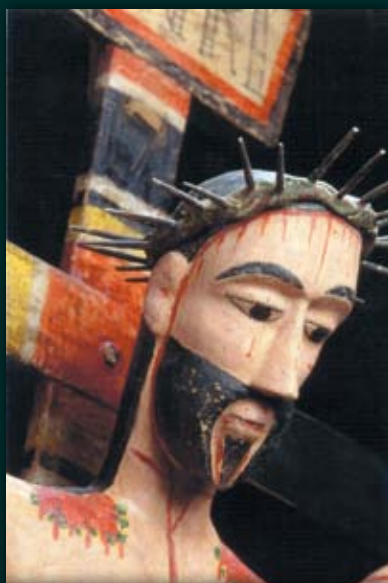


THE VALYERMO  
*Chronicle*

S T . A N D R E W ' S A B B E Y



Nº 231 ✕ SPRING 2011



EAR FRIENDS,

A wise monk once said: God is not as interested in our sins as He is in our return to Him. We see this truth reflected in the story of the Prodigal Son. (Lk. 15:11-32). When the son finally returned, the father was not the least bit interested in knowing how his son spent his inheritance. He wasn't interested in knowing where he went or what the son did when he was away from home all that time. Nor was the father interested in hearing the speech his son had prepared. The only thing the father was concerned with was that his son had returned home. Even after all the son put his father through: the late nights, the worrying, the constant answering of the question, *Where is your youngest son I haven't seen him in a while?* and the embarrassment that comes with it, still the only thing the father was concerned about was that his son had finally come back home. There were no questions asked. The prodigal son wasn't grounded; nor did the father ask for an explanation or even an apology. The only thing the father asked for was that a party be given in his son's honor!

Most of us would agree that this was definitely an unusual kind of relationship,

yet it is a relationship that we too can have because this is the kind of God we have. A God who does not allow anything, including sin and death, to keep us from Him, (Romans 8:38). We have a God whose love for us doesn't diminish with each sin we commit or with every mistake we make. In fact, quite the opposite seems to be true. His love for us actually seems to grow in intensity in moments like these. "When we were lost and could not find the way to you, you loved us more than ever..." (Eucharistic Prayer #1 for Masses of Reconciliation).

This is the image of God we need to hang onto, especially as we enter the season of Lent, a season when we are encouraged to examine our lives, to take a look at our shortcomings and sins. It's all too easy to get discouraged when we realize how sinful and unworthy we are of God's goodness. It's too easy to despair and become disheartened when we realize how often we fail, how often we take one step forward and two steps backward. However, holding tightly to this image of a loving, forgiving, patient God makes it easier for us to look honestly at our sinfulness and ourselves. It's easier because we know that no matter how dark and ugly the inward journey for us may get, no matter how deep the shame and guilt may be within us, there is a remedy for it all, and that remedy is Love, Jesus. He waits for us as we make our return to Him and he embraces us with forgiveness, healing, and welcome.

During this season of Lent, we are encouraged through prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and other spiritual disciplines to "come to our senses" as the son did, and realize our need for God. May our Lenten journey find us making our way back to Him who patiently waits our return.

Abbot Damien ✠



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# When Pasta met Tomatoes

BY ISAAC KALINA, OSB

*Fr. Isaac is our resident Italian cook at the Abbey and leads a series of successful food and theology workshops.*

*Here are some of his reflections on what any Italian would call “la vera cucina.” It is also an invitation for us to reflect on the role food and meals play in our lives as occasions to build up community, family and friendship.*

**M**OST PEOPLE WOULD agree that the Italians are some of the most passionate people on this earth. And passionate they are about many things!!!

Who else besides Italians can make such a big fuss over food? Yes, I said “food”! How it’s prepared, what it’s cooked in, what it’s served with, if it’s fresh, in-season, frozen or over-ripe. It doesn’t matter if it’s Lent, Christmas, summer, or Easter; if you are sick in bed burning up with fever; if the weather is cold, hot, raining, or Santa Ana winds are blowing. Nor is it important if times are prosperous or in a downward spiral, in war or peace, in celebration or mourning, in good times or in bad! Very few things in this life are not influenced by food; nothing in life is as far-reaching, all-encompassing, as universal as food.

That’s because food is about life, about tradition, family, about all that is good in the world, courage in our struggles, hope in all of our loves. It’s about anger, forgiveness, tears, pride, laughter and the Holy, which is in a nutshell all intimately connected to



ST. PASCHAL DE BAYLON, PATRON SAINT OF COOKS

God. It is the stuff through which God is encountered, and through which He makes Himself known to us through Jesus and the Scriptures, His Eternal Word become flesh.

The history of Italian cuisine shows that the festive meal has come a long way from the bizarre, often disgusting practices of notorious 1st Century Roman banquets, the ultimate dream for a glutton. The Roman poet, Juvenal, once complained that “those Romans were interested in nothing else but eating.”

One cannot speak about the history of Italian food without an account on how pasta and tomatoes influenced the Italian palate. But the happy marriage of these two soul mates did not come easy or with little struggle. Those giant hurdles of ignorance and superstition had to be overcome before they actually became happily united.

There have been much speculation regarding the origins of pasta, including how it was traded and imported from the Far East to Italy by Marco Polo. Chinese noodles, made from coarse millet, were a staple in China since the year 2000 B.C., some 4000 years

ago. But some say that pasta was already part of the ancient Italian civilization of the Etruscans whose noodles were made from durum wheat called *lagane* which is still abundant throughout the Italian peninsula. This food was not boiled like regular pasta, it was baked *al forno*, ‘in brick or stone ovens.’

The origin of dried pasta could have had its debut during the Arabic conquest of Sicily in the 8th Century. Arabs were eating dried, thin noodles, called *ittriya*, which the Italians could have adopted as spaghetti (*spaghi* meaning ‘little threads’). These dried Arabian noodles were produced in great quantities on Sicily, especially in Palermo, one of the greatest Arab colonies at this time.

Our modern-day word “macaroni” comes from the Sicilian dialect, a word used for “making dough forcefully.” The ancient method of making pasta meant “kneading the dough with the feet”, a labor-intensive process that often required “dancing” for an entire day on sun-drenched cobblestone.

In Southern Italy and parts of the Dalmatian Coast, the ancient lasagna siciliana still eaten today, included spirits-soaked raisins, plump currants, roasted *pignoli* (pine nuts) and fresh-leaf spices purchased from Arabs trading along this route.

In its native land, macaroni wasn’t regarded as food for the upper classes. This is no surprise since people could only cook with firewood, which was certainly more scarce in the south than in the north. Often southerners adopted simpler, more rustic, hearty stews like *la cacciatore*, *la pizzaiuolla* or *cioppino*, whereas the more extravagant cooking styles of nobility could only be found among northerners with their *polenta* (cornmeal), *risotto* (arborio rice) and their *gnocchi* (potato dumplings). Southern cooking wasn’t even considered for high-class dining since it was associated with poverty and *gli terronne*, the nickname that “southern hicks” were given by their northern countrymen. This was the name given to my great-grandparents, who

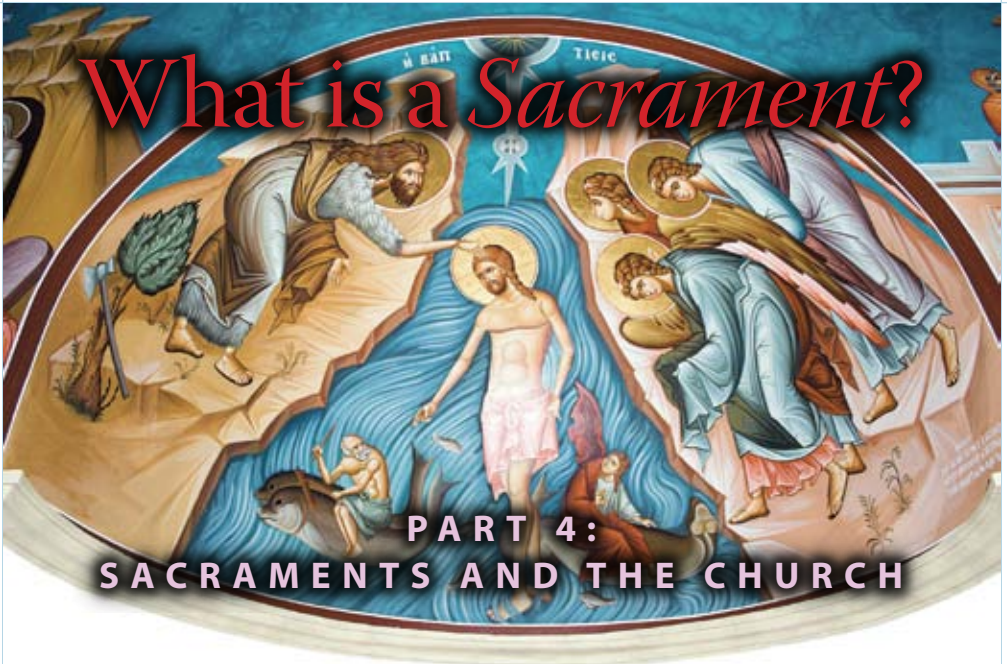
were poor island folk, simple fishermen and *zappatori*, ‘those who lived close to the land’ who needed to feed their families, put a roof over their heads, and rubbed elbows with the world along the busiest Mediterranean trade routes to Africa and all points East.

