



Mount Saviour

THE BENEDICTINE MONASTERY

OF MOUNT SAVIOUR

PINE CITY, N. Y., 14871

NEWSLETTER

October, 1963

Dear Friends of Mount Saviour:

Because there are a number of things we would like to talk over with you or express to you, we shall try to incorporate them in an autumn effort at a newsletter.

There are autumns and autumns, and most of them are so beautiful it verges on truism to write it down once again, but since God is so good to us, why should we not hymn His praises, at least in the prosaic and provincial way of telling you once again how good it is to be in the North at this time of year. "Indian Summer" is no misnomer, when in defiance of imminent death the whole countryside risks its all in new, bright-colored garments that shout to winter that another spring will come, sometime.

It will not disturb you, we hope, if we do not chronicle the news in order. The reason is that we would like to express our appreciation for the success of Dedication Day, celebrated Sunday, the fifteenth of September. Trying to re-cast the litany of thanksgiving is not an easy task, since we are always in danger of overlooking someone who has been particularly generous, but, like autumn, we dare to risk, saying thank-you in words different from last year, and the years before, certain that when we mention specially those who worked in the booths, and tents, sent food or items for the sales, worked on publicity or arranging to borrow tents and other equipment, gave their time to serve on committees, as the objects of a heartfelt "Thanks, and may God bless," any who have not been included in these categories will relax in the warmth that in "Thanks, and may God bless" radiates to the whole clan of the Friends of Mount Saviour.

The terrace south of the chapel which is the site of the D-Day doings has all but grassed over again in the warm days that have followed, but we cannot forget, despite the "summer" weather, that it is also time to ask you to send lists of deceased so that from All Souls' Day through the month of November we may join our

prayers to yours for their eternal joy. To this effect we enclose a reply envelope and a separate sheet on which to list their names.

Bundling together Dedication Day, All Souls' Day, and our Building Fund Drive may not seem like the easiest feat imaginable, and it is not, but it can be done! Just as we are able to count on using some of the proceeds from the successful Dedication Day of 1963 for our building costs, so may we count on the prayers of the eternally blessed among our relatives and friends for the success of our building drive. Up to now, and, for that matter, in the foreseeable future, our "drive" has been planned to be on the restrained side. But, as we who are on location realize, big buildings mean big bills. In simple faith we say that we count very heavily on the prayers of the living and deceased for our material well-being. We also ask you to think twice about sending an All Souls' Offering this year. For this reason: in the near future we shall send you information about memorial possibilities and general fund needs. These letters will not be sent to the entire mailing list at once, but because they will start traveling soon we thought it only fair to say that you would soon receive this invitation to help us defray construction costs. In a word, send a list of names of those for whom you wish prayers, but if your means will only permit of one donation please save it for the building.

We have had quite a bit of abbatial coming and going since last edition. It centers about our own canonical visitation, and the blessing of Archabbot Rembert Weakland of Saint Vincent Archabbey.

The visitation began on August 4, with the arrival from Rome of our Abbot Visitor, the Right Reverend Benno Gut, Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Order, with his secretary, Father Lambert Dunne, monk of Saint Mary's Abbey, Morristown, N. J., and Father Abbot's brother, Father Philip Gut of Einsiedeln Abbey, Switzerland. A visitation may involve observation or investigation. Thank God, when it had ended on the 7th of August, we

could feel that the Primate had observed rather than investigated, and we could return to a quiet life, implementing his recommendations. Visitations can, as you see, have their grave side, but at least here at Mount Saviour they have a light side as well. This consisted in an outdoor buffet supper at Saint Gertrude's, our guesthouse high on the windy hill west of the monastery. The wind behaved, the sun set gorgeously, the food was passing fair, and Father Abbot Primate took it all in to the tune of a Mount Saviour Hootenanny — folk music by mountain monks! To the strains of "Sleep, Kentucky Babe" the Primate promised to return and we trust he will.

