



Mount Saviour Chronicle

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY OF MOUNT SAVIOUR
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The Road to Elmira

How God works out His plan can seem downright disconcerting at times—and yet often quite interesting when considered in hindsight. The historical circumstance of how Mount Saviour came to be located in Elmira, New York, of all places, is a prime example. When our founder, Fr. Damasus Winzen, a monk of the Maria Laach community in the Eifel region of Germany, was sent by his abbot to the United States in the 1930's, it was because it was becoming apparent that Maria Laach's own existence was at risk with the ascendancy of the Nazis. Relocating to Elmira, New York, was definitely not part of Fr. Damasus' plans at the time.

Early on, in 1940, Fr. Damasus was speaking of a possible foundation in Bridgeport, Connecticut; however, various complications and delays prevented the acquisition of the property. From 1941 to 1947 a monastic foundation was established in Keyport, New Jersey, which came to be known as St. Paul's Priory. The house closed after six years, but the experience enabled Fr. Damasus to learn by the necessary pain of trial and error the exigencies of monastic life in the United States. From 1947 to 1950, as chaplain for Regina Laudis, the first contemplative house for nuns in the U.S., contacts and plans continued to be made for a similar house for men. In 1950 a proposed foundation in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, failed to materialize. Another possible location had the necessary support of the bishop of Worcester, Massachusetts. But circumstances intervened when a fire left the Trappists of Little Falls, Rhode Island homeless, and the bishop offered them a new property. Fr. Damasus suspected that the diocese would not be prepared to take on two new foundations at the same time and so he abandoned that plan. Each of these locations had its own providential twists and turns, which while not without their disappointments, were still leading Fr. Damasus further along the path in bringing his goal to fruition.



*Fr. Bernard Burns and the Hofbauers
"Now where did I put that medal?"*

Fr. Bernard Burns, a frequent visitor to Regina Laudis, was among a group of monks often mentioned by Fr. Damasus who were ready to join in any foundation made by the monks of Maria Laach. A native of Elmira, New York, and a monk of St. Paul's Benedictine Abbey in Newton, New Jersey, Bernard was admitted to

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan. 12-15, 2018	15 th Annual Knitters' Retreat Weekend
May 6, 2018	16 th Annual Damasus Winzen Memorial Lecture with Fr. Timothy Verdon
May 25-26, 2018	Annual Sheep Shearing Days
August 12, 2018	Dedication Day

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NEWS

The following are some highlights of the past year. For updated and expanded notes visit the Monthly News page on our website: www.msaviour.org

12/8/16 Solemn Profession of Br. Luke Zimmicky

1/13/17 Knitters' Yearly Weekend Retreat



Br. Pierre at the Knitters' Retreat

1/23/17 Chali Govantes Retires After 30 Years at the Monastery



Sarah "Chali" Govantes and Friends

2/2 - 2/6 Community Retreat with Fr. Konrad Shaefer, OSB, Prior of Cuernavaca, Mexico

4/19/17 Br. Ignatio Tuyen Returns to Vietnam After Two-Year Stay

4/24/17 Ronald Lau (Br. Mark) Received into the Novitiate

4/30/17 Imam Zaman Warwat Talk on "Muslims, A Mysterious People"

5/7/17 15th Annual Damasus Winzen Lecture with Fr. Martin Shannon, Community of Jesus, Orleans, MA

5/26-5/27 Annual Sheep Shearing Days

6/8/17 Community Outing to the Srs. of St. Joseph in Rochester for the Combined 90th Birthday Celebrations of Fr. James and Br. Stephen



Our Absent Brothers

6/11/17 Eleanor Haber Talk on "Jerusalem, The Holy" at St. Joseph's

7/1/17 Fr. Darr Schoenhofen Takes Up Residence as a Second Chaplain

7/15/17 Solemn Profession of Br. Michael O'Connor

8/1/17 Three-Year Appointment of Abbot Cuthbert Brogan as Administrator of Mount Saviour



Abbots Cuthbert Brogan and Anselm Atkinson

8/13/17 Annual Dedication Day Celebration

8/25/17 Sixty Years Ago, Harold Eugene Duffee, Br. Gabriel, Arrived at Mount Saviour to Begin His Monastic Life

8/30/17 Br. Savio Returns to Pope John XXIII Seminary for 3rd Theology

9/17/17 Steve Jacobsen Talk: Insights From the Rule of St. Benedict and Modern Conflict Theory

10/1-10/10 Brs. John and Pierre to England and to Maria Laach in Germany

10/13-10/15 Oblate Retreat Weekend

11/5/17 Fr. John Desocio's Talk at Saint Joseph's After Mass



Br. Luke's Monastic Journey

I wanted to be a monk ever since I was in sixth grade at St. John the Evangelist School in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. Since I had previously visited twelve other monasteries across the United States, the decision to enter Mount Saviour was an easy one for me to make, as this was the only monastery I visited that actually practiced the motto of St. Benedict: "Prayer and work". In 2012, after nine months as a Postulant, in order to express a deeper commitment to the Lord, I petitioned the community members of Mount Saviour to accept me into the novitiate program. At the end of that year I again petitioned the community members to allow me to continue formation as a simple professed monk. In my petition I stated that my discernment journey so far had been an exciting one. I had allowed God into my life at a much deeper level than I ever thought possible, and had faith and trust that He was leading me in the right direction. Entering my second year as a Junior, I recall being drawn even closer to God, who had helped me through some challenging times, and truly believing in the power of prayers which I saw had been answered. In my petition of 2015 to continue into my third year of simple profession, I wrote that my life at Mount Saviour had exceeded all my expectations, and I never could have imagined that I would have the relationship that I now had with God. I felt comfortable and very much a part of the community.