The greatest discovery for Italians and their favorite pastime came remarkably late, not until the 19th Century when pasta met tomatoes, and they got married. The discovery of this “immoral fruit,” known as scandalous and cheeky, changed the story of pasta forever. When Christopher Columbus took to the oceans to find passage to India, he brought back this luscious new fruit, calling it *poma’amoris*, a ‘love apple.’ Pasta then began to be served with purees, sauces making them much more delicious than dry noodles with butter and cheese. Pasta was eaten *asciutto*, ‘dry with your fingers’ until tomato sauce demanded the usage of fork and spoon. (I bet you never saw an Italian eat spaghetti with just a fork because they never, ever, EVER cut their spaghetti; they like to, are fond of, and would rather twirl theirs.)

It’s no exaggeration to say that the tomato was originally rejected out-right by Catholic Europe. At some point in Christian history, the apple understandably came to be synonymous with forbidden fruit (the Scriptures played some role). The poor apple received its very name from people who saw it as “sinful, as a voluptuous, glistening pearl, a slutty-red fruit that oozes juices, dripping with amazing electric flavors, a sensual aphrodisiac inviting one to suckle its harlot’s flesh.”

When the tomato came to Europe in the 1600s, people’s imaginations ran away with them. The Italian name for tomato, *pomo d’oro*, literally means ‘golden apple.’ It remained on a formal list of “disapproved/inappropriate dishes” for almost 200 years until the late 1700s when it gained acceptance by more Italians as a decorative garnish. The rest of Europe still snubbed its nose at the “gift of

*Please turn to page 24.*



FR. MAXIMOS DAVIES

**L**ET'S RECAP. I BEGAN BY ASKING you to consider what a difference it makes when we begin to look at reality in terms of *events* rather than *things*. In particular, I have asked you to think of the salvation in Christ as the *event* of the Father's love poured out in His Holy Spirit. Through the undivided activity of Son and Spirit the Father gathers together all of creation into His eternal embrace. This activity, what the Fathers called the single Divine *energeia*, is manifested in the "sacraments" or "mysteries". Here within the boundaries of time and space we encounter what the Fathers call God's *philanthropia*, his free and unmerited love for humanity. We have also seen how this divine activity, this philanthropy, can be compared to a river that irrigates the fields prepared by human activity, both that public activity we call liturgy and also the private "liturgy" of each human heart swept up by the flow of the great River of light.

I have also suggested to you that one of the most important messages of Vatican II was

that Catholics ought to recover the strong sense that salvation obtained through the sacraments is not just the obtaining of certain helpful aids and improvements through some kind of spiritual "tool" we call grace. According to the teaching of the Council, salvation consists in the entrance into a *mystery*, an event of love for which we have no better name than the Church.

Now there was nothing really new about this conciliar teaching. In his own way Pope Pius XII foreshadowed the Council's work in his encyclical *Mystici Corporis* in which he clearly identified the Church with the Divine Person of Jesus Christ:

If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ—which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church—we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression "the Mystical Body of Christ" —an expression which springs from and is, as it were, the fair flowering of the repeated teaching of the Sacred Scriptures and the Holy Fathers. (Para. 13.)

This is a theme that the new *Catechism* explores at considerable length. Now in Christ Jesus in His Church, through the pentecostal outpouring of the Holy Spirit by which the Church is made real in history, God has pitched his tent among us and is gathering us together into His Kingdom. For this reason the Council, as we have seen, calls the Church “a kind of sacrament.” This truth has been restated constantly by Catholic magisterial authority. The Church is not, and can never be seen, as somehow a useful “thing” or purely human “society” that offers another thing called “salvation” as a benefit of membership—a benefit that can also be obtained by means of some other kind of organization, such as a morally sound life or adherence to an equally “good” religion. Salvation is *identified with* the Church, because in His Church Christ dwells eternally as Head and the Holy Spirit pours out and gathers back the unending flow of the Father’s love. It is true that to see into this mystery, however dimly, we must look beyond the purely external, human (and sometimes all too human) element of the Church. As the *Catechism* puts it: “it is only with the ‘eyes of faith’ that one can see [the Church] in her visible reality and at the same time in her spiritual reality as bearer of divine life” (para. 770). It also follows from this that visible membership in the Church is not always what determines participation in the spiritual event of the Father’s love. Those who reject the Church in all sincerity on account of its outward ugliness, and to whom the free gift of the “eyes of faith” is not given, may nonetheless be caught up in the great River. But the point is that there is only a single River, that which is made visible and tangible in the waters of Baptism. There are those who, through no fault of their own, cannot see the Spirit in the Font, but this does not mean that the Spirit cannot see them. It is only by regarding the Church as primarily the event of love, rather than some juridical entity or society of common interests, that

we can hold all these doctrinal elements together. Only this does at least some justice to the Mystery that transcends all language.

There is little I can offer you from the liturgical treasures of the Christian East that will add much in terms of content to this theological “program” to which the modern Church has devoted so much of her intellectual resources. What I can do, I think, is show you a vision of the Church seen through the liturgical eyes of Eastern Christians that may help you appreciate with greater clarity (even perhaps excitement) the heights and depths to which the Church today is asking you to attain.

In the *Shepherd of Hermas* (a remarkable text of the second century, deriving from the Church of Rome but written in Greek, which was the language of the earliest Christian community there) a visionary sees an old woman of great beauty. He asks his angelic guide who this woman might be and this is the reply he receives: “It is the Church of God.” Then the visionary asks, “Why then does she appear old?” And his guide replies, “she is an old woman, because she was the first of all the creation, and for her sake was the world made.” This notion that the Church is the most ancient of all God’s creatures, the first reflection of the Father’s love, was a favorite one of a number of Eastern Fathers. They interpreted the Old Testament as depicting in figures the very same Church made visible at Pentecost; the great patriarchs and prophets of old were no less saints of the Church than their successors the apostles and martyrs. Even today the canonical iconography of the Byzantine Churches shows figures of the Old Testament along side those of the New. Walking into a Byzantine Church painted according to this tradition, the worshipper is immediately drawn into the history of salvation from creation to *parousia* and walks through this history in the company of the saints from all ages: before the Law, after the Law, the earthly life of Jesus Christ and, finally our time, the era when the Church be-



comes visible in the sacraments.

There is another dimension of the Church which the Byzantine tradition also emphasizes. Not only is the Church extended throughout history and the outflow of Divine love. She is also constituted *locally* in time and space so that this event of love is not simply remote and abstract but as real and tangible as any human embrace. Specifically, the Church is realized sacramentally in the liturgical assembly, most especially in that assembly the fathers called the *synaxis* the gathering together in Communion with the Body and Blood of Jesus in the Eucharist. The *Catechism* confirms that this theology is that of the universal Church: “[The Church] exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, and above all a Eucharistic assembly” (para.752). There are particular ways in which this reality is expressed in the Byzantine Liturgy. For example, the traditional canons prohibit the celebration of more than one Divine Liturgy per day on a single altar. This is precisely to ensure that the *synaxis* is a true gathering of all the saints that make up the “Church sojourning” in a particular place. Every Byzantine Divine Liturgy assumes the presence of the Bishop, if not in person, then symbolically through the reverence accorded his throne (which is placed in every Church, even the smallest) and by celebrating the Mysteries over his signature placed on the cloth, the *antimension* into which the relics of martyrs are sewn. The presence of the Bishop is important because he is the father of the entire community, the one who initiates the event of salvation for his people, baptizing and confirming them, consecrating their altars, preaching to them the Word of God, and ordaining ministers to represent him in some of these tasks. All this is a theology with its roots deep in the Apostolic and sub-Apostolic Church, articulated with great clarity by St. Ignatius of Antioch. Finally, the Byzantine Church has always emphasized the local dimension

of the Church by its efforts at receiving and consecrating the *cultural* gifts of particular communities. The Byzantine Church has generally favored the vernacular language, or at least a stylized form of the vernacular intelligible to most worshippers. The chant of Byzantine Churches has generally taken on the cadences and styles of the local culture, as have the other arts and architecture.

