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Chronicle

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O LORD, IT IS GOOD FOR US TO BE HERE

Transfiguration 1973 - Number 41



Plans are well under way for this year's Fall Festival, our twentieth, and we hope for the good weather and spirit of celebration that happily marked last year's event. The near perfect weather provided the right atmosphere for square dancing, barbershop harmony and the concert chorale singers. Because of the late restoration of our bridge, preparations were somewhat tenuous with the result that we sold out of most of the items early in the day. Despite the general disaster situation in the area some 12,000 people turned out and seemed to enjoy themselves. The raffle as you know is our one annual financial appeal. We would neither like to over-emphasize nor under-emphasize the economic importance of the festival for the monastery. For those of you who cannot support the raffle for whatever reason and would like to help us in some other fashion we suggest sending trading stamps of all kinds and invite you to move out any items old or new that might be sold off in our street of shops.

FALL FESTIVAL



DEAR FRIENDS OF MOUNT SAVIOUR,

Every six years all the Abbots and Priors of independent monasteries throughout the world that are part of the Benedictine Confederation come together at the monastery-college of Sant' Anselmo in Rome. During the past three years I have had the privilege and blessing of being the English-speaking representative on the Commission which is preparing the section on Monastic Life for the International Congress this September. The theme chosen for the Congress is 'The Experience of God' and the Commission has published twenty-one articles on this theme in five languages so that monks can discuss these papers and exchange their own experience of the Spirit.

'Monastic Studies', the journal we publish at Mount Saviour, carries the English edition of eighteen of these articles. Many of you are familiar with issue #8 dedicated to Rev. Father Damasus Winzen. I would warmly recommend issue #9 and invite you to join us at the Congress in this way. The \$5.00 is much less expensive than going to Rome--and a lot less exciting too! This study and effort of monks to deepen their own vocation in seeking God will have its powerful ramifications in all who seek him. Thanks to a modest grant from the De Rancé Foundation to aid our publication, issues will be sent to the very poor monasteries and convents in the Third World. I ask your prayers for the success of the Congress, and in thanking God for the part that we at Mount Saviour have been able to play in it.

Official business took us to Rome and official business brought the Abbot Primate Rembert Weakland and his secretary, Father Damien Kraus, to us from 8-13 January. The Benedictine Confederation is made up of associations of monasteries or congregations and a few independent monasteries including Mount Saviour. Every three years the Abbot Primate must make a Visitation of the independent monasteries under his care. The role of a Visitor is very much like that of a friend--a most demanding relationship. He is not a protector nor a sycophant. Neither is he a spy nor an ostrich. He must be an especial friend of the bridegroom Christ whose dwelling this is.

We met with Abbot Rembert and discussed 'position papers' written by members of the community in the mornings, and had private interviews in the afternoons and evenings. In that way he was able to obtain a rather accurate picture of us as we function together and as we are individually. He has visited the Community informally and officially at other times during the past six years and is aware of our growth and shortcomings. How different from the 'political' investigations now going on in our country. Pope John called the Council in order "...to show in its true light and restore to its real value the quality of human and Christian



life of which the Church has been the mistress throughout the centuries." Certainly a Visitation as a dimension of Benedictine life shows by its striking contrast the climate of mutual trust and confidence -- a certain quality of human and Christian life. We thank Abbot Rembert for his continued care and for his words quoting St. Peter at the Mount of the Transfiguration '...it is good to be here!'

There are many things to write about, but since we are talking about 'how good it is to be here', I would like to tell you how we are using the Damasus Winzen Memorial Endowment. We invested the principal and should realize a little over \$1,000 a year for its purposes.

We were able to bring Fr Burkhard Neunheuser osb here to work on the voluminous papers of Fr Damasus. They have been friends since novitiate days at Maria Laach. Fr Burkhard has published articles in German and English and is the director of the Liturgical Institute of the International Benedictine College in Rome. So he brought the talents of a scholar and the love of a friend to his work. He was



able to put earlier papers and conferences into their context. An added blessing for all of us was that he brought himself. It is so encouraging to see someone whose human qualities have been enhanced by 50 years of monastic life and monastic life graced by such a person. He was a living lesson, as was Fr Damasus, of what it means to be a monk: 'Always a novice; always ready to go on to new things'. He did an enormous amount of work, but so did Fr Damasus! So there is a lot yet to be done.

