



Mount Saviour Chronicle

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“May your hearts be knit together in love . . . and in the understanding of the mystery of God, and of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

Colossians 2:2-3

*In the joy of the Nativity of our Lord
we wish you his grace and peace.*

"It is God, for his own loving purpose, who puts both the will and the action into you." This is an astounding vision of man. In the depths of man's being is the loving activity of God. This is in no way altered when Paul continues "Do all that has to be done without complaining or arguing and then you will be innocent and genuine, perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhanded brood, and you will shine in the world like bright stars because you are offering it the word of life." (Phil. 2:13-16) Each of us can recognize other men or ourselves in the "deceitful and underhanded brood." But even here we are more wrong than right in our understanding of ourselves and others if we go no further than this. Christmas enables us to experience the impact of God's love become man, one of the brood. Before this mystery we stand shocked and limp.

The text of Genesis, "It is not good for man to be alone" (Gen.2:18) has as its original context the union of man and woman both of whom would be together with God. After the first sin, man and woman kept their togetherness, but they shared an even greater aloneness. As an expression of God's heart in this new context, the phrase is even more poignant. It is the first prophesy of the Incarnation. That God would join himself to all men, and that his deepest desire was to be united with each one of the deceitful and underhanded brood in order to share with us his love, stands even beyond the bounds of mystery. This is why God's love for us must occupy our thoughts until the conviction of this love becomes for us the touchstone of all reality.

St. John, who reveals to us that God is Love, also reveals that he is Truth and Light. God knows who he is and who it is he loves, and he knows it radiantly. Being loved we are changed and given access to his love and truth and light in order to shine brightly in the world and offer it in turn the word of life. As this change occurs in us, our vision of the world and our union with man in his struggle for a better future also changes, it becomes God's vision, for in truth we put on the mind of Christ. We may only feel like a candle in a hurricane in the midst of the ruthless social, political and personal exploitation of our times, but Christ is no candle and his fire within us is not candle power. It is the brightness of his glory and the truth of his love willing and acting.

Hope Inherent in History

Throughout the history of mankind certain people did shine like bright stars and offered or accepted the word of God. Often enough, these bright stars possessed only shame and servitude, cut off from their own culture and land. Christopher Dawson expressed it well when he wrote that in the Dark Ages religion was the only power that remained unaffected by the collapse of civilization, by the loss of faith in social institutions and cultural traditions and by the loss of hope in life. This hour of human failure and impotence was also the hour when the power of eternity was manifest. When we in our present situation strive to penetrate the darkness, we are able to see something of the creative process at work in the depth of the social consciousness.

In our study program this fall we have covered the first thousand years of Christian history. It is a marvelous experience to witness the interaction of the revelation of God and the phenomenon of man. Clovis was one of the bright stars of this period — his conversion was as momentous for Christianity as that of Constantine. He moves us to compassion when we hear him complaining that he has no relatives and is surrounded by enemies on every side, but St. Gregory of Tours tells us that the King's loneliness was nothing but a ruse to flush out relatives he had not yet murdered. Our compassion turns to despair for mankind and for the Church, but the event is far in the past and mankind and the Church have survived.

The Conviction of God's Love

One wonders how the message and deed of God's union with man in and through Christ survived at all through those dreadful centuries. There is, of course, only one answer. It was God's love for men, not just for Christians. As the conviction of this love becomes for us the touchstone of all reality, we begin to perceive life from a new viewpoint. Imperceptibly God's point of view becomes our own. This conviction must be the operative factor in our lives not merely an article of our faith. God did not give us an anthropological theory, he became a man, and so must we. Grounded in his love we can enter the human condition as did he. The coming of Christ in the mystery of the Incarnation becomes for us today not merely a tenet of religion, but the most momentous event in the temporal history of man.

It has been pointed out that the Old Testament has its downs as well as its ups whereas the New Testament seems always to be up. The New Testament is optimistic because it is the good news about the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit. It is an optimistic light shining in the darkness. The authors wrote it as it was but somehow we miss the agony. The Old Testament writers knew by experience the zero point for a large part of it was written at the time of the Exile when the hope of the people was at its lowest ebb. We need this Old Testament corrective so that we can share and find meaning in the experience of crisis in a religious and survival context.