This seems like good place to end. Right here in your own, local Church. If you have heard anything I’ve said, I hope it will be the challenge to reassess your own understanding of being a “member of the Church”. I hope that you will be able to cast out any lingering ideas you may have that this “membership” helps ensure good fortune in this world. I trust that you will also be on the lookout for any notion that this “membership” is just a good way of showing people how moral you can be. In place of these demons, I pray that you will invite the Spirit to clear your “eyes of faith” so that you might look in a new way at this very building and your very own congregation, this place and these people on whom you have looked so often before. I have taken you East, but journeys like that only take on their real meaning when we return home. If you can look now with eyes wide open at the man or woman, the child, the sinner, the opponent or friend who sits next to you at Mass and see, not simply another “member” but a fellow celebrant of the great Mystery, then I will have achieved my purpose. And if you can go forth from that Mass determined and empowered to live always in the event of that Love, then my every prayer for these reflections will have been answered. ✠

**Fr. Maximos Davies** is a priest-monk of the Romanian Byzantine Catholic monks of Holy Resurrection Monastery, currently living here at St. Andrew’s Abbey. He is a graduate of the University of Sydney, Australia and of the Patriarch Athenagoras Orthodox Institute attached to the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California.

# A Journey into Faith

BY ANNE BREMSER, OBL. O.S.B.

*When St. Benedict writes that our lives must be a continual Lent he is referring to Lent as a time for conversion, reflection, and examining the truth of one's spiritual search. The following article is a personal reflection on how one person came to be a Christian. Anne Bremser is an oblate of the Abbey, and long-time friend. If anyone else would like to share their own story or reflection on their own spiritual journey in the Chronicle, please send it to the editor for consideration.*

**A**N ATHEIST ASKED ME HOW I managed to convert from Humanism to Christianity. It didn't make logical sense to him, also a Humanist. His curiosity inspired me to write about my journey to Christianity, and specifically (because he asked) how someone had managed to convert me. Most Christians who try to convert a non-believer say that we need to accept that we are sinners, and that we need to accept Jesus as our personal Savior. The problem is that an atheist doesn't have a personal God to offend, and so does not believe in sin, at least in the same way as does a believer.

Telling me to repent didn't do anything to make me a Christian. I already believed that *doing good* was the human thing to do, and I didn't believe, or even think about the possibility, that I had offended a God that I didn't think existed. I didn't think I needed to be saved from anything. Being asked to repent, when I was no better or worse than any Christian I knew, didn't make any sense. I thought of the bad things that I had

done, or the good I failed to do, and that they were mistakes to be thought about, and then not repeated. I certainly didn't think I was sinning. To this day, I don't really like the word "sin", because it is a loaded term for so many people. I prefer the phrase "failure to love". That is more descriptive, and doesn't instantly turn off someone who isn't Christian.

In school, I was the official pagan, and everybody except the Catholics tried to convert me to their brand of Christianity. I was put off by the notion of sin and re-

*“In school, I was the official pagan, and everybody except the Catholics tried to convert me to their brand of Christianity.”*

demption, and was appalled by the idea of a prosperity gospel—if I would only convert, God would bless me with material goods and good health. I couldn't imagine a God who was that petty. What did that mean in a world where many were starving, including Christians? I was especially bothered by people who said that once I was saved, every sin would be forgiven. It sounded like a license to sin.

What happened was a series of events that I think were given by Divine Grace, and that I responded to.

I was a member of the local oratorio society as a singer. Every year we sang *The Messiah* by George Friedrich Handel. I did it the first time because my music teacher promised an “A” to anyone who sang in it. I was the only one from my class. In order to sing well, one has to understand the meaning of the music, and sing with emotion. Each year, as I sang the *Messiah*, I thought about the words and what they meant, and wondered about this God who inspired the composer to such heights. We sang Vivaldi’s *Gloria*, Mozart’s *Requiem*, and many masses and motets. I was caught up by the music, and moved sometimes to tears. What had inspired the musicians to make this music? What do the words mean to me? The *Messiah* in particular is a good outline of Christianity through scripture, a musical catechism. I had been exposed to much Christian art—illuminated manuscripts, icons, statuary, and the great paintings of the Renaissance. This same Christian tradition had inspired those works of art. And what of the soaring beauty of Gothic cathedrals, the architects who designed them, and the communities who had sometimes spent over a hundred years building them?

I was also overwhelmed by the beauty of Nature.

My father taught Comparative Religions at the local community college. He taught it as sociology, himself leaning toward Buddhism and Humanism. His job also meant that I was exposed to many religions and attended their celebrations on holy days. Why was it that God seemed to be so universal? (Or, as expressed in Buddhism, the *possibility* of God.) I sang hymns with the Sikhs at the Gurudwara, marched in the parade and lit firecrackers on Bok Kai, the local Chinese Taoist festival, attended the local Buddhist Church on occasion, especially on Obon, a summer celebration with dancing in the streets. Everywhere people were worshipping—singing, dancing, creating art, all for

God. It didn’t seem like a simple sociological difference to me.

I started looking for an explanation for these things—the work of human hands; the beauty around me; and the universality of praise.

I read books about different religions, and found truth just about everywhere. But when I read the Gospels, I could only say yes! yes! and yes! This is true. This moved my heart in a way it had never been moved before. I began to believe in a personal God who loved me infinitely. I still did not think of myself as particularly sinful or in need of salvation, but I did see from the Gospels that I could improve greatly, and wanted to be more like Jesus. I made changes in my life, simplifying, giving to the poor, and working for justice.

Finally came the day when I desired to be one with my Lord, Jesus Christ, understanding that with baptism I would be dying to sin and rising to life as a new woman, a member of the body of Christ. I had fallen completely in love with God, in a way that I never have with any person. I was so full of joy, I could scarcely bear it. I went for long walks, thinking about the One I loved, and watched the stars and the moon at night, thinking of the hugeness of creation. It was just as I have since read about falling in love with a person, but bigger. After experimenting with various denominations, I concluded I was a Catholic. I had read Thomas Merton, the lives of some saints, and the Dutch *Catechism*. I was baptized when I was nineteen.

It took years after that to fully comprehend that my failure to be Christ-like was sin, or an offense against God. I hadn’t really understood Jesus as savior, but as teacher. I loved God more than words can express, but still thought of my sinful acts as mistakes. After many years and much more reading and praying for understanding, I realized that if God is love, then every failure to love was

an offense against God. I prefer to this day to define sin as an active absence of love. But now I understood the gift of Jesus on the cross, his great act of love in giving up all to save us from sin and death. The creator of the universe became a human being in order to show us how we should be, and can be as human beings, and showed us the greatest loving act of all, to give one's life for one's friends. He took my sin upon Himself, and made me clean; and knowing this, I gave

*“It took openness,  
and the willingness  
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lost my mind.”*

thanks to the God I had been thanking for everything else for so long a while.

Now I find this gift of love and loving the greatest thing, the most extraordinary thing of all, and am truly a Christian. It was a journey of many years. I would never have become a Christian if I had only been told to repent and be saved. That wasn't part of my culture or understanding of my life. It took the willingness to search and discover what was before my face all the time. It took openness, and the willingness to be ridiculed by my non-believing friends and family, who thought I had lost my mind. It took being true to myself, trusting what I had found in the scriptures, especially the

Gospels, to begin to open my mind and heart to God.

My atheist questioner also asked why it seems that former atheists all seem to become Christian. He said that he would have more faith in the existence of God if someone became Muslim or Hindu from atheism. So I have to address that, at least from the perspective of my personal experience.

I very nearly picked Sikhism, as a matter of fact. They are a very compassionate community who believe that God is truth. Their Gurudwaras have kitchens and dormitories for people who need a place to stay. They truly act on the command to feed the hungry and offer hospitality to strangers. I never went from visiting them without being feasted with delicious homemade food at any time of day. It didn't matter whether I was Sikh or not, or whether I was interested in becoming one. They were simply kind and hospitable people. I was looking for something like that, a community of believers who really acted on their belief. But the emphasis here was on truth, not love, although both are true of God.

