



CHRISTMAS 1997

When the song of the angels is stilled
hen the star in the sky is gone
hen the kings and princes are home
hen the shepherds are back with their flock,

The Work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild nations
To bring peace among peoples
To make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman

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As I write this, we are preparing for the Advent season, a time of new beginnings, of preparation for the Christmas/ Epiphany/ Resurrection events to which it is inexorably bound.

How do we prepare...in a world that provides more distraction than ever to the mystery of the Incarnation? Recent events have caused me to focus on three women who may be our guides in this. First and foremost is Mary, the Mother of Our Lord. Her Advent preparation for the coming of Christ was her journey to Elizabeth and Zachary. She was a young girl, bearing a child, as yet unmarried and under the cloud that pained even her betrothed. She could probably be sure of only one thing - that her life had been totally torn apart

by the message of the angel and her answer to it. Yet troubled and afraid as she must have been with needs of her own, she went to reach out to another. In this she remains the prototype.

The others are Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, an incongruous pair whose deaths made us focus on some interesting paradoxes. They were both recognized and admired by the world as women who reached out to help those in need.

Diana was a true child of this generation. Being born beautiful and to a privileged rank did not make her immune from the ills of the present day: family breakdown, failed marriages, feelings of rejection and inad-

equacy. Despite her own struggles, or rather as a result of her willingness to confront them, Diana discovered that healing comes from going outside ourselves into the lives of others. As Clive James wrote in the New Yorker: "...what looked to us like frivolity; was desperation. (Yet) far from being obsessed with her own injuries, she would forget herself in the injuries of others.... When she walked into a hospital ward, everyone recognized her as one of them. They were her. She was just their soul, free for a day, in a beautiful body that walked so straight and breathed so easily. She said that the sick were more real to her than the well: their guards were down, they were themselves."

One of the saddest conclusions that could be taken from all the coverage of Diana's life is that she did not seem to have found solace or strength from her faith, her Church. She seems to have been motivated by purely humanitarian standards, which is not to denigrate them. Yet her actions were interpreted by those whom she touched and those observing them, as a genuine manifestation of the core of Christ's teaching: "What you do to the least of these, you do to Me." In this, her example remains a challenge to the rest of us.

At the other end of the spectrum from this quintessential, Versace-clad child of the present generation was Mother Teresa. She made every choice in her life guided by and supported by the love of Christ and His Church. Her quest to live out the gospel mandates led her to seek out and care for the most destitute and abandoned. It is ironic that those to whom she ministered and those who observed her in the slums and stench of Calcutta saw in this sari-clad woman a magnificent humanitarian. Although she saw the face of Christ in the outcasts of this Hindu dominated country, it was

beyond their understanding to recognize Him in this woman and her companions. She was simply "Mother". In one of those marvelous twists of fate, the virtually unchurched Diana was accorded a private funeral from one of the world's most beautiful church, Westminster Abbey, and Mother Teresa a state funeral from a sports stadium!

As we prepare to celebrate the great feast of the Incarnation, listen to St. Paul's words to Titus proclaimed at the Dawn Mass of Christmas: "Apparuit benignitas et **humanitas** Salvatoris nostri Dei." The graciousness and humanity (loving kindness) of God our Saviour appeared! Jesus is the appearance of the humanity of God. But so are we, His Body made visible. In our hearts do we believe that Christ not only dwells in us, but also in the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked and the imprisoned?

We give gifts at this time of year to celebrate the greatest Gift of all, given to the world from a stable in Bethlehem. Should our gifts be expensive trinkets from catalogs for someone who doesn't need them; may not even want them? Or will it be the gift of ourselves to others in whatever degree of simple **humanitas** we can muster? Do we really believe that in the gift of ourselves, we bring the gift of Christ to another? Yet we prepare for such a gift during Advent, receive and begin to nurture it at Christmas and manifest it ever more fully in the ongoing Epiphany of our lives. Mary, Teresa, Diana - and all the saints challenge us and stand ready to share their portion of the **humanitas** of our saving God with us and especially so when we reach out to serve those in need.

In Xto,

Fr Martin



Please remember us in your prayer and, if possible, also in your estate planning or will. Our legal title is The Benedictine Foundation of NY State.

Abbot Pricke Marcel Rooney, who was with us for Dedication Day, tells of the adventures of his 1st year in office to Br Luke, Br William & Br John Thompson & the community.



Minhhang K. Huynh's 12' X 9' Genesee Crucifix, done in egg tempera, is shown in front of the west nave of the chapel. The 'Franciscan' crucifixes of central Italy and especially Siena were Minhhang's models. It was here from 10 August till 18 Sept.



Br. William Uiting, who began his Novitiate Sept. 13, exchanges the Kiss of Peace with Br. Luke, Br. Bruno & Br Gabriel.

