

BISHOP KEARNEY TO BLESS NEW BUILDINGS SEPTEMBER 14th

We are happy to announce that Bishop James E. Kearney, Ordinary of Rochester Diocese, will bless our new monastery on Monday, September 14. Just a little over thirteen years since turning the first spade for our chapel, the Bishop will honor Mount Saviour by dedicating the new permanent quarters.

The actual ceremony of blessing will be on the 14th. (Invitations will be sent out.) The public is invited to inspect the new buildings at our Open House, Sunday, Sept. 13, beginning with High Mass at 11:00 A.M. The schedule of events is printed elsewhere in this issue.

With the completion of the Northwest and Northeast Buildings, our construction master-plan is more than half realized. The Northwest Building contains sleeping quarters, library, study and classroom space for the monks. It is the secluded "inner room" of the monastery. The Northeast Building is for activity, work and administration. Here, guests are welcomed in the porter's lodge and parlors. The chapter room, refectory, kitchen, laundry and tailor shop are here. This building represents the hustle and bustle of Martha while the other represents the quiet and repose of her sister, Mary.

Over six hundred donors have contributed to the Building Fund but there is still a large debt outstanding. If all who receive this Newsletter contributed one share, the cost of one square foot of building, fifteen dollars, we could pay off a large part of our debt.

CHRIST OF THE DESERT

For quite a while we had been thinking of making a foundation. Things suddenly crystalized this spring. Then Archbishop James Davis of Santa Fe, New Mexico, answered our request to settle in his diocese in a very understanding and fatherly way.

On June 16, just before Compline, our three pioneers, Fathers Aelred, Placid, and Basil received a crucifix, a copy of the Holy Rule, and a breviary as the foundation stones for the new "Monastery of Christ of the Desert." At dawn the next morning they set out on their long drive to Abiquiu, N. M. Some excerpts from letters we have received will give you an impression of the place in its first beginnings.

Reverend Father Damasus paid a visit and wrote to Father Gregory and all at Mount Saviour: "The whole visit at 'Christ of the Desert' was one of the happiest experiences of my life here in the U.S.A. It all went so well. I was able to be with them on July 11, the Solemnity of St. Benedict, and to celebrate Mass in the little chapel, which in all its poverty and simplicity looked so well and in good taste. I rejoiced to find the three brethren in good spirits and assisted in the most generous way by Larry Croake and Bernard McDonald.

Pine City, New York 14871
MOUNT SAVIOUR MONASTERY

OPEN HOUSE FOR PUBLIC SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

11:00 A.M.: High Mass followed by guided tours of the new buildings except during Divine Office

Refreshments available in the Food Tent

1:45: None followed by Rosary

4:30: Drawing for Raffle Prizes

5:00: Vespers and Benediction

TO REACH MOUNT SAVIOUR

From the East, take Route 17 to Elmira and follow Route 17E through Elmira. At the blinker at western city limits, turn left. Cross bridge and follow signs.

From the West: From Route 17 in East Corn- ing take Route 17E through Big Flats. Turn right at blinker before entering Elmira, cross bridge and follow signs.