I was then asked about the history of violence in Christianity, the Crusades, the Inquisition, witch hunting, and the violence of all sides during the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

I chose Christianity for several reasons after thinking long and hard about the history of violence. Christianity is, I believe, a pacifist religion in actuality, and those who understood and lived Jesus' message have remained peaceful. It was Western culture that was in fact violent. Christianity has always been profoundly countercultural. Even the crusades were started by an attempt by Pope Urban II to rein in younger sons of nobles who had inherited nothing and were wreaking violence on the local population. In an attempt to curb local violence, he sent them off on an errand to conquer the Holy Land for Christian pilgrims. But he too, in



using those means, was a product of his own violent culture. In his ethnocentrism, he thought it was a good thing to fight the nonbelievers, and a good outlet for the disinherited.

If you separate the politics and worldly greed of cultural Christians from the picture, Christianity has always taught love and justice. Hospitals and universities are descended from Christian practice, and so is the Catholic Worker, a loosely organized group that tries its best to live the Gospels literally: feeding the hungry, providing hospitality to the homeless, living poor themselves in order that others may have more. I was heavily influenced by them. My father had asked Ammon Hennesey of the New York Catholic Worker to speak at the college, and I met him as a girl. He gave us a perpetual subscription to the New York Catholic Worker newspaper, and I read each issue, especially Dorothy Day's "On Pilgrimage" articles. Here was real Christianity in action. I thought at the time that they were representative of the Church at large, and saw the kind of action based on belief that I was looking for. And the pacifism that I expected from real practicing Christians, not simply cultural ones. I find it a miracle that despite the culture of violence and history of wrongheaded popes (e.g. Julian II, the Warrior Pope), the Christian Church has managed to keep its message of love and peace for all intact. During the Spanish Inquisition, two of the most prayerful and inspiring people of the Church were writing about love of God and neighbor, St. John of the Cross and St. Theresa of Avila. They were both imprisoned for their works, but it is they who are remembered and celebrated today.

Another reason Christianity appealed to me was that I did grow up in a predominantly Christian culture. That was a conscious choice as well. I was the only child of European descent in Buddhist Sunday school, and never felt like I was a part of

things. I also wasn't sure about what was Japanese and what was Buddhist. Remember, I was making these choices as a teen, and being a part of the community was important. I was respected because my father was a well known speaker in the Buddhist Church of America. But I wasn't hearing what I needed to hear about love, or seeing it being practiced there. I should say there were many kind and compassionate people there. But there was no outreach or sense of responsibility to the larger community. I felt that being a member of the majority religion was better; I didn't have to become a pseudo-Indian or Japanese, or some other culture with which I was unfamiliar.

My atheist questioner asked again, "What is the first step toward belief in God that we can all agree on?"

I think the first step is openness to the possibility that there is a God, and a deep desire to find out about God. What have people all over the world said about God? Can you be open to the possibility that there is truth in Christianity, and that loving is the most important value?

If someone who had wanted to convert me, and had been talking to me before I was a Christian, would have opened up a conversation about love, I would have been very open to it; as it is really a conversation about God. When we speak of love and unity, we are speaking the language of God. If you were to say that what you found through your faith was knowledge of being loved, and then, in response, loving in return, I would have been more likely to have followed up on that sooner than I did. I had to find it in a book.

My atheist friend was not convinced. But I think he didn't want to be. He was in love with being atheist. But in answering his question, and reliving my journey of faith, my own faith was renewed, and I look forward to the journey that lies ahead. It will include love, love, always love. ✖

# LANDSCAPES, LIFESCAPES



*(Thoughts after a chat with Fr. Werner)*

BRO. BEN HARRISON, MC

**T**HIS HIGH DESERT TERRAIN is so exquisitely austere, so starkly lush. I love the way you can see the soft, mineral tones of the gritty soil, sand, rocky rubble, scree between the spindly creosote bushes and silvery sage, amid the prickly yucca stalks and scrappy clubs of cholla cactus.

The scrubby plants stand out against the background of gray and tan earth, formed into rounded hills and steep gullies. There is as much death as life – the jumbled, collapsed branches of Joshua trees; the desiccated, antler-like, dead juniper limbs ris-

ing out of the living green hulk; and the smaller clumps of growth—dead, dormant or drought-struck most of the year, with their dried yellowish, rusty and gold flowers and seed pods contrasting with the bare soil.

Fr. Werner's desert landscapes perfectly capture this combination of subdued colors and sharp forms, resilient life and undisguised decay, angled light and sheltered shadow. I have always admired his pastel paintings, not only because they so perfectly reflect desert vistas, but also because his style is as spare and restrained as the terrain itself. The paper he used is tinted with the pale grays and tans of the bleached desert

land, and against that naked background, his sharp, jagged chalk strokes of startling color exactly catch the rugged shapes and shadows.

But within the drawings there are often swaths of bare, unmarked paper which evoke that sense of emptiness, of silence, of openness so characteristic of the high desert. To gaze for a time into one of his landscapes is like a walk in the desert. You can almost smell the pungent odors of dry dust, moist clay, sagebrush, cottonwood; can almost feel the liberating expansiveness of open air inviting you, like the ravens and hawks, to spread your wings and ride the currents.

I tried to speak with Fr. Werner once or twice many years ago, but I realized he was rather deaf. So I was surprised about two years ago when he started a conversation with me at the table one evening. (It was a feast and there were not many guests.) It seems he got a good hearing aid at last. He asked me who I was and where I worked, and when I told him I was a Missionaries of Charity Brother working with homeless people in Los Angeles, he began to ask more questions. At first I thought he was just pretending polite interest, but then I realized he really wanted to know—how those people manage, how they keep clean, what they do in bad weather, what causes them to be in such situations, how I relate to them, what I feel about my vocation.

The next evening, since the monks were having a community meal, I was eating

alone in the little dining room. Fr. Werner came in and joined me for dessert, and we sat and talked again—about his art and about my work and vocation. The next day he showed me some of his other paintings, stored in the office. In response to my questions about how he chose his scenes, he told me that he was always drawn to views that seemed to lead one off into the infinite, into the freedom and wide-open spaces...he did not say, “of spirit”, but I felt sure that that

was his drift.

His art is profoundly contemplative and implicitly kerygmatic, in the sense that it echoes the Word of Truth revealed in creation: a Word that challenges me to live in harmony with that same straight, unadorned Truth; a Word that invites me into the mystery of One who is utter simplicity and unbounded freedom.

My conversations with Fr. Werner helped me see a parallel in my own vocation. The people I work with are marginal, desert people, in touch with that naught, that emptiness that nibbles at the ropes of our being. Sometimes I can look at the life of one of our street men or a homeless woman, or someone I know in jail, and I can see that same strange juxtaposition of form and emptiness, of the inspired and the inert, of colorful character and dull depression. Contemplating the journey of another poor wanderer (and are we not all that, ultimately?) is like gazing into a landscape with the suggestion of a dirt track curving off into distant, silent unknowns.

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Many of the great workers of charity, including Mother Teresa, spoke of “contemplation in action.” Perhaps part of what that means is precisely that, as we do what is called for to be a brother to our fellow traveler, as we share our pilgrim bread on the journey through the wilderness, we also look with wonder at our companion, seeing him as a Word spoken to us from out of mystery and accompanying us deeper into mystery—an image composed, impressionistically, of many definite strokes against an empty background and drawn into a unity not by the framing but by the far horizon, towards which all rises and inclines.

Perhaps that is a worthwhile service to provide my brother or sister living under bridges or closed away in prisons—to let them know that someone hears the hidden message of their life; that another human being can ponder their journey and find grace and goodness there despite all that

is broken and half-unstrung; that someone can glimpse a deeper meaning to their existence from the sketchy strokes and empty spaces visible to his eye, and can say, “Amen,” “You are my neighbor, my friend, my companion.”

To discover God in the desert is to love the desert. To behold the mystery in another person’s life is to honor that person as the bearer of his truth. And his truth is similar to mine—that I am “fearfully and wonderfully made” and “like the grass of the field that withers”—and that my glory and my delight is to stand in quiet wonder before the One Who Is. As in Fr. Werner’s art the swaths and patches of blank paper visible between the masterful strokes give context and substance to the scene, so, in our lives, we can, if we look in the lacunae, the emptiness, the gaping holes, the wounds, find the very Ground of Being, that No-Thing which holds the universe together. ✖



**N**OT ALL OF US HAVE BEEN or will be parents. But all of us have been children. All of us know what it means to be, as a child, a part of a family—or not a part of a family.