Certainly there is darkness in our own age when Western civilization, the Church, and the earth itself feel the impact of the present crisis. But it is not a crisis of God's love for us, for this love is the basis of the Gospel good news! In his own loving purpose it is God who puts both the will and the action in us. "Christ in you, your hope of glory." (Col. 1:27)

The Experience of God's Love

Man today hungers for the experience of God. It is necessary that he experience something of this incarnation of divine love, of Christ being formed in him. He must be able to perceive the loving purpose of God being willed and acted out in the lives of human persons. It was this experience that so impressed me as I traveled through Europe this summer on my way to the



Congress of Abbots in Rome. I found evidence of God's indwelling spirit in unexpected ways and unexpected people. I found it too where I hoped I would find it: in the joy of the Benedictine Sisters at Dinklage who welcomed me into their choir; in the quiet effective influence of the Community at Slangenburgh in Holland; in the monks of Maria Laach to whom we owe so much; in the youthful spirit one finds at Trier; in the fresh elan that radiates from Wavreumont; in the beauty and balance of the life and liturgy at the Trappist Abbey of Mont des Cats; in the vitality of the Benedictines of St. Benoit sur Loire; and in the prayerful atmosphere of Taizé. One recognized the marks of the invisible Spirit also in many Abbots and Priors at the Congress. This was an encouragement which warms the heart and instills great confidence in the monastic way of life.

One experiences God's indwelling spirit almost daily here at Mount Saviour also, or rather things happen here which enable us to realize God's loving purpose at work in moments of darkness and crisis, but most of all in the very ordinary and banal events of our daily life. Mark Dellamano, one of the Notre Dame University students who "lived-in" with us last summer, found it here among us also.

"I have often wondered where I would be if the summer at Mount Saviour were not part of my past," he writes. "The transformation for me was radical, not merely in the sense that we did something totally different for a summer, but much more significantly in that Mount Saviour was a pivotal before which there

was chaos, frustration and anxiety and after which a more consistent and ordered life could grow.

People find no small source of astonishment in the fact that we shared a common life this summer. Students are usually not characterized as desiring any relationship with God and monks aren't supposed to know what is going on in the real world. The irreconcilable twain have met and there are a great many raised eyebrows, which is good. The more the Mount Saviour experience is seriously thought about the greater the awareness will be of the real needs of this 'shook up generation'."

We see the world as we know it and as we love it, but the same world is known and seen and loved by One whose Spirit works in us to bring about in our own times the building up of the Body of him who is before and beyond all things. He was once seen by men in the humanity he received through Mary. She received the word of life in faith with the command to rejoice. The announcement is the same to us. Christ is being formed in us according to the loving purpose of God. The process might frighten us, but it should not terrify us for this is our faith, our hope and our joy. "... The Lord is in the midst of you; ... he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love." (Zep. 3:17)

— Father Martin Boler, Prior

FALL FESTIVAL 1970

According to Father Damasus' meteorological projection, September 20th, coming right after the full moon, might well have been rained out. Committed as we were to a rain or shine policy this could have been disastrous. But as it turned out the days accompanying the waning full moon got all the rain, so a benign September sun still had time to dry things out before the Festival. Once again Mount Saviour was blessed with weather to order.

The Fruits of Maturity

The Fall Festival is traditionally held on the third Sunday of September. This time of year suggests a phrase that very well sums up our 1970 Festival: the fruits of maturity. This maturity is the fruit of 17 years' experience, beginning with the simple Dedication Day of 1954 and including the planned growth of recent years. Many of our workers have helped us from the very beginning.

With the weather on our side we were able to harvest the results of the zealous efforts of the many friends and advisors who helped us arrive at monumental improvements over last year's Festival. It was this updating, this mobilizing of our resources and facilities, that really made the day. The improvements in traffic flow, parking supervision, people circulation and food services were the most evident and most appreciated by the crowd of some 6,500 visitors.

The Problem of a Festival

The scope of the Fall Festival has grown enormously over the past two years. So much so that some of our old friends ask us if we are not compromising our notion of a celebration by attracting such large crowds. And



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The Crisis of Festivity

It is not surprising that in this day and age when meaningful work is itself questioned the very notion of Festival should be endangered. Both work and celebration spring from the same root, so that when one dries up, the other withers. In spite of all the wealth and increased leisure of modern society there are people who simply cannot accept themselves and consequently are deprived of the peace of meaningful activity and of even the possibility of contemplation. Unfortunately, for people like this, festivity is impossible. But we cannot celebrate a festival for someone else. The most we can do is encourage a spirit of festivity by an open-ended concern for all that is true, good and noble in the human spirit; in short everything that says a humble but grateful "yes" to life.

Something of all this, we hope, stands at the heart of our Fall Festival celebration. It is this particular outlook that prompts us to open our doors and hearts each year, inviting all to a day of festivity. Our sincere thanks to all who came and shared this day with us, to all our workers and to all who contributed to the success of the day by their response through the mail. We hope that you will be with us to celebrate Fall Festival 1971.

The 1970 Fall Festival netted over \$11,000. However, this entire amount is swallowed up by the interest due annually on our building loan. We appreciate all that you have done for us in the past but would urge you to bear in mind our needs for next year's Festival. You can send us at any time hand-made items, articles for an antique booth, and trading stamps which enable us to obtain raffle prizes.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Among the most precious treasures of the Community have always been our friends. They come from various parts of the world and from different backgrounds to keep us in touch with the living present. Among those who visited us recently were those who came to share their wisdom, experience, skills and simply the pleasure of their company.

