the involvement of our many workers.

We have always depended on the guidance and practical assistance of our friends to make the Fall Festival a success. This year the presence of the lay committee advisors was much more in evidence and their role shifted from a merely advisory capacity to active leadership. The results of this year's festival show the fruit of co-responsibility in organization and follow up. We mention Mr. and Mrs. William Drohan in particular since they were the executive chairmen and fulfilled

that role with great zeal and professional competence, at no small cost to themselves in time and energy. And while we mention only Bill and Bette Drohan, we thank all the committee leaders and individual workers whose valued assistance enabled us to be hosts to literally thousands of people.

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THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK

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