What it means to be brought into the world and cared for, or perhaps not cared for, wanted or sadly not wanted, loved gently or loved harshly. What it means to discover one is a part of something larger than oneself—a family, or not to be a part of that family, excluded from it. All of us know the joy of the acceptance of who we are, or the sharp pain of those who are rejected by family, because of who they are. It is quite fitting that the feast of the Holy Family is always celebrated on the first Sunday after Christmas, because it is also a celebration of the Incarnation: the Eternal God becoming fully a part of what it means to be human, and part of a family. Not just for a season, but for all time.

If we look at the Incarnation within the context of family, it becomes both more understandable to us and more formational in how we live out our own lives. It tells us of a God who is not simply our biological creator, but rather a God who is an integral participant in the daily life of his creation. His participation is not simply set out in a series of natural laws given to humanity, but primarily through an experience of God's very nature. God, through the Incarnation, can be grasped as more than creator, as overwhelming as that in itself is, but also as *loving*. Loving is who God is. The Incarnation tells us that God is related to us not only because of biological generation, but primarily because he is related to us as loving. And this experience of loving is the context in which family takes place. It, in its deepest aspect, defines family.

Love is an experience common to, or at least commonly desired by, all of us. When we experience love, when we truly love, among the many mixed desires that make up the experience, is a yearning to relate to an "other." Love does not love itself, for the very

## LENTEN REFLECTION on Family



JUAN SIMÓN GUTIÉRREZ (1643–1718), THE HOLY FAMILY

BY FATHER AELRED NIESPOLO, O.S.B.

*This article is an adaptation of a homily given on the Feast of the Holy Family. It seemed be suitable for Lenten Reflection on an area that is so essential in all our lives—that of family, and of how we relate to it. The scriptures referred to are those of this past year's liturgical feast.*

notion of love implies a need for generativity, life-creation, fecundity. Out of God's very nature as Loving comes the desire to create. Within the expression of love, there is also a sense that we need to be loved by someone other than oneself; the desire to free oneself from the burden of being alone, of being known only to our self. What I mean by that is when we love, or allow ourselves to be loved, we experience the need to reveal who we are, and that we be loved because of, and at times in spite of, who and what we have revealed ourselves to be. We mutually

define our very identity by the acceptance or non-acceptance of the other. Genuine, creative Love by its very nature demands an accepting “other.” Love, whether biological or not, is thus always an act of creativity, of creation. This is at the heart of family, just as it is at the heart of the Trinity, because family is not simply about family, and how that family is made up, it is about what *happens* in a family. It is not simply about blood ties. We celebrate the Holy Family because of the Incarnation, because it is the Trinity manifesting itself as Emmanuel, God With Us. This has important consequences in how we ought to think about family as something far beyond physical generation, but rather as any group of persons that embraces and fosters participation in the intimate life of God, and in each other. Our God whom we define as Loving. Ourselves whom we understand as in his image.

One of the most famous opening lines in literature appears in the Russian novel *Anna Karenina*, by Leo Tolstoy. He writes: “Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.” What is it that makes happy families all alike? (And it is here that we can profitably begin our own personal, and intimate, Lenten reflection.) I think it grounded in that open desire to be known for who and what one truly is. The reality of this openness depends on how fully you enter into the life of the other, and how you let the other enter into your life. We’ve all seen how some family relationships, or friendships, or community relationships, are all too frequently based on secrets and half truths, and are thus, if not totally false, at least severely limited and unsatisfying. It becomes a relationship of facades, of stereotypes, of sterile non-expectations of each other, a matter of adhering to laws, rather than responding to creative love. In a happy family loving happens, in an unhappy family secrets happen. Any self, any family, any community, any nation, any

organization, if it is built upon secrets and half-truths, cannot find life; and worse cannot give life. They simply exist, and never grow. They fade away.

At the heart of every happy family seems to be the offering of healthy self-definitions by the others in our lives. At the heart of every unhappy family are actions which foster and promote negative, secretive self-definitions by the others in our lives. The happy family is made up of parents and children, husbands and wives who offer mutual hope and definition. And this is true of other kinds of family: of family in a wider sense, a happy family is also made up of friends relating towards friends, those who love towards those who are loved, one member of a community towards another member of the community, these are also real families that demand creative love. This love is not about domination, not about authoritarianism, not about control. It is not even about survival. It is about sharing a life of mutual self-donation, the reflection of ourselves given in hope, to our God; who gave himself to us. This is what any and all holy families are about—their relationship to and with each other, to and with God. The unhappy family oppresses, kills, makes hopeless, makes one secretive and furtive because of fear. We have all seen families that are happy, welcoming and life giving to others, that are rooted in an open hospitality, and that offer a healing vibrancy to those who have less, or to those who are wounded. And we have also seen the opposite and the sadness one is sucked down into, where life is withdrawn and not given.

Our first two readings complement each other and are grounding portraits of relationships, not simply of laws laid down. Sirach (3:2-6, 12-14) offers practical instructions on how a family ought to live together—but these instructions are really common acts of respect that ought to fill our everyday life, and they are understood as acts of worship towards a loving God, not following the dic-



tate of some aloof creator. They are rooted in accepting God’s offer of life.

Paul’s vision of family, and communal, morality in Colossians (3: 12-21) may even be read as a commentary on Sirach, enumerating the virtues behind our actions, the flesh and blood virtues of the Incarnation: mercy, meekness, patience, forbearance, compassion: in order that the word of God, Christ incarnate, make his dwelling with us, within us, within our hearts and dwellings, communities and houses that make up our different kinds of families. Paul defines the quality of our respect for each other, the way we honor each other, and are gentle with each other.

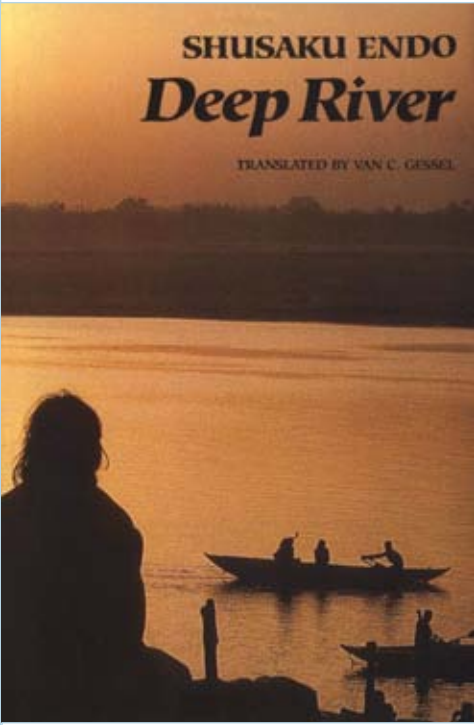
While the gospel is indeed about Joseph caring for Mary and Jesus (Mt. 2: 13-15, 19-23), at its heart is one very simple fact: we must feel safe in our family. And we are to help each other feel safe, safe from spousal abuse, from bullying, from love built atop conditions, or intimidation, or child abuse. No matter what we call our family, a family built on secrets, or on law, instead of loving respect and openness is not a safe place for growth.

At this time of year, *especially* at this time of year, as we move towards a deeper comprehension of how we were saved and brought to new life by the Passion of Christ, we ought to honestly ask ourselves about our own families—all of our families—whether biological, or communal, or spiritual, or those rooted in genuine friendship and partnership—do we free each other from despair, from depression, from hopelessness, from anger, from doubt and oppression? Or do we cultivate the deep anxieties and uncertainties of our hearts in an anxious and uncertain age? Do we try to live out the freeing and life-giving incarnation of a God who is truly with us, who enters into every aspect of our lives, especially those which cause pain or are hurtful? Of a God who loves us? Do we communicate a loving God of creation, or a God of death to each other? Would we want to be children in the kinds of families we daily help to create? ❖

QUARTERLY BOOK REVIEW  
by fr. philip edwards, o.s.b.