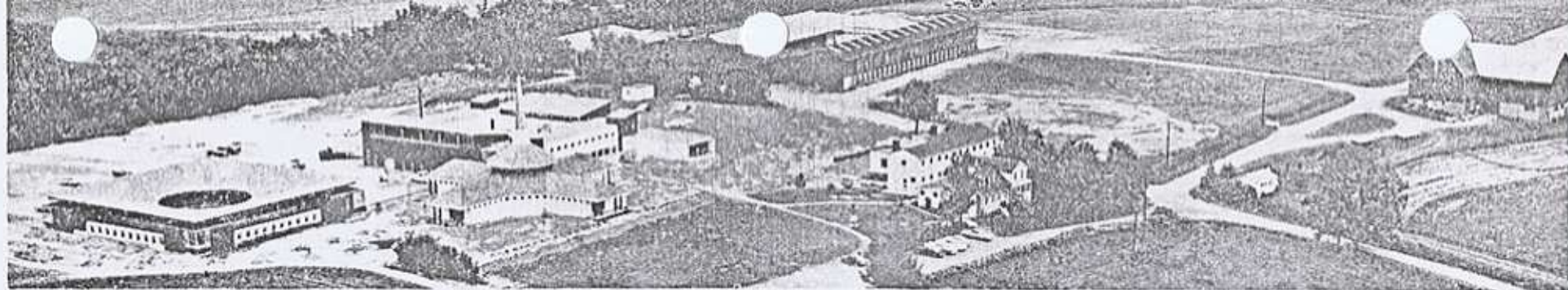
REQUEST FOR MASS OFFERINGS

We are able to fulfill many more requests to offer Masses than we are now receiving.

We shall be glad to send to those who request them a supply of Mass cards for the living and the dead. These may be sent to the family of the deceased or to the person whose name day, birthday, wedding day, or other special anniversary you may wish to remember in this way.

In our diocese the offering for low Mass is \$3.00; for a Low Mass on a special date, \$5.00; and for High Mass, which is the community sung Mass, \$10.00. Those who cannot afford these stipends are asked to send what they can, and we shall see that their intentions are cared for.

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NORTHWEST BUILDING

NORTHEAST BUILDING CHAPEL

BARN & SHOP PRESENT MONASTERY

Photo by Jim Walsh of Elmira Star-Gazette

"When I got there on Saturday afternoon, Father Aelred was busy in the kitchen. Mexican crockery in the most vivid colors was neatly laid out on the refectory table. The plates and dishes were painted and glazed in a great variety of patterns and were terribly inexpensive, of course. But one could not help feeling right at home and a part of the general set-up down there, where Spanish and Indians have met. From my vantage point at the altar, I could let my eyes wander from the crucifix on the altar (the one that Father Aelred received at the moment of departure) through the first door into the dining room, and through the next door to the stove, a certain culmination point."

A few days earlier Father Placid had written, in his amazing way:

"Our five tents are set up in an extensive grove of big old trees near the riverbank, and 300 or 400 yards north of the four room adobe house. I've never tented overnight before, but the past two nights went very well. The biggest difficulty lies in entering and leaving the tent. It is only 5 feet 6 inches high in the center, and slopes right down to the ground on either side. Thank God, there is a pair of screen flaps that zip together at the entrance, otherwise life would be unbearable from the first moment because of the insects.

"Larry and Bernard constructed a long, well-appointed lavatory table in the middle of the camp-grove. Along one side of the table are ranged three mirrors attached to uprights. On the sides of these uprights hang six plastic wash-basins . . . The whole construction is set up on two big wooden spools like the one I'm using as a table, and it was completed in a few hours by the two aforementioned experts."

Father Basil, in a more bucolic vein, writes on August 1: "This is really a nice, quiet spot and it makes one understand why people from the area take exception to our calling this place Christ of the Desert: the tamarisk trees just outside the house, then further down, at the well, the big box elders, the green field beyond them (it's only tumbleweed, but it looks enough like grass to make you happy). Then comes the river, sage brush and more trees on the other side and finally to top it all, the painted cliffs with ponderosa pines sprawled for hundreds of feet below and above them."

TRIP TO EUROPE

During March, business called Reverend Father Damasus to Europe. Reverend Father and Father Martin (this was his first trip to the "old country") visited people and places in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain, during a three week journey. Of course Rome was on the schedule and the highlight there was a private audience with Pope Paul VI. When

Reverend Father entered, the Holy Father had ready on his desk an autographed copy of the Constitution on the Liturgy. In the course of their conversation, the Holy Father emphasized his great hope in the Church in the United States.

ECUMENICA

Apart from the many welcome visits by groups from non-Catholic churches of the area, one of the things that has made us happy about the ecumenical movement recently was the retreat conducted here in June by Reverend Father Damasus which had among its participants Catholic priests and non-Catholic ministers. The initiative had been taken by diocesan priests who wished to come here with minister friends to make a retreat as a token of the bonds that these recent years of peace among Christians have cemented between them. It was our pleasure to be able to welcome this group as we would welcome any guests.

