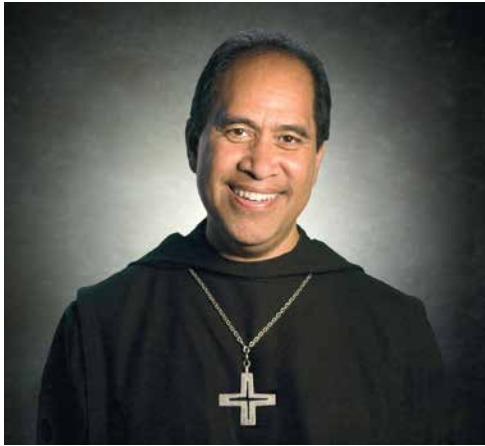


THE VALYERMO
Chronicle

ST. ANDREW'S ABBEY



Nº 237 ✠ MICHAELMAS 2012



laughter and tears. Though the evening had to end, the friendly relationship we have with our Carmelite Sisters will no doubt endure for generations to come.

The week after the dinner with the Sisters, we celebrated Father Philip's Golden Jubilee: fifty years of monastic vows! What a gift for our monastic community and for the Church to have in our midst a living witness of fidelity, perseverance, and commitment. It was truly a joyful event, a festive celebration with literally hundreds of guests in attendance, including the pastors of the local parishes: Fr. Vaughn Winters and Fr. Tom Baker. There were plenty of old friends, new friends, and good friends we haven't seen in a while. The sheer number of people who came to this celebration was an obvious testimony to the love the people of God have for Fr. Philip and vice versa. May God continue to bless Fr. Philip as he faithfully perseveres in living out and responding to the call of God.

The week after Fr. Philip's celebration, our brothers Cassian and Bede professed solemn vows at an evening Mass here at the Abbey. This too was a beautiful celebration, filled with prayer and emotion. The day a monk professes solemn vows is *the* day he looks forward to (besides his final call heavenward). It is the day he finally gives his life over completely to God in the context of monastic life. To have witnessed Brs. Cassian and Bede profess solemn vows on July 22 brought back memories for me, and no doubt for the older monks, of our own solemn profession day: memories of the zeal and fervor with which we promised to live a life faithful to the Gospel as written in the Rule of Benedict.

Our summer festivities ended with the diaconate ordination of Br. Cassian and Br. Bede on August 19. This ceremony is a necessary step for each one of them before they are ordained to the priesthood. We were blessed to have Bishop Gerald Wilkerson in attendance with us at vespers that evening, after which he presided at the celebration of the Eucharist

and conferred the Sacrament of Holy Orders upon Brs. Cassian and Bede. It was a beautiful, solemn, and prayerful celebration filled again with plenty of family, friends, and good food. Please continue to pray for Brs. Cassian and Bede, as next summer, God willing, they will be ordained to the priesthood.

The Almighty has done great things for us here at the Abbey, and holy is his name. It was a very busy, full, but blessed summer for us. It goes without saying that we are able to celebrate these events that are important to our lives only because of the generosity of God working through you. Please know of our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the many different ways you show your support. Know also of our daily prayers for you. May God be glorified in all we do, and *may he bring us all together to everlasting life* (RB 72:12).

Abbot Damien ✧

From the Editor

As apples ripen on the Abbey's trees and the days grow appreciably shorter, an autumnal thread is delicately woven through *The Chronicle*. Seed-time; ripening; endings and beginnings; looking back and looking ahead—you will find all these themes reflected in the pages that follow. As you read them I wish you

Peace,

Bede Hazlet, OSB ✧

CORRECTION

In the Midsummer 2012 issue on p. 13 in the first full paragraph of the right-hand column, "at in?" should read simply "in."

THE VALYERMO *Chronicle*

NUMBER 237 ✧ MICHAELMAS 2012

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LAYOUT

Michael Schrauzer

COVER:

These two icons of unknown provenance depicting SS. Michael (left) and Gabriel hang in the Abbey's sacristy. It is likely that they originally adorned the deacon's doors of an iconostasis.

Printed on chlorine-free,
FSC-certified paper.

EAR FRIENDS,

The Almighty has done great things for us here at the Abbey, and holy is his name.

This has been a fantastic and blessed summer for the monastic community here at St. Andrew's Abbey. We started the summer with a refreshing retreat in June preached by Fr. Xavier Knacke, OSB, of Conception Abbey in Missouri.

In July, twenty-five Carmelite sisters of the Most Sacred Heart came to the Abbey for dinner (which they so generously prepared). The occasion was the closing of the Sisters' day care and retreat facility in nearby Lake Los Angeles after having been there eleven years. During those eleven years the monks helped to support them and their ministries by celebrating Eucharist at the convent six days each week, as well as periodically giving talks and being available for the Sacrament of Reconciliation at their retreat center.

The Sunday dinner was initially planned as a way the Carmelite Sisters wanted to show their gratitude to the monks, but it ultimately turned out to be an evening where both communities showed gratitude and appreciation for each other. It was a wonderful and memorable evening which included gifts, songs, stories,

A Grain of Wheat

*Largo mistico
Per Cristo Gesu*

Unless the grain fall,
Fall, fall, fall into the dark earth,
Fall into darkness and not mind,

And die,

It remains only a grain,
Long stored, unused, slowly
Perishing preserved,