THIS IS ENDO’S SECOND-TO-LAST novel, published two or three years before his death in September of 1996. He was a prize-winning novelist, considered “the Graham Greene” of Japan (and called by Greene himself one of the best writers of the twentieth century). As a boy, he was brought by his newly converted and divorced mother into the Catholic faith, and so became both outsider and insider in his native Japan. You need not know, however, any of his illustrious past writings to appreciate and enjoy this one as a straightforward picaresque novel of Chaucerian pilgrimage and prophetic witness. The novel stands on its own, wonderfully weaving the developing conscience and consciousness of each of its ‘pilgrims’ in and out of each other’s lives to come together as Japanese tourists on the bank of the Ganges, the deep river of faith and life. Every character is fully enfleshed in accordance with twentieth century canons of anti-heroic realism, so that real blood flows in his passion play of sacrificial love and redemptive self-knowledge. We read with Western eyes and hear only in translation; we are probably like the most obtuse and crass of photographing tourists, ignorant of what the author is really saying to those of his own language and culture, yet the Holy Fool, the Wife of Bath, the Suffering Servant, the Broken Man on the Cross continue to speak beyond words. We “will weep and know why” but hopefully we will say, “yes”.

There is the theme of the clash of western theology with its exclusivity (inherited from the Mosaic covenant) and rational definitivity and the Eastern penchant for a more inclusive transcendent sense of mystery. Each Asian nation has its own cultural “take” on



DEEP RIVER

Shusaku Endo

(translated by Van C. Gessel)

New Directions Paperback, 1994

ISBN 978-0.8112.1320-2

this mystery, China is not Japan, nor is Japan, India, but there is a rootedness shared by most of the Far East in what came forth from India, most significantly Buddhism, that makes sense of the homecoming, enlightening experience for the Japanese tourists present at the Ganges.

Recent scholarship is discovering how present and influential were the bearers the Good News from the Eastern Christians long before the onslaught of western colonial expansion of the past few centuries, but the Christian presence here seems to be western post-Jesuit mission Roman Catholic, especially personified in the mysterious Frenchman (from a previous novel, *Wandering Fool?*) who suddenly appears and then disappears as an angel of mercy in the

Japanese hospital, the mercifully ministering Missioners of Charity of Mother Teresa in the streets of Calcutta, and in Otsu, the nerdy, bumbling outcast found wanting by both woman and seminary and, finally, battered and broken by those he was trying to help bear their dead to the river. Despised and rejected by all except the untouchable outcasts who bear him to the hospital on the dead man's litter, "his [broken} neck twisted to the right like the branch of a bonsai tree"—like the corpus on the western crucifix before which he was wont to pray—Christ crucified...scandal and folly... the power and wisdom of God—and still the river flows and hearts seek.

Our mission in China was to help the Chinese Catholics be themselves in Christ and His Church, to be Catholic (and monastic) Christians and still Chinese. From the beginning of the Church there has been the tension between the guarding of tradition and acceptance of new understandings and ways as the uncircumcised Greeks became brothers with the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the New Israel. The everlasting question "Who do you say that I am?" from the one who looks at us and loves us saying, "I have called you by name, you are mine." The two-pronged message of Good News is always "do not be afraid, I am with you"—"repent/return and believe, make straight the path before you." Yes, we "*will* weep and know why", but the answer of life is always "yes!" ✖

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## WHY THE ABBEY IS IMPORTANT TO ME

### 4 IN A SERIES OF PERSONAL STORIES

*Our journey with the Abbey began many years ago. Our children Andrew, now age 23 and Megan now age 20 were little at the time. My husband Dave and I having been raised Catholic had always attended mass at the local parish with our children. One day an acquaintance asked us if we had ever been to St. Andrew's Abbey. We had no idea where or what it was so we made the drive one Sunday to attend Mass and see why this place was so special and I'm happy to say we have been going ever since. Many years later our son Andrew chose St. Andrew's Abbey as the location for his Boy Scout Eagle project. He spoke with one of the monks to find out some of their needs and was asked if he could possibly build them a garden shed to hold all of their gardening tools. During the time of construction we were visited by then Abbot Francis who was there for support of the weekend project. Abbot Francis attended our son's Eagle ceremony and a life-long friendship was formed. As we continued to attend mass we became friends with many of the monks. One day we received a phone call from Father Carlos who had found my cell phone on the chapel floor. He didn't know to whom it belonged and scrolled to find a number to call. I went to the bookstore to pick it up and Father Carlos and I had a long conversation and we too forged a new friendship. He asked if I would be interested in volunteering at the bookstore as he needed some filing done and I was happy to be able to help. Three years later I am still volunteering in the bookstore on Tuesdays helping in various capacities as needed. I have formed new friendships with other volunteers and feel so blessed to know such wonderful, faith-filled individuals. Volunteering has blessed our family with the opportunity to give back to the monks and the community of St. Andrews and has helped us on our spiritual journey. The Abbey has always been a special place of solitude for my family and I. We feel especially close to God when we are here in the serenity and quiet of this special place and we thank the Lord for having guided us here so many years ago. Since volunteering at the bookstore our friendships with the monks have continued to grow and be nurtured and we think of them as our extended family. We look forward to continued fellowship, friendship and are grateful to the monks who continually offer us their guidance, love and support throughout the trials and tribulations of our lives. We truly feel at home and at peace when we are here. "No Hunting Except For Peace" has taken on a whole new meaning and for that we are eternally grateful.*

Janet La Plante



Janet La Plante

*Please consider donating to the Abbey through Dollar-a-Day. Your gift will support the monks of Valyermo in their indispensable spiritual ministry.*

# Around and About THE ABBEY

## GREETINGS FROM BERKELEY

My photo here is taken in one of my moments contemplating the view outside Incarnation Monastery's Chapel where my day begins and ends. I am looking at the picturesque Bay Area with a clear view of San Francisco Bay and trees, houses, and buildings surrounding the U.C. Berkeley campus of which the Graduate Theological Union is an allied school. The Graduate Theological Union is an ecumenical and interreligious crossroads, building bridges among Christian denominations and other faith traditions, and dedicated to educating students for teaching, research, ministry, and service. It seeks to achieve its mission in two ways: as a graduate school offering academic programs in a wide range of fields in theology and religious studies, and as the largest partnership of seminaries and graduate schools in the United States. G.T.U. flourishes as a haven for interdisciplinary religious thought, study, and practice, making a tangible difference for the greatest good—and serving as a place where religion meets the world.

Located in Berkeley, California, where the diversity of cultures and faith traditions reflects our own contemporary world, study



FR. MATTHEW RIOS, O.S.B.

at G.T.U. is intellectually challenging and rich in resources. The proximity of member schools of various denominations and religions literally and figuratively, the presence of multi-faith centers, and interdisciplinary programs create a dynamic intellectual community that draws scholars from around the world. Religious traditions represented here now include Protestant, Catholic, Unitarian Universalist, Greek Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, and Buddhist—all of us working together for a common mission while maintaining the distinctiveness of our particular communities of faith. Our curriculum has grown beyond the traditional strengths in Bible, history, theology, and ethics to include the arts, cultural and historical studies, spirituality, and interdisciplinary studies. Without belaboring the obvious, it is indeed good and a blessed moment to be here!

My typical day begins with morning prayer with the brothers here at Incarnation, then my private *lectio divina*, followed by a walk up and down the hills in the neighborhood, and off to the classroom or to the library depending on my class schedules. I return to the monastery for our evening prayer and Eucharist, followed by our common meal of the day,

## MONKS' FEAST DAYS

March	17	Br. Patrick
	19	Fr. Joseph
	21	Br. Benedict
April	25	Br. John Mark
May	1	Br. Joseph
	3	Fr. Philip
	10	Abbot Damien
	25	Br. Bede
June	29	Br. Peter

which is always enriched with rich conversations mostly on the news of the day spiced sometimes by critiques and sometimes humor about various personalities occupying the news headlines of the day. I have my share in the weekly household assignments including presiding at the Eucharist (which is a challenge when biblical scholars are around such as Sandra Schneiders and Barbara Green) and it is here at Incarnation that I learned a little bit of cooking for our small community with the brothers teaching me their skills and their recipes. I must admit, I am still at a learning stage and may perhaps perennially be at such a stage. After supper and dishes, I usually get back to my cell either reading my notes for the day or browsing my e-mail, sometimes my facebook pages, then a private Compline. This is a short paragraph about my life over the past two years but there is more in between. As the vocation of all humanity is to render praise and thanksgiving to God, all I can say is: I thank you Lord and I praise you for the wonder of my being, the wonder of your creation, and the wonder of life that keeps on unfolding. Peace and blessings to all, dear *Chronicle* readers. That in all things, God be glorified! —Fr. Matthew Rios, O.S.B.