The secret of peace is honesty and charity. Peace among Christians is, in a modest way, a monastery's business, too. Hospitality is the most fitting way for us to contribute to this peace. Consequently we were delighted to be able to receive the Most Reverend Thomas Roberts, S.J., former Archbishop of Bombay. Archbishop Roberts was beginning a lecture tour in the United States under the sponsorship of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Having had members of the Fellowship here for retreat, we were recommended to the Archbishop as a stop on his trip through upper New York State. The Archbishop spoke twice to the community, and once in Elmira, sponsored at Elmira College by the Newman Club. There can be no doubt that his charm gives sincere and charitable access to non-Catholics while dulling the impact of his casually radical stand on many questions now being discussed among Catholics.

Among forays outside the monastery must be included two for which special thanks are due the Anglican Church. In January the Anglican community of Saint John the Evangelist, the Cowley Fathers, in Cambridge, Mass., welcomed our Father Benedict as participant in an ecumenical gathering. In April, Father Benedict represented Mount Saviour as guest of the Episcopal Student Association in Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H., which with the Catholic Thomas Aquinas Center was joint sponsor of a series of ecumenical activities involving the Catholic and Episcopal students at Dartmouth.

Last fall, Fr. David went to the University of Michigan, at Ann Arbor, where he gave a lecture "Why a man becomes a monk." This lecture stirred up much interest in the monastic life among Catholics and non-Catholics alike.



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RECENT PROFESSIONS AND CLOTHINGS

Within recent months four novices took simple vows. This was the first group of novices professed since Father Gregory was appointed novice master. We now have a group of ten in simple vows. Br. Joseph San Fratello is from Batavia, a town in "up-state" New York. Br. Michael Oehl and Br. Cyprian Turner were neighbors when they lived in Brooklyn, New York. And the fourth is a mid-Westerner, Br. Bernard Lambert of Cleveland, Ohio.

Our two novices are Robert Humphrey of Rochester, Mass., and Jack Maher of Trenton, N. J. The former received the Benedictine scholar, Bede the Venerable, as his patron and the latter's patron is the martyr and soldier, St. Sebastian. We welcome Brothers Bede and Sebastian to our family.

FARM REPORT BY FATHER JOHN

We had our third dry summer on the farm. The first crop of hay was fair but there was no second growth to speak of. This year, in addition to making grass silage, we baled hay. The many bales made Brother Matthew quite an expert at stacking them. Brother Bruno did the raking, which gave him much experience at driving a tractor. We hope to have a good corn crop for silage which will make up for some of the hay we did not get. We need rain badly now in order to have a good hay crop next year. We ask you to join our prayers for rain. Please also pray for all the farmers who have suffered much from three years of drought in the Northeast. May God reward you.

Brother Elias is now orchard man since Father Placid went to "Christ of the Desert" in New Mexico. It looks as if we will have a good apple crop this year. The peach trees are also doing well but it will be a few more years before they bear fruit in abundance. A fuzzy grey groundhog made several holes in the orchard. Brother Anthony trapped him before he could do any more damage.

Father Francis and Brother Elias take care of our bees. One day they did a fine job of getting a swarm of bees out of a linden tree. A hive was set up under the tree and within a few hours the swarm entered it. We all breathed more freely after that!

We have had several able helpers on the farm. Larry Croake of East Orange, N. J. stayed with us for over a year as a volunteer worker. We owe Larry much gratitude for all the work he did and the good cheer he showed in his tasks. Larry heard the call, "Go West, young man", and consequently is now helping our brothers at "Christ of the Desert". Bernard McDonald, of St. Louis, Mo. is also lending a much needed and appreciated hand there for the summer months. At Mount Saviour we had Joseph Liu and James Hall with us for the summer. Joseph is a native of Hong Kong and is studying at St. John's, Collegeville, Minn. Jim is the son of our Oblates Mr. and Mrs. James Hall of Elmira. Joe Liu was the guest of the Hall family for the summer. Joe and Jim did a fine job of removing brush from land we want to reforest in a few years.