On the 28th of August Rev. Father Damasus went to Saint Vincent Archabbey for the blessing of Archabbot Rembert, in the company of an abbatial party consisting of the Right Reverends Eugene Medved of Westminster Abbey, British Columbia, and Odile Sylvain of Saint Benoit-du-Lac, Quebec. It was the first visit of each to our monastery, an oversight which Father Abbot Sylvain made good by visiting once again on his return trip to Quebec. We had tried for years, since his blessing twelve years ago, to have the honor of a visit by Abbot Sylvain, who had given our novices hospitality and training for three years at the beginning of our monastery's life, from 1951 to 1954, to say nothing of many other favors done for us by Saint Benoit-du-Lac during these years. Since it will be twelve years on the 18th of October, feast of Saint Luke, since Abbot Sylvain was blessed as the first abbot of Saint-Benoit-du-Lac, it is a pleasure for us to wish him a happy and blessed day, and many happy returns!

In the last half of August we had also been enjoying a visit from Father Burkhard Neunheuser, monk of Maria Laach, Roman school-mate of Reverend Father Damasus, and now professor extraordinary: he teaches philosophy at Maria Laach in the first semester, liturgy at Sant'Anselmo in Rome in the second semester, and this past summer taught theology at the Benedictine Sisters' summer school at Saint Joseph, Minnesota. During his stay here he was lured into the orbit of the Jesuit cosmos, with a few monks of the community, by agreeing to participate in an ascetical institute of several religious orders sponsored by the Jesuits of Woodstock, Maryland. He was accompanied by Father Martin, who doubled as our representative in the civil rights "March on Washington" on August 28; and by Father Benedict, who chauffeured a panzer unit that picked up Reverend Father Damasus at Saint Vincent Archabbey, following the abbatial blessing, brought him to Woodstock, and completed a homespun pincer movement to isolate the Jesuits under the nozzles of monastic artillery. The plot failed. The Jesuits were so mild, were in fact so much the quintessence of hospitality that the monks were disarmed and moved to mercy

and all became, and parted, great friends, each true to his respective Society or Order.

Dom Chronicler notes that on the 8th of September we had still another buffet supper *al fresco* to honor our retreat master, Father Bede Griffiths, and the departing Fathers Burkhard and Thomas. Father Burkhard, identified above, had come to the point of embarking, somewhat unwillingly, for the Old World. The United States attracted him tremendously, but he had to get back to school in Germany and Rome.

Father Bede Griffiths had just finished preaching us a very wonderful retreat. He is a monk of Prinknash Abbey, England, at present working to found Kurisumala Ashram, Kerala, India. He had come to this country to speak on Western monasticism's adaptation to the culture of India, at the convention of the Catholic Art Association in Santa Fe, in mid-August, in which Father Damasus also took part as speaker; and we were fortunate, very fortunate, in winning him as retreat master on his way to visit England. Fortunate in many ways because Father Bede is a man of many gifts. As retreat master, his great gift was an unassuming attempt to share with us, and apply to our monastery, the life he had led and is leading as a Benedictine monk in England and in India. Prinknash and Kurisumala are monasteries that recognize the need of adapting venerable monastic traditions to contemporary conditions. His conferences along these lines were very encouraging to us, since from the outset we have tried the same approach within an American context. Adaptation is particularly necessary in India, where Western forms, even Western monastic forms, do not communicate the real depth of the Christian religion, unless some effort is made to express them in the Hindu idiom, both as regards customs and spirituality. Little attempt having been made along these lines by Catholics up to this time, the experiment of Kurisumala promises a great deal for the Church in its dealings with the Hindu religion, which, like our own, is very self-contained and believes it has little to learn from contact with others.

Another of Father Bede's gifts was his celebration of the liturgy. Since going to India he has learned the Syriac Rite, and has received permission to celebrate in it. In India he must celebrate in Malayalar, the language of his congregation, but in the U.S.A., fortunately, this obligation is translated into English. This meant being treated to a week of worship in an admirably simple rite, and in English.

On the basis of these two gifts alone, quite apart from the generosity Father Bede showed in meeting members of the community at every available moment, there was good reason for us to bless him and the retreat with an agape, or closing love-feast.