Mrs George Winter and Johannes Linn are gathering and editing memoirs, biographical material, and letters we intend to publish as a book. We are in a translation bog at the moment but as soon as we are clear of it there will be more to say about their work and the publication.

There were 12 people 'living-in' the community with us last summer. They share our situation fully and last summer that meant serving the flood stricken in this area. It was not exactly what we had planned! We thank you for your continued support so that we may continue to plan to make hospitality our special care (Rom 12,13: 1 Peter 4,9).

After much prayer and consideration, Fr Aelred Wall has come to the conclusion that he should retire as Prior of Christ in the Desert. We will certainly defer to his lights in this decision because of the wisdom and foresight he has shown in founding and guiding this Monastery. He has carried through its building phase to make it what must be the most beautiful monastery in the world. He had the vision to found it in the heart of the oldest Catholic Culture in the New World, amidst Native American cultures, and near a famous Presbyterian Conference Center at Ghost Ranch. We are filled with wonder and admiration at the fruits of his labors these past eight years.

Fr Aelred will always be remembered as the Founder of Christ in the Desert and his charism will remain

forever in its spirit. I have decided to appoint Fr Gregory Borgstedt as Prior. We know this will be a source of confidence and joy to the many friends of Christ in the Desert. We ask you to join us in prayers of thanksgiving for Fr Aelred's labors and that he may continue to serve God's people. We ask your continued prayers and support for Fr Gregory and the monks who make Christ known and loved so much among us.

In Christ,

CHRIST IN THE DESERT

Dear Friends of the Monastery,

In accepting the responsibilities of Prior I want first of all to express deep gratitude for the foundation which Father Aelred has established, thus enabling us to build on it with confidence. What one finds here is, under the providence of God, due to Father Aelred's efforts. He established not only a most beautiful monastery. Above all he had a vision of simple, contemplative, monastic life, and realized it to a considerable degree in the course of almost nine difficult years.

We all know how courageously and generously he struggled to build this monastery, both spiritually and materially. Besides all of us who are here and all of you, countless others, too, owe him more gratitude for what he has accomplished than it is possible to put into words. May he enjoy the rest and relief from the superior's burdens and the good health and happiness he so richly deserves.

Please pray that we may grow spiritually in this desert which thanks to him and to your help is also something of an oasis. And be assured that we consider it one of our greatest and most cherished responsibilities to remember you in our prayers.

Very sincerely yours in Christ

Father Gregory Borgstedt, O.S.B.

Monastery of Christ in the Desert
Abiquiu, New Mexico 87510

SYMBOL, MYTH, RITUAL

The study program during the winter dealt with "symbol, myth and ritual." It is not an easy topic - one can be aware of symbols and use them, without being able to say what a symbol is. This is no difficulty when symbols are current and living - at Mount Saviour we have the heritage of Father Damasus' teaching on the octagonal chapel, the brightness of the upper chapel, the dark crypt beneath with the Mother and Child in the center,