We also would like to thank our friend Donald Bowles of Elmira who helped us to purchase two new hay wagons and an orchard sprayer.

FATHER LUKE, THE GUESTMASTER, REPORTS:

"Since the new year we have accommodated over 500 guests, retreatants, and relatives of the community at Mount Saviour guest houses. Among those who brought us special joy were the following: Bishop John Gran, O.C.S.O., of Norway, who spoke to us of the work of the Vatican Council in preparation for its next session; Father Peter Minard, O.S.B., our former novice master, who spent a few days here before his final preparations to begin a small community in North Carolina; and a group of five deacons who made a retreat in preparation for their ordination to the priesthood. (We would like to welcome other groups of deacons on retreat.)"

OBLATES — A WORD FROM THEIR DIRECTOR, FR. BENEDICT

What are oblates? Let us give you an example.

Over a year ago a man wrote from Glen Oaks, Long Island, saying that he had been directed to do so by Father Joseph Mondel, our Oblate Brother Richard Whiting. The style of the letter was strong, and turned out to be a true reflection of the man. The man behind the style was Everett Martin. He had recently been received into the Catholic Church by Father Mondel and was in search of further commitment. He was not unhappy or at loose ends in his parish; he had in fact begun training as a lay reader for the parish liturgy and belonged to more than one of the parish organizations. After some correspondence I met Everett Martin during an Oblate trip to New York City. You will have to forgive a certain clannishness if I admit that I found in him an admirable fellow Celt. He was no monk, however, and admitted that he enjoyed much of what he encountered in work, in people, in all things. He was seeking a means of deepening in the liturgical and ascetical life, and wanted, as he said, to be "tamed" and made more effective as a Christian. His most wonderful "work" was as apprentice lay reader in Our Lady of Snows Church, Floral Park, L. I. His reason for turning to the monastery lay in his feeling that it would take the somewhat more intensive monastic approach to give substance to what he felt had been a life of mere style, though, since he never abandoned it while becoming an admirable Christian, he must have perceived at least intuitively that goodness is not unacquainted with style. We became good friends and he became Oblate novice Brother Comgall of Mount Saviour. Comgall was an Irish monk approximately contemporary with Saint Benedict in the sixth century, though likely a good deal more severe than Saint Benedict. Everett-Comgall somehow did not look the part, unless one bear in mind that the Celts are a flamboyant type, even in asceticism. Whenever we met, Everett-Comgall would absorb quantities of Mount Saviour lore, until the day came when he could restrain himself no longer and he made definitive plans to visit. It was my pleasure to be able to drive to the monastery with Everett-Comgall and his wife Wendy after the May Oblate meeting in New York City. They were not disappointed in the monastery, and left for home on a Sunday. At seven Wednesday morning came the call telling of his death of a heart attack two hours earlier. I honestly confessed above that there is a certain amount of clannishness in all this, but now that May has come to August I still feel that Mount Saviour will long be the richer for having attracted the oblation of Everett-Comgall Martin. One of the more touching paradoxes put into words by Pope John XXIII is: magna igitur lex est humilitas et lenitudo: the great law, after all, is mildness and humility. It was this, among other things, that Everett-Comgall sought and believed he found here. Since he had visited Mount Saviour only once at the time of his death, most of the community as well as most of you will have to take my word for it that beyond the bluster and magnificent indignation, mildness and humility were at the heart of the new Comgall, in such measure as would give a monk or nun much to strive to imitate.

Making the necessary adaptations, the same could be said of Brother Thomas More (Mr. Sidney) Wilkin of Rochester. If Brother Comgall passed across our sky with the flash of a comet, Brother Thomas More had long been a small, steady star in the galaxy of friends of Mount Saviour. At his passing on the 22nd day of March he left the memory of a mildness and humility proverbial to all who knew him, and sure to put him in the agreeable company of John XXIII. The sympathy of all here is expressed once more to the widows Mrs. Wendy Martin and Mrs. Eloise (Sister Francesca) Wilkin.

Somewhere in all this lies a definition of an Oblate. If you can sift it free please send it on to Father Benedict. May God reward you.

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