The other monk feted at the supper is one of our own, Father Thomas Jakubiak who, at the time of the meal, was given a "bon voyage" to Maredsous, a Benedictine abbey in Belgium, famous for studies and art, as well as one of the great monastic centers of Europe. When Father Thomas had arrived in Europe his destination had changed to the University of Munich, where he is now very likely sipping nectar distilled by some of the finest theologians in Germany. The change of destination was caused by Maredsous' helping in the work of the General Council, which led to cancellation of studies in the Abbey this year. So, with Father James Kelly at the Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem, and Father Thomas at Munich, we have an overseas contingent once again.

Having just celebrated the feasts of Saints Francis and Placid brings to mind the members of the community called the Great Saints Francis and Placid, more, perhaps, because they are both six-footers than because of phenomenal sanctity, though the latter cannot be entirely excluded! The feasts of these two elders call to mind the work of the ones who have remained behind, and who have not done much traveling these past weeks, Father Francis being one of the key men on the farm, and doubling as bee-keeper on the side, with a few residual sting welts to prove it; and Father Placid yearly developing the orchard to the point where it is one of the most beautiful and productive areas of the near-thousand acres we own. The bane of the orchard is the deer population. This year Father Placid tried a technique of controlled barking by turning to the possibilities of the machine age. Instead of borrowing a dog for the occasion, he went to the dog-pound with a tape recorder and returned with a 15 minute program which he played over speakers specially installed in the orchard. The barking was so cheerful that for a while some wondered whether it was not actually encouraging the deer, but not too many a four legged Bacchus was seen making off with a cluster of grapes in his mouth, so that the grape and wine return from the orchard will be better than ever this year. Father Francis and Fathers John and Laurence are pointing with pride to the bulging silo, fat and heavy with a reasonably good grass base, considering the fact that it was too dry a summer to get more than a single cutting of grass silage; and aromatic with a topping of corn cut from a very successful crop.

With the passing of summer, school begins, and ours, a small affair with several of the community as local students, and "boarders" in the number of two from very different points of the compass: Father Daniel Fightlin of Weston Priory, Vermont, and Guillermo Romagosa of the Archdiocese of Havana, eased into a new term about September 20th. Though some of the "work" has come more or less to an end with the end of summer, another kind

of "work" takes over for the winter season. The natural rhythm of the year shows up more clearly in a monastic society where, to some extent, it is possible and certainly desirable to hibernate with the Word of God as the basic constituent of our diet in prayer and study, reversing the pattern of the animals, by storing up enough during the school or study year to keep us through a summer of heavy work.

Those of you who have known Mount Saviour for some years will realize why we found it impossible to include Father Peter Minard in the news of our guests. It is impossible to consider him as a guest alone; we have to chronicle him among our own brothers. Father Peter was our novice master, as many of you know, from 1954 to 1960. A monk of Ligugé, an abbey near Poitiers, France, Father Peter has been assistant to the novice master, or novice master, practically all the years of his monastic life. He and the founding fathers of Mount Saviour became acquainted during the years he spent on mission as novice master at Saint Benoit-du-Lac. His tenure there expired in 1953 and through the kindness of the abbots of Ligugé and Solesmes Father Peter was permitted to spend five years with us to organize the novitiate here. After this he offered to help the monastery of Notre Dame du Mont-Pelé, in the French West Indies, on Martinique, where he has been since 1960. To one accustomed to the climates of France, Quebec, and New York State, the climate of Martinique, extremely hot and humid, presents its problems. The "breather" granted monks from the temperate zone will be spent by Father Peter in the fresh air of New England, as temporary chaplain of the Benedictine nuns of Regina Laudis, Connecticut. The atrium of this paradise is New York, both city and state. This occasioned a few happy days for us, from September 21 to 26, when Father Peter came back to renew the many bonds of friendship that are his here at Mount Saviour, particularly gladdening the hearts of the many among us who knew him as novice master, and who still instinctively address him as "Father Master." No one here doubts that on this occasion instinct is borne out as true and right; from porta caeli — the gate of heaven — we send still one more Pax! to the Master living with our sisters in the southern reaches of the New (England) Promised Land.

In the space remaining we would like to pass on a word of thanks from Reverend Father Damasus and the community to the Oblates who, according to Father Augustine, the Cellarer, made an almost 100% response to the letter sent out just before D-Day asking them, as intimates of the monastic family, for special help in making that day a social and financial success. For their generous cooperation all of us send thanks and a brotherly blessing.