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Mount Saviour Pine City, N.Y. 14871

Chronicle



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Dear Friend of Mt Saviour,

In ancient times if someone built an altar it was as a response to the God who had just visited there. The Lord appeared to Abram at a place East of Bethel and West of Ai. Abram "built an altar there to the Lord and invoked the Lord by name". This same sequence is repeated again and again in the history of the patriarchs. The place of encounter was signed by an altar of stone or beaten earth. Offerings were made there because it was recognized as a place of particular divine favor. In time this second feature, the place of worship had more significance than the memory of God's appearance which gave it birth. More value was given to the place than the memorial of the divine visitation. At first the chosen people demolished pagan altars as the law demanded but then were content to 'baptize' the high places with their material offerings. (I Kings 3, 4) The many altars tended to

obscure the fact that the altar is only a sign to attain to the living God. They also resulted in God being worshiped as other gods were worshiped.

Centralization of worship at one place only, namely Jerusalem with its one altar and one temple, was one of the responses to this double danger. For Jesus (Mt. 23,18ff) clearly the altar was holy. But this was by reason of what it signified. To draw near to the altar is to draw near to God and it is impossible to do with anger in our heart. As with the Feasts we will mention later, so with the altar, Christ not only gives the true meaning to the ancient worship, he replaces it - puts an end to it. The new temple is his body; there is no altar but he, for the altar sanctifies the offering. This is the meaning of John 17, 19 that he sanctifies himself. He is now priest, offering, and altar.

At the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple which

commemorated the consecration of the altar by Judas Maccabeus, the Gospel of John reports these words of Jesus: "... as the one whom the Father consecrated ...". The sequence of Feasts, the Sabbath, Passover, Tabernacles, and the Dedication of the Temple allows St. John to show how they are replaced by the Christ, Jesus. There is no Sabbath rest for the one who gives life, healing, and judgment on the Sabbath even as there is no resting for the Father who gives life, healing, and judgment on the Sabbath. The manna of the Exodus-Passover is replaced by the one who is the bread come down from heaven. The light and water ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles are replaced by the one who is the true source of living waters and the light of the world. Now at the Feast of the Dedication of an altar by men, we hear the proclamation of the one truly consecrated by God, the new altar and the new Temple as the only place chosen by God where worship would be in spirit and in truth.

As Christians it is with the greatest reverence that we ponder the mystery of human groping toward God in worship. We are more and more attentive to Jewish Feasts since they introduce us to the one who fulfilled and superseded them. What did they mean to Jesus and how were they formative of him? In the centuries of their development, we are taught something of God's ways. This Feast of the Dedication of the Temple at Jerusalem, for example is the culmination of the countless visitations of God in various times and places. Fearful, hesitant, and flawed, but none the less a recognition of the divine presence and a response to the invitation to relationship. Building an altar and calling on the name of the Lord was more of a giant step for humankind than the moon walk. The relationship in prayer and worship became an ever more confident and faithful offering of one's self, family, tribe, and nation until we reached the fullness of time when someone called on THE name of the Lord, namely "Abba" and was consecrated by God as altar, temple, and priest. The voluntary offering of his life, his dedication in the Exodus-Passover, the Paschal Mystery, is his final sanctification which issues in the mission of his disciples likewise consecrated by the Spirit to the service of God. The long awaited unity between the God who repeatedly visited us is established forever and we dwell together in the altar-temple of the risen body of Christ become life-giving Spirit who makes us a living sacrifice of praise. Today at the time of Mass and prayer our sanctuaries become the place of the Covenant - sign of the risen Christ and the intimate unity of God and humankind. "Bonded and knit together by every constituent joint, the whole frame grows through the due activity of each part, and builds itself up in love". Ephesians 4, 16.

What was written above about the altar comes from Xavier Leon-Dufour's *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* and the part on the Feasts from Raymond

Brown's 2 volume commentary on St. John. The meaning of our Chapel was treated by Rev. Fr. Damasus in earlier *Chronicles*. This is from *Christmas* 1958.