## DEPARTURE OF PAUL AND GENE

Observers Paul Cloney and Gene Reyes, whose arrival at the Abbey was mentioned in our last issue, decided after some months here to depart. We wish them well, and invite you to join us in praying for them as they continue their journey of discernment.



**OBLATE NEWS:** Upcoming oblate meetings held at the Abbey will be on March 13, April 10, May 8, and June 12 (Pentecost Sunday). Conferences begin at 2 p.m. in the Conference Center. Reserve your place for lunch by calling the Retreat Office at 661-944-2178 or emailing [retreats@valyermo.com](mailto:retreats@valyermo.com).

**VOLUNTEERING:** The gift of time cannot be measured. The Abbey and the monastic community need you. There are projects and positions available year round and without you we cannot accomplish our goals. Please consider spending time here at the Abbey.

We need help in: Abbey Ceramics, Abbey Books & Gifts, Development Office, Retreat Office. Call 661-944-8959, or email [development@valyermo.com](mailto:development@valyermo.com)

**SEND US YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION:** Please help us stay current with your updated postal and email addresses and phone number. Doing so helps us to save money as the Post Office charges us when they forward mail we send. You can help us eliminate additional fees by letting us know when your address changes. Contact the Development Office at [development@valyermo.com](mailto:development@valyermo.com).

**THE CHRONICLE IS NOW ONLINE:** If you prefer to read it online just send an email indicating this preference to [development@valyermo.com](mailto:development@valyermo.com). This is a cost-saving convenience for the Abbey.

**ABBEY BOOKS & GIFTS:** Shop the Abbey Books & Gifts Store! Open seven days, 10–11:45 a.m. and 1:30–4 p.m.

## ABBEY BREAKFAST RECIPES

Guests have often asked the recipes for Fr. Isaac's hot cereal and Br. Bede's scones, as served in the monastic Refectory. Both monks respond to those requests below.

### *Fr. Isaac's Hot Lenten Breakfast Cereal*

- 1 cup wild rice
- 2 cups oatmeal
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup malt-o-meal
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups cream of wheat
- 1 cup brown sugar or  $\frac{1}{2}$  powdered
- 2 cubes butter or margarine
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup apple cider
- 3 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup dried Mission figs
- 1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cups pecans/nuts
- Water
- Honey
- Salt

Begin with a clean 2 to 3 gallon saucepan. Add 4 quarts lukewarm tap water and 2 pinches kosher sea salt. Bring to rolling boil, then add 1 cup wild rice (dried) and up to 2 cubes butter/margarine. Again, bring to fast boil for 12 minutes straight, covered with lid stirring every 3 to 4 minutes. Add 4 cups additional boiling water,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (warm) apple cider, lower the flame and cover again. Add 2 cups oatmeal,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup malt-o-meal,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups cream of wheat. Add either 1 cup brown sugar or  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups confectioner (powder) sugar, stir and set aside. Continue cooking on medium to low flame for additional 10 minutes stirring often. In dry frying pan skillet, roast-up and brown  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups mixed/chopped pecans and walnuts on high flame. With a wooden spoon, stir in 3 full tbsp. balsamic vinegar, stirring until totally absorbed by sizzling nuts. Remove from flame and add caramelized nuts right to saucepan with the hot cereal. Add 1 cup chopped/dried Mission figs (or your own fruit, yogurt or dried berry of choice). Drizzle with honey. Enjoy.

—Fr. Isaac Kalina, O.S.B.



### *Br. Bede's Scones*

When I bake scones I don't usually use a recipe; I improvise on the basis of my own whim or the available ingredients. I've devised this recipe for you to use as a basis for similar improvisation. I have not given an exact oven temperature or baking time because these will depend to some extent on your altitude (the Abbey is at about 3,600 ft.).

- 4 cups flour
- 2 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- A little salt
- 2 tbsp. vanilla extract
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup butter, soft or even melted but not warm
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cups raisins
- 2 eggs
- Some milk

Pre-heat oven to 350–375 degrees.

Combine all ingredients except the milk in a mixing bowl.

Begin mixing with a spatula and adding milk little by little until a dough forms that is thoroughly moist but still holds its shape (more or less) in the bowl.

Grease a cookie sheet or line it with parchment paper (you may need two sheets, depending on their size).

Using an ice-cream scoop, place lumps of dough on the sheet, leaving some space around each lump (the scones will rise a little in the oven).

Bake for between thirty and forty-five minutes, or until the scones are golden and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Serve with butter and jam.

The recipe yields about a baker's dozen scones, but the size of ice-cream scoop you use will affect the number produced.

—Br. Bede Hazlet, O.S.B.



**GIVING MADE EASY:** Please consider the Direct Gift Program. It is easy to give to the monks of St. Andrew's Abbey. We accept Visa and MasterCard, or you can donate automatically from your checking account. It is safe and simple and you can make changes at any time. Please call the Development Office for full details at 661-944-8959 or email [development@valyermo.com](mailto:development@valyermo.com).

**BEQUESTS AND WILLS:** Please remember St. Andrew's Abbey if you are writing or updating your will. A bequest to the Abbey, a non-profit California Corporation located in Valyermo, CA, will help us to continue the ministry of the Benedictine monks here. It is a great investment in the future. Thank you.

**MASS AND PRAYER REQUESTS** may be sent to: Br. Dominique Guillen, OSB, St. Andrew's Abbey, PO Box 40, Valyermo, CA 93563. ✂

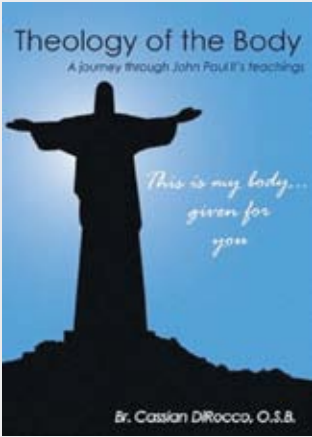
**WHEN PASTA MET TOMATOES** from page 5 the gods" during a period of time when zesty and spicy foods were considered evil, too hot, to be avoided, temptation for the senses, excitable, leading to gluttony, and, surely to death. The first recipe for pasta with tomatoes was written down in the year 1839, less than 200 years ago, and the rest became history.

**References:**  
*Food: A Culinary History*, Jean-Louis Flandrin & Massimo Montanari, Columbia University Press, New York, 1999, p. 1-2.  
*History of Food*, Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, "History of pasta," p. 187-194.  
*Oxford Companion to Food*, Alan Davidson, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 232, 273-4.  
*The American Century Cookbook: The Most Popular Recipes of the 20th Century*, Jean Anderson, Clarkson Potter, New York, 1997, p. 213. ✂

QUICA PROJECT

**Quica Project**, a new vehicle for proclaiming the Gospel, has been birthed with the aid of the Benedictine monks of St. Andrews Abbey. Drawing from prayerful reflections from Fr. Gregory Elmer, O.S.B. and Br. Cassian DiRocco, O.S.B., Quica Project is a response to John Paul II and Benedict XVI's call for a new evangelization. Its mission is to nurture and serve the Truth, Beauty and Goodness of the Catholic Church through media and the arts.

Quica Project is a simple blending of the treasures of the Faith and a desire to bring that message to the world. Quica's first release is a seven CD box set of Br. Cassian's presentation of the Theology of the Body, in which John Paul II communicated an authentic understanding of male and female, created in the image and likeness of God. Br. Cassian offers an insightful explanation of this compelling message, speaking on the mystery of Trinitarian love shown in the



human body and applied to the vocations of marriage and celibacy. Besides this and Br. Cassian's upcoming releases on contemplative prayer and Divine Mercy, Quica Project is planning to make available a series of retreats given by Fr. Gregory Elmer. These works of art include reflections on Teresa of Avila, the Desert Fathers, the Church Doctors and Biblical studies. The home base for Quica Project is the Bethany House in Reseda, CA. The

house was an abandoned convent at St. Catherine of Siena Parish that has been nourished back to health by a group of people who are striving to live the Gospel in a simple way. It is under the Spirituality Commission of the Archdiocese of LA and coordinated by Fr. Paul Griesgraber and Sr. Sheila McNiff. Quica Project is one of many fruits that have blossomed from this house of prayer and rest. For more information about Bethany House, please email [thebethanyhouse@gmail.com](mailto:thebethanyhouse@gmail.com).