Father Thomas Berry, C.S.P., organized a course of study for us last year, and this fall with his guidance we are exploring another phase of it: the history of the development of the Christian message. Ellen Anderson of Cornell University is assisting us twice weekly in our historical studies and discussions. Father Matthias Neuman, O.S.B., of St. Meinrad Archabbey gave two conferences on the psychology of Christ. Before Father Peter Minard, O.S.B., returned to his monastery of Ligugé in France, he conducted our annual community retreat. Special mention must be made of the workshops on religion and psychiatry conducted by Dr. Albert Görres of Munich, Germany and Dr. Bruno Franek, our oblate Brother Gregory, of Rhode Island; these sessions were sponsored jointly by Mount Saviour and the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, Buffalo. Father Boniface Luyckx, O.Praem, shared his adventures in African monasticism. Professor John Boler of the University of Washington, brother of Father Martin, brought us up to date on

some ask whether the notion of the festival and fund raising are even compatible. Perhaps we can reply to these questions by asking ourselves just what is a festival? Dr. Josef Pieper has defined a festival in his recent book *In Tune with the World* as "the union of peace, intensity of life, and contemplation." Our Fall Festival is an attempt to live out these very elements in a celebration that is public by intent and purpose. It represents a self-portrait of the Community of Mount Saviour. And far from being a one day stand, this celebration incarnates the ongoing dialogue between our community and the local community on the religious, social and cultural levels.

Celebrating a Festival

Not too many people are conscious of the underlying elements in any festival, elements that speak of something that man cannot give to his fellow man like the happiness of being created, the goodness of all things, participating in the life of God and ultimately the overcoming of death. Basically the praise of God is at the



heart of every true festival. But in addition, you cannot have festivity without singing, dancing and music, without visible forms of celebration, without some form of art. Yet even the arts, important as they are, are only secondary; they are a real contribution to a festival, a medium, but not the substance. Without festivity the arts have no home, they are superfluous.

Siegl's block prints. Mrs. Siegl has given Mount Saviour copies of almost all the work she has produced since 1955.

Brother Peter returned at the end of August from Downside Abbey in England after a year's study under the tutelage of Dom Iltyd Trethowan. He has been named guestmaster since his return.

Brother Pachomius Dippo of Troy, N. Y. completed his novitiate and on September 14 made his first promises. He came here after his graduation from Siena College in 1968. Almost from the time of his arrival he has been the sacristan.

Brother Bernard is studying theology at the Washington Theological Coalition in Washington D.C., and is in residence at St. Anselm's Abbey.

Our farmers report excellent crops this year, especially the corn, untouched by the midwestern blight. Eighty five acres of corn were planted with average yields twenty percent above last year.

MEMORIAL

Please remember in your prayers our friends who died during 1970.

Jennie Borgstedt
Margaret Boler
Charles Crossed
William Davis
Mary Duffee
Mathew Ekes

Sr. Josefa Gonzaga
Peter Heenan
Edmond Michelet
Michael Mondel
Thomas Tighe

TAPE CASSETTES

Antiphons sung by the monks.
Reel-to-reel — \$3.50

The Psalms of Compline
for St. Damasus
Reel-to-reel — \$4.50

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including postage.

MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK
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new cultural developments. In August, Dr. Josef Pieper of Germany, conducted a workshop on modern trends in philosophy and religion. Claire Henry, graduate student of ceramics from Syracuse University, worked in our pottery studio for two months during the summer and shared her knowledge and skill in ceramics with Father Nicholas.

Father Martin traveled to New Orleans in February to attend a meeting of American Benedictine Superiors, and in September he participated in the world-wide Congress of Benedictine Abbots at Sant' Anselmo, Rome. Brother Ansgar accompanied him and has remained in Rome to study theology at Sant' Anselmo.

Auxiliary Bishop John McCafferty of Rochester, resident in Elmira, was chief celebrant at Mass in honor of St. Benedict on July 11. Afterwards he took part in a discussion of the role of monastic life in the Church with the community and the University of Notre Dame students who were sharing our life for the summer.

Father Damasus, our founder and first prior, suffered a heart attack in May and another in June. He was in St. Joseph's Hospital, Elmira, for several weeks, and we are happy to report that his recovery has been good. Father Damasus has not been idle during his stay in the infirmary but has been busily taping commentaries on the Psalms which are now available through the Mount Saviour Shop. Please refer to insert for further information.

In September, the monastery sponsored a show at the Arnot-Ogden Museum and Gallery, Elmira, of Helen

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TAPES AND CASSETTES

Compline and Vespers sung by the monks.
Cassette — \$4; Reel-to-reel — \$3.50

Commentary on the Psalms of Compline
by Father Damasus

Cassette — \$5; Reel-to-reel — \$4.50

Please add 50c per order
for handling and postage.

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR, ELMIRA, NEW YORK

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