In 2016 I petitioned the community to accept me as a solemnly professed monk. All of my expectations at Mount Saviour had been met. My path here has been more one of unlearning than of learning and of letting go more than of holding onto principles. Each time I encountered my own powerlessness I got through it because I realized my dependence on God.

When Abbot Cuthbert received my profession on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin

Mary, December 8, 2016, he told me that I had been consecrated as a temple, a holy place, and by my consecration had become another brick helping secure the foundation of Mount Saviour. He also instructed me to be generous, to be obedient, to become a living stone in this monastery by my stability and, by the daily working of the earth of my heart, to become something beautiful for God.

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St. Joseph's Hospital in Elmira in the summer of 1950. A high school student of his, Damian Milliken, also from Elmira, hearing that Fr. Bernard had been admitted for treatment, went to visit him. He was surprised to find Fr. Bernard sitting up, poring over great sheets of drawings spread over his bed. Milliken was invited to look at the drawings, which he described as being of professional architectural quality. Fr. Bernard said to him, "Just imagine a great abbey like this on the bluffs over the Chemung River in Big Flats." Milliken said that as he left, Fr. Bernard displayed a look of great satisfaction, absorbed in his pen and ink dreams.

After recovering from surgery, Fr. Bernard asked Milliken to come along with him on a visit, for he thought he had a contact who could put him in touch with people who had property up in the hills along the river. Arriving at the future site of the monastery, they were warmly greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Hofbauer, a solid German immigrant couple. The conversation with them consisted mainly of generalities. After leaving the Hofbauers, Fr. Bernard said they should go out to say a prayer and plant the medal of St. Benedict that he had brought along. They did not dig a hole but placed the medal under a rock in one of the many rock walls that lined the property. Milliken's conscience was a bit uneasy, scheming as it were, to pull the land out from under the Hofbauers' feet without even telling them what they had in mind when they came up there.

It was at Fr. Bernard's urging that Fr. Damasus came to Elmira on August 17, 1950, to view the future Mount Saviour property. On November 29 of that year, the two of them called upon Bishop Kearney of Rochester and received his approval for the new foundation in his diocese. Obedience, twists, turns, complications, delays, disappointments, prayer, dreams, intercession, steady perseverance toward a goal, approval, realization—it almost sounds like there might be a message in here somewhere.



Br. Michael's Profession

Br. Michael: Interior Peace

About two years or so before joining the monastery I was going through a rough time at my plumbing job, having very high anxiety, and even coming down with ulcerative colitis. In the midst of this, the idea of joining a monastery came to mind. Still, I sat on the idea for about two years.

Little by little I started to look into the possibility, and finally asked my parish priest about it, who found some monasteries with the help of the internet. Mount Saviour was the only one that was not involved in education and I felt called to that kind of monastery. I eventually called and set up a date to visit, and made two visits before deciding to quit my plumbing job.

I had no idea what monastic life was about before joining. I spent one month in an observership, living inside the cloister with the brothers, and then decided that I wanted to continue.

During my journey there were times when I thought about leaving, until certain things, such as agreeing to consult with a spiritual director on a regular basis, helped me greatly. The biggest factor in enabling me to continue the journey was receiving the gift of interior peace. As each of the three years of simple vows came up it was never a difficult decision to continue. Now, as a solemnly professed monk of Mount Saviour, I thank God that I continue to be graced with the gift of interior peace.

Please remember us in prayer and, if possible, also in your estate planning and will.

Our legal title is:

The Benedictine Foundation of New York State

A New Chaplain

Last July Fr. Darr Schoenhofen, a retired priest of the Diocese of Syracuse and native of Elmira, began serving as priest-chaplain to the Mount Saviour community. In addition to serving as a parish priest, Fr. Darr also served as a theology instructor in the Permanent Deacon Program there. From 1992 – 1997 he served at the Pontifical North American College in Rome as academic dean, formation advisor and spiritual director. In addition to his new duties at the monastery, Fr. Darr is serving as hospital chaplain at Elmira's two hospitals and continues to serve as spiritual director for a number of directees in the Diocese of Syracuse. Currently living in one of our apartments, Fr. Darr will move down the road to St. James, the big blue house on the right as one comes up Monastery Road, when the contractors are finished refurbishing it.



Fr. Darr Schoenhofen

RECOMMENDED BOOKS READ IN OUR REFECTORY

Everyday Saints and Other Stories by Archimandrite Tikhon Shevkunov

Not in God's Name: Confronting Religious Violence by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

Haiti: The God of Tough Places, the Lord of Burnt Men by Richard Frechette

Signs: Seven Words of Hope by Jean Vanier

Grandma Gatewood's Walk: The Inspiring Story of the Woman Who Saved the Appalachian Trail by Ben Montgomery

Echoes of the Word by Enzo Bianchi

The Church of Spies: The Pope's Secret War against Hitler by Mark Riebling

American Prophets: Seven Religious Radicals and Their Struggle for Social and Political Justice by Albert J. Raboteau

Called To Community: The Life Jesus Wants for His People by Eberhard Arnold

Pilgrimage: My Search for the Real Pope Francis by Mark Shriver

Chasing the Last Laugh: Mark Twain's Raucous and Redemptive Round-the-World Comedy Tour by Richard Zacks