The new Israel of the Messianic Age will live according to the "law of the house" proclaimed by Ezekiel in his description of the ideal temple and the ideal community: "This is the law of the house: up on the top of the mountain the whole country! Round about in every direction is the Holy of Holies!" (Ezekiel 43:12) In the Messianic Age, the Holy of Holies ceases to be a very small place set apart to be absolutely holy. It becomes the center of sanctity in every direction.

At the death of the Lord, the veil separating the Holy of Holies from the outside world was rent. The Temple of the Lord's body was destroyed. But at His Resurrection, it was raised up again. On Pentecost, it began to expand over the whole earth, the Holy Spirit "filled the whole house". (Acts 2:2) Only at Christ's Second Coming will this beginning be brought to its fulfillment in New Jerusalem where there is no temple anymore, "for the Lord almighty and the Lamb are its temple." (Apoc. 21:22)

While the Church is still on her pilgrimage through this world, in the age between the temple and New Jerusalem, we build churches. They are very different from the temple. They are the Holy of Holies opened to the whole People of God. There they come: children, women, men. All those, who are living members of Christ's Mystical Body, have access to the altar, to bring their gifts, and to receive the Body and Blood of the Word made flesh, which builds them up into one spiritual temple glorifying the Father.

Monks and guests form one circle around the altar and easily fuse into common song and common action. The octagon is indeed the ideal shape to express the "law of the house:" "Round about in every direction is the Holy of Holies!"

The altar and chapel are the spiritual and architectural center of a monastery. At Mount Saviour, both express the idea that from the Holy of Holies, which is the beauty of the Word made flesh, the temple destroyed for our sake and raised again for us, sanctity radiates into every direction. The altar surrounded by the eight-pointed star and the octagonal chapel show that the Lord being lifted up from the earth draws all things to himself. (cf. John 12:32)

In the Middle Ages, the separation of the monks from the world frequently went to the extreme of excluding the lay-folk from the monastic services. In our days, the relation between monks and the faithful has changed a great deal. While it remains true that monastery churches are not parish churches, there are three important movements alive in the Church today establishing a much closer contact between the monks on the one side and the diocesan priests and laity on the other. The liturgical movement,

the Bible movement and the retreat movement work together to extend the Holy of Holies "round about, in every direction."

When Mount Saviour was founded, a high dignitary of the Roman Curia gave the advice: "Open the gates, Dom Damaso, don't shut them." Ever since, I have considered it the special mission of Mount Saviour to bring the guests close to the life of the community as long as both parties profit spiritually from such contact.

Fr. Damasus envisioned the Chapel in its original construction and especially in the re-designing in 1963 as an expression of our new relation in the risen Christ and the Spirit. The Church becomes a place of 'inclusions' rather than 'exclusions' as was the Jerusalem Temple. The step up into the sanctuary has been eliminated since the whole Chapel is sanctuary and sign of our dwelling place in God.

In brief, then, when Bishop Clark dedicates the Chapel of Our Lady Queen of Peace on the 15th of August this year, we will be celebrating all the mighty acts of God throughout history brought into focus in a particular church and congregation. And since this focus is the action of God in Christ become life-giving Spirit, we who gather here become the Triune God's sign and pledge of the glory to come.

In Xto,



FALL FESTIVAL:

Sunday, September 16th, is this year's Festival. Our theme is that Peace which only the Lord can give but which we can receive and nurture every day. The newly dedicated Chapel has always been under the patronage of Mary as Queen of Peace. It is she who received Christ as we receive and bring him forth today. The peace of Christ is a present victory and joy that overflows our attempts to contain it. We are most grateful for your response to the raffle and your prayers of thanks to God for all who help or have helped us these 29 yrs. We do need volunteers that weekend. Call Mary Ann Hain — (607) 734-6562 or write us a note.

FROM OUR BOOKSTORE:

MONASTIC STUDIES: In response to many inquiries we wish to advise our readers that volumes #1 to 7 are out of print and out of stock. However copies of #8 to 12 are available. The listing below highlights a few of the major articles. A list of the complete articles in each issue is available on request.

#8 - 1972 In memory of Father Damasus Winzen. 187 p. \$5.00
In the Joy of the Holy Spirit by Emmanuel M. Heufelder.
What Has Christianity to Do with Jesus? by Gerard S. Sloyan.
Christian Confrontation with Buddhism & Hinduism by Br. David Steindl-Rast.