The *Catechism* 2501 says, "Created in the image of God, man also expresses the truth of his relationship with God the Creator by the beauty of his artistic works. Art is a freely given superabundance of the human being's inner riches. Art bears a certain likeness to God's activity in what He created." The Quica Project hopes to fulfill this mission and live up to the call for our generation. **To place orders, view Quica's mission or access media produced by Quica, please visit [www.quicaproject.com](http://www.quicaproject.com).**

# Story Contest

IN THE LAST ISSUE of the *Chronicle* we introduced Hugo, a German-Shepherd mix whom the community had recently adopted.

Last Winter, during a heavy rain-storm (in which Pallet Creek had become a rushing torrent), he disappeared from the Abbey grounds. Monks and guests searched and searched for him but found no trace, and after a while many of us gave up hope of ever seeing him again.

Early one morning, though, five days after he had disappeared, he came back! He was very thin, covered in mud and scrapes, but otherwise just fine. (We took him to the veterinarian to be sure.)

What could have happened to Hugo during those five worrying days? How did he find his way home? Hugo cannot tell us, but maybe you can imagine the story of his adventures!

Write a short story about Hugo's disappearance and return, with illustrations if you wish. Send it to the *Chronicle* and we'll publish the story we like best in the next issue.



🐾 HUGO 🐾

## Here are the RULES:

- To enter the contest you must be in *fifth grade or below*.
- Your story and illustrations (if any) *must all be your own original work* (on your honor, no help from family or friends).
- Entries must be received by *April 30, 2011* in order to be considered.

*Send your entry to:*

St. Andrew's Abbey,  
P.O. Box 40  
Valyermo, CA 93563  
Attn: Story Contest

If you would like to have your story back, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.



## RETREAT CENTER *Calendar*

**T**HE RETREAT CENTER PROUDLY presents a new season of retreat offerings. Full descriptions are available online at [saintandrewsabbey.com](http://saintandrewsabbey.com). Link to Retreat House. Please call the retreat office at 661-944-2178 for availability and reservations. A \$75 non-refundable, non-transferable deposit is required to secure your room for overnight retreats. Payment in full is required for Saturday workshops.

*We accept Visa, Mastercard, and Discover for your convenience.*

*Tuesday, March 8 – Friday, March 11*

### **LISTEN: A Silent Retreat to Begin the Lenten Journey**

The *Rule* of St. Benedict begins, “Listen...attend with the ear of your heart”. This retreat will begin on ‘Fat’ Tuesday evening with a festive dinner and continue through the first Friday of Lent. During this time we will maintain an atmosphere of silence, punctuated by a conference or conferences to aid in the observance of sacred silence. (Those who wish to extend their stay to include the Lenten Retreat on the weekend that follows will receive a discounted rate for the weekend.)

\$285 single; \$225 shared.

*Friday, March 11 – Sunday, March 13*

### **LENTEN RETREAT**

*Fr. Matthew Rios, OSB*

The fundamental liturgical principles of Lent and Easter inform our spiritual practices during this holy season. We will look at their origins and evolution, consider the profound meanings of liturgical elements, and reflect on selected readings to prepare ourselves to enter into the celebration of these liturgies fully and meaningfully enriched.

\$260 single; \$170 shared.

*Monday, March 28 – Thursday, March 31*

### **BRIGHT SADNESS: A Lenten Retreat with the Byzantine Monks**

*Abbot Nicholas Zachariadis*

Join the Byzantine Catholic monks in their celebration of part of the season of the Great Lent. In addition to joining the monks at prayer, workshops will help you see how everything about the Byzantine Rite: icons, music, fasting, prayers, church architecture and furnishings—everything!—is designed to engage the whole human person in an experience of God through joy-filled repentance.

\$285 single; \$225 shared.

*Thursday, April 21 – Sunday, April 24*

### **THE SACRED TRIDUUM**

The Sacred Triduum is the holiest time of the liturgical cycle of the Church. You are invited to share the monastic experience of this sacred liturgy, beginning on Holy Thursday and concluding on Easter Sunday. (*Since this time is rooted in silence and reflection, we ask that you plan to arrive in sufficient time to be settled in your rooms before 4 p.m.*)

\$350 single; \$250 shared.

*Monday, May 2 – Thursday, May 5*

### **SPRING LANDSCAPE PAINTING**

*Deloris Haddow*

This retreat is open to artists at all levels, including beginners. Photographers, sculptors, and writers are also welcome to come and experience the colors and beauty of the high desert in the setting of the monastery. Escape the stress of daily life while deepening a spiritual vision in your art. (*A materials list will be provided.*)

\$285 single; \$225 shared.



*Friday, May 6 – Sunday, May 8*  
**PSALMODY AND CONTEMPLATION**  
*Fr. Luke Dysinger, OSB*

In ancient and modern monastic spirituality the chanting of psalms is believed to have the power of both purifying the soul and enabling the Christian to perceive God's inner purposes ("logoi") embedded within history and creation. In this workshop the monastic tradition of psalmody will be studied and practiced by participants in order to help them appreciate three spiritual levels or uses of the Psalter: first, the psalms as a means of repentance and inner transformation; second, the Psalter as a mirror of one's relationships in the world; and third, the Psalter as a window into heaven.

\$260 single; \$170 shared.

*Monday, May 9 – Friday, May 13*  
**PRIESTS' RETREAT**

*Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB, Abbot Emeritus*

PURITY OF HEART: Attempting to rediscover our initial call to priestly ministry as a way of personal holiness and altruistic service; seeking to discern areas of personal weakness and shortsightedness in our approach to ministry and prayer while, at the same time, finding ways to counteract illusion, false ego, and temptation, which pose as obstacles to a balanced and productive life as priest.

\$380 single.

*Friday, June 3 – Sunday, June 5*  
**INVOLUNTARY SIN?:**  
**An Eastern Christian**  
**Contribution to Christian Ethics**  
*Fr. Maximos Davies*

It is easy to stereotype Eastern Christianity as the "mystical" and "contemplative" sister of the active, socially-conscious West. But it is also true that Eastern Christians have their own approach to Christian ethics, revolving around the twin notions of divinization (*theosis*) and asceticism (*askesis*). We will discuss how this moral vision leads Eastern Christians to look at such things as social justice and labor issues, violence and warfare, marriage and divorce, contraception and abortion.

\$260 single; \$170 shared.

*Friday, June 10 – Sunday, June 12*  
**PENTECOST RETREAT**

*Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB, Abbot Emeritus*

This preached retreat is for oblates of St. Andrew's Abbey or anyone interested in Benedictine spirituality. The focus of the retreat is the Rule of St. Benedict and the Liturgy of Pentecost.

\$260 single; \$170 shared.

*Monday, June 13 – Friday, June 17*

**COME TO THE TABLE**

*Fr. Isaac Kalina, OSB,*  
*Michael Kalina*

This is a "hands on" workshop which will attempt to create some wonderful culinary dishes in the monastery kitchen. Morning sessions will focus on instructions and looking at the theme of food in Holy Scripture. Evenings may be spent watching films which portray the redemptive action of Jesus, who *prepares the table* for His friends at the *Eternal Banquet*. Participants will have ample opportunity to enjoy whatever delights they create during the afternoon sessions, and their last evening here will prepare and serve a "last supper" in the monastery refectory.

\$380 single; \$300 shared.

*Friday, June 17 – Sunday, June 19*

**FATHERS AND FAMILIES**

*Victoria Dendinger, Ph.D, Obl. OSB,*  
*Br. Patrick Sheridan, OSB*

This retreat, held on Father's Day weekend, will be an opportunity for fathers, sons, and daughters from 11 to 111. It will include talks, music, movies, discussions, Bible study, and recreation. Whether you *are* a father or *have* a father with whom you would like to deepen your relationship, you will find this weekend a helpful and enjoyable time for bonding. The Youth Center facilities will be used for dorm-style sleeping, conferences, recreation, and liturgy.

\$120 per person; family rates available.

**FOR COMPLETE DESCRIPTIONS  
 OF ALL RETREATS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

[www.saintandrewsabbey.com](http://www.saintandrewsabbey.com)

(click "Retreat House")

**PLEASE CALL THE RETREAT OFFICE AT**

**661-944-2178, ext. 102**

**FOR PRICE AND RESERVATIONS.**



St. Andrew's Abbey  
Postal Box 40  
Valermo, CA 93563-0040