NEWS NOTES

One of the first things Fr Placid did here was to plant trees for an orchard - which prospered! In the last years of his life, he was unable to do much there and the orchard suffered. Br Bruno and some helpers energetically began to put it back in shape. The last two years Br John Thompson, and this year Br William Uiting, and Fr Alfred Lopinto who is here on a mini-Sabbatical, added their efforts. This season the 14 varieties of apples yielded 4 tons of fruit. 700 lbs are being kept in our storage & a good amount has been made into apple sauce. We were able to squeeze out an additional 400 gals. of cider. We use a minimum of sprays and not the one found to carry the E. Coli. The orchard also yields 3 varieties of plums, which topped 400 lbs. and some very delicious pears and a small number of peaches. Thanks be to God, the trees, the soil, our brothers and their helpers. It was a banner year!

It has been our good fortune to know people & guests with musical ability and to have a community and friends who appreciate their gifts. The Vox Gaudens medieval ensemble performed a variety of music spanning the 12th through the 15th Centuries.

50 Pilgrims on Mt. Saviour's Italian trip last May in the chapel of San Giorgio in Venice where Pope Pius VII was elected in 1800. Plans to stay in Villas in Italy in May 98, the Holy Land in October 98, and a Danube River Tour in the spring of 99 are in the making. If you are interested, let us know.

We highly recommend them. On August 23rd, the chapel was the site of Glen McClure's Performance Mass: St Francis in the Americas. Glen sets the poetry of Francis to folk melodies and original music from New World styles including Samba, Salsa, Calypso, American hymnody & Jazz. It was a truly wonderful celebration of the common ground we of the Americas may share with a little imagination, creativity & faith.

On 15 November, Peter Calderone, one of the youngest in our series of illustrious artists, gave a concert on our newly restored Steinway to the great joy of the community and guests.

In September, Br John Thompson and Fr Martin attended the splendid consecration of St. Meinrad Archabbey Church. They stayed overnight with Frank and Marie Waickman in Akron Ohio on the way there and with the monks of St Vincent's Archabbey on the way home. In October, Fr Martin went to Omaha for his 50th anniversary of graduation from Creighton Univ., Medical School. The jubilarians assured one another they hadn't changed a bit in spite of the photos on their name tags which asserted otherwise.



BUILDING REPAIRS: THIS TIME THE CHAPEL

We plan to undertake some needed repairs on the Chapel next spring. Recent rains make it imperative since the sanctuary area around the altar was a small lake. The steeple has been in place since 1953 and the roof and windows since 1964. They all leak depending on the direction of the wind and the amount of rain or snow. The new roof & repairs will cost \$80,000. We are deeply grateful for your help in the past and pray that you are able to continue your prayers and support.

IMAGINARY PICTURES:

During WW II, the pictures and art objects were removed from the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. The staff continued to conduct tours in front of the blank walls and describe the 'pictures.' We were advised to have more pictures and fewer words so we designated a camera monk. He took lots of pictures but in unloading the camera, he also unloaded the canister the film was in. Therefore...imagine you see here the 18 people taking part in our Adult Study Week in June. And here are Joseph Fisher, Vinod Shah, Brian Winter and Peter Mwenga Mutuku, who took part in our 8th Annual Summer Program for men 21-35 yrs of age, making beautiful signs directing people to the various Guest Houses, the Shop, etc. Here they are helping to set up the Geneseo Crucifix pictured elsewhere. Notice Rt. Rev. Frank Griswold, Episcopal Bishop of Chicago, friend and Ecumenical Oblate of over 30 years, relaxing before leaving for Philadelphia where he was elected Primate of the Episcopal Church in the USA. Now the pictures have taken up so much space, we haven't room left to tell you about Br Ronald Fogerty's latest workshop on Contra-sexual Polarities in the Human Person, or Fr Martin's recent conference in Philadelphia, nor about our fence-jumping cows who for 5 days terrorized the countryside. Even the coyotes kept out of their way, etc., etc.

COMING EVENTS

Our 9th Annual Summer Program for Catholic men 21-35 who intend to continue as laymen runs from 1 July to 7 August. It is a great opportunity to experience and deepen a faith commitment by living within the Mount Saviour community.



Relaxation during our annual outing:
Br. James Kelly,
Fr. Timothy Brennan,
Br. Luke,
Br. John Thompson,
Br. Pierre,
Br. James Cronen,
Br. Raphael and
Fr. Martin.



A steeple's eye view of the renovated link between the chapel and the monastery buildings. A Vertical Wheelchair Lift is tucked in between the building on the left and the smaller one next to it so we are handicap-accessible to and from the chapel.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING DECEASED FRIENDS AND RELATIVES:

Hugh McKiernan • John Gallagher • John Barnoski
Marion Becker • Maria Galban • Henry Duffee
Gorden Campbell • James Dale Williams
Charles Hughes • Jim Keenan Jr
Sr Victorine Collins RSM
Emmanuel von Severus OSB
Tom Lynch • Milt Horning • Frances Kennedy
Beverly Douglass • Anne MacKenzie Posthauer

Our Adult Study week from 7-11 June will have the theme of Discipleship in Scripture and the Rule of St. Benedict. More information upon request.

See our Monthly News on our web site. [Http://www.servtech.com/public/msaviour](http://www.servtech.com/public/msaviour)