#9 - 1972 ON THE EXPERIENCE OF GOD 210 p. \$5.95
Encounter with God in History by Magnus Lohrer.
Experience of God Today? by Christian Schutz.
Fraternity as an Aspect of the Experience of God in the Cenobium by Ambrose Wathen.
Liturgy and the Monastic Experience of God by Adrien Nocent.

#10 - 1974 ON HOSPITALITY AND OTHER MATTERS 218 p. \$5.00

Hospitality by Henri J. M. Nouwen.
Hospitality in the First Five Centuries of the Church by Rowan A. Greer.
On the Reception of Guests by Fr. Damasus Winzen.
The Poverty of a Host by Henri J. M. Nouwen.
Poems by Madeleine L' Engle.

#11 - 1975 ON BENEDICTINE MONASTICISM 223 p. \$7.95
Conversation and Stability in the Rule of St. Benedict by Ambrose Wathen.

Johannine Themes in the Rule by Hans Urs von Balthasar.
On Silence by Matthew Stark.

Monastic Experiment by College Students by George F. Simons.

#12 - 1976 ON EDUCATION 301 p. \$8.95

To Study the Early Monks by Adalbert de Vogue.
Challenge of Eastern Meditation by Josef Sudbrack.
Education of the Heart by Charles Dumont.
Friendship and Spiritual Direction by Aelred Squire.
Love of Neighbor in the 12th Century by Mary Woodward.

A life of Christ by Shusaku Endo. Written by a Roman Catholic Japanese layman to introduce Jesus to non-Christian Japanese. It sold over 300,000 copies. \$9.95

Searching for God: by Cardinal Basil Hume osb \$4.95

Sign of Contradiction: Pope John Paul II. The Retreat conferences the present Pope gave to Pope Paul VI before any of us knew about him \$8.95

Man from a Far Country biography of Pope Paul II by Mary Craig \$3.95 (paper)

Pope John Paul II by M. Malinski \$10.95

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NEWS ITEMS:

The best news is the association with us of Fr. John Main osb and Br. Lawrence Freeman osb formerly of Ealing Abbey in London. With a group of laypersons who came with them from England to Montreal, they have begun a small community there and will be opening a novitiate in the Fall. We will write more about them in a future Chronicle.

Our equally best news is the growth of the Community at Christ in the Desert. Br. Peter and Br. Cassian have joined Philip, Michael, Christian, Jeremy, Xavier, and Christopher Gardner who returned after studies at Louvain.

Also very good news is the Chapel repair. Phase I is complete which means what was wrong is fixed. We entered Phase II which begins when we discover water in amounts and places we never had it before. We are also in Phase III which is to try and pay the bills. We are eternally grateful for those of you who were able to contribute 'extra' to the raffle for this construction. We have been unsuccessful so far in obtaining grants from large Foundations. If someone (s) would be able to make us low or no interest loans, it would be very helpful. In the meantime we thank God and all of you as we gather there in Christ to meet that other debt we never fully pay of which St. Paul speaks - to love one another with the life we are receiving.

We are also grateful to Abbot Edward of Berryville, Va., Fr. John Hammond of Weston, and Fr. Luke Rigby of St. Louis who were our visitators in January. Our news will be better when we have put into practice what they helped us discover of our goals and needs.

We've converted some space into a room for wood boilers. Br. Pierre and guest helpers have gathered over 40 cords of the Northeast's most available form of solar energy to be re-converted into heat this winter.

Our guests have always proven a source of joy and delight and they have contributed more and more to our work. They have been an enormous help in the woods, the farm, the monastery tasks like laundry, kitchen, and cleaning. Wayne Barr, Bruce Krag, Joe Bettinger, Mike Marchetti, Scott Turner, and Paul Gionfrido deserve special credit along with our milkmaids Mary Woodward and Sandy Ferrera.

We have begun again to turn our attention to the Liturgy under the guidance of the newly published Thesaurus or treasury for praying the Divine Office. In terms of good news, this unknown document will be like the gospel in renewing the face of the world - and the heart of our worship.

The farm is doing exceptionally well this year. The place is flowing with milk and an off brand of honey!