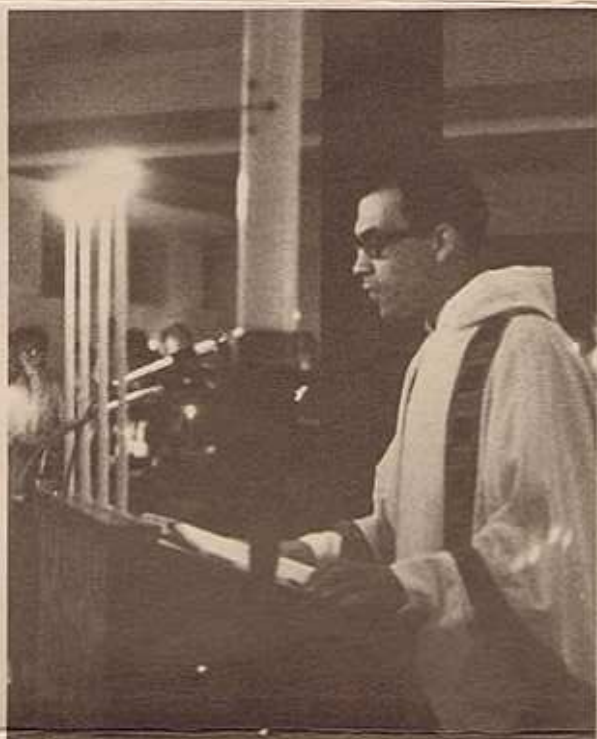


the colored windows painted by Norman Daly with their bold symbols of the mystery of time - elements of our life to which we do not have to advert in order to experience their influence. But his teaching will fade with time, and developments in the liturgy, in religious life, in our nation, will demand of us all a practical ability to recognize and deal with the symbols we need. It seemed best to ask speakers to focus our attention on various aspects of "symbol," and this was done in the autumn, beginning with Father Thomas Berry of Fordham University, who is the general guide of our study program.

After Christmas Professor David Miller of Syracuse University came for a weekend and spoke of myth, according to the strong sense of the word -- it is myth that conveys the meaning of our historical actions. In his concluding talk he challenged us to rehearse the "myth" of Mount Saviour and the "myth" of Saint Benedict which express to us the meaning of the life we have been called to.

The two sections of our program on symbolism and on myth were concluded with mini-symposia -- mini, in comparison with the Word Out of Silence Symposium held here last August. On three evenings members of the community spoke for 10-15 minutes each on relevant topics on which they had been reading; and each evening after three talks there was time for questions and discussion.

The third section opened with a weekend of talks by Professor Richard Pilgrim of Syracuse University on ritual, and concluded with the Easter Vigil. Here again we have the memories of Father Damasus' teaching, and this year we blessed the new fire out of doors near his grave, in the monks' cemetery west of the chapel.



Two encounters, both on the subject of myth, took place late, after its proper season. Erlo and Anne Van Waveren, Jungian depth-psychologists in New York City, spoke of the theory and practice of their teacher, C.G.Jung, and analysed some of the brothers' dreams. Mrs Hugh Franklin, who has written stories for children (and adults) under her maiden name of Madeleine L'Engle, spoke to us of writing, and of the writer's response to the Spirit who blows where He wills and has frequently made use of fairy stories to teach the truth.

The education of a community of lay monks, such as this one -- among us are all degrees of previous learning and of zeal --, and the creating of a common mind as well as a common heart, is a great challenge. We are grateful to Father Tom Berry for suggesting the framework within which we move and for his many visits, and to Brother Francis for working to produce this year's fruitful program.

A contemplative symposium on spiritual traditions held at Mount Saviour Monastery in August 1972 provided insights into a "one world spirituality" emerging in our time from the convergence of many historic religions. The week-long convocation for one-hundred-fifty participants engaged in spiritual service in university and religious communities was itself an event in this evolution. Liturgies, meditation disciplines, conference and dialogue were shared. The gathering of spiritual pilgrims was served by masters from many parts of the world; some are seen in prayer in the chapel, left to right:

celebrated author Alan Watts; yogi Ram Dass, formerly Richard Alpert; Fordham Prof. Thomas Berry; Zen master J. Sasaki Roshi & Zen abbess Gesshin; Hindu Catholic theologian Raimundo Panikkar; Greek Archimandrite Kallistos; Yoga Swami Venkatesananda; Muslim Pir Vilayat Khan; counter-culture guru Swami Satchidananda.



CASSETTE TAPES AVAILABLE OF THE PROCEEDINGS:

WORD OUT OF SILENCE SYMPOSIUM

- 1/ DAVID STEINDL-RAST, Monk of Mount Saviour, Environment as Guru. Place, space, time define Benedictine contemplative life. Sunday Vespers sung by the Monks. (50 min.) \$6.00
- 2/ RAIMUNDO PANIKKAR, Professor Univ. of Calif., Silence of the Word: Non-Dualistic Polarities. Hindu scriptures reveal Word as incarnation of Silence of the Father; Responses (90 min.) \$8.00
- 3/ JOSHI SASAKI ROSHI & GESSHIN CHEVEY, master & abbess, Mt. Baldy Zen Center, California, Zen, the Root of Being. Pure experience beyond subject-object dichotomy; responses, questions on Zen practice. (135 min. 2 cassettes) \$13.00
- 4/ EUCHARISTIC LITURGY, Roman Rite, Mount Saviour Monks (50 min.) \$6.00
- 5/ SWAMI VENKATESANANDA, world renowned yoga teacher, Mauritius Indian Ocean, Role of Guru in Ahimsa. Human being as ahimsa, perfect integration, manifestation of divine Light, the Guru; responses. (120 min. 2 cassettes) \$12.00
- 6/ COMMITMENT TO THE SPIRIT, CONVERGENCE OF RELIGIONS, dialogue intro. by Francis Martin, scripture scholar, charismatic community in Rome; with Thomas Berry of Fordham, R. Panikkar, Alan Watts, R. Vachon of Montreal, Swami Satchidananda, etc. (160 min. 2 cassettes) \$14.00
- 7/ RAM DASS ALPERT, yogi, former Harvard psychology professor, What Can We Say of the Self to be Realized? Integration through meditation of practical use in reconciling polarities in our fragmented society. Personal experience in India. (60 min.) \$6.00
- 8/ EUCHARISTIC LITURGY, Byzantine Rite, Francis Martin, with Mount Saviour Monks. (80 min. stereo) \$8.00
- 9/ KALLISTOS MARE, Monk of Patmos, Professor at Oxford, Freedom, Obedience & Love, Spiritual Fathers in Orthodox Christianity. Spiritual authority & discipline in Christian East; Jewish Hasid responses & others. (90 min.) \$8.00
- 10/ GREED, RACISM & EVIL, Sarah Small and Others. Intro. by Co-director Packard Manse Ecumenical Center. Polarities producing evil in human nature & societies explored-spoken from different religions. (90 min.) \$8.00
- 11/ MANTRA PRAYER, Swami Satchidananda and Others. Intro. Founder world-wide Integral Yoga Institute. Mystical prayer in primal Word of God. Hindu, Sufi, Catholic & Orthodox Christian, Jewish, American Indian, Zen teaching & examples. (125 min. 2 cassettes) \$12.00
- 12/ SUNRISE SERVICE, Alan Watts. Mantric service, worshipful pure sound; introduction to contemplative liturgy. (40 min.) \$6.00
- 13/ PIR VILAYAT INAYAT KHAN, Head of Muslim Sufi Order in West, Sufism in Dialogue Between Religions. Seek beyond phenomena of personal growth to be in touch with divine cosmic ground. (60 min.) \$6.00
- 14/ NUR TURKEE & SHAHIDA VON BRIESEN, original members of New Mexican religious commune, Uma Community: Search for Basic Values. God-seekers start from scratch. Similarities in American Indian & monastic traditions. (50 min.) \$6.00
- 15/ SUNSET SERVICE, Shlomo Carlebach. Mystic fires in Hasidic songs; folksinger-rabbi loved in many parts of the world. (60 min.) \$6.00
- 16/ COSMIC CHRISTIAN LITURGY, celebrated by Raimundo Panikkar. Cosmic & human dance of the Word of God; offering sacred elements. Nature, readings & orations of several religious traditions. Profound ecological service. (90 min.) \$8.00
- 17/ ALAN WATTS, Christian-Buddhist visionary author & lecturer, Unity in Contemplation, true transcendental meditation. Topics needing exploration in encounter of Christianity & other religions--Watts & others. (120 min 2 cassettes) \$12.00
- 18/ EVERYDAY CONTEMPLATION, concluding observations by spokesmen several religious traditions. Beatitudes sung by Mount Saviour Monks. (50 min.) \$6.00
- 19/ COMPLETE SET SYMPOSIUM TAPES (23 cassettes) \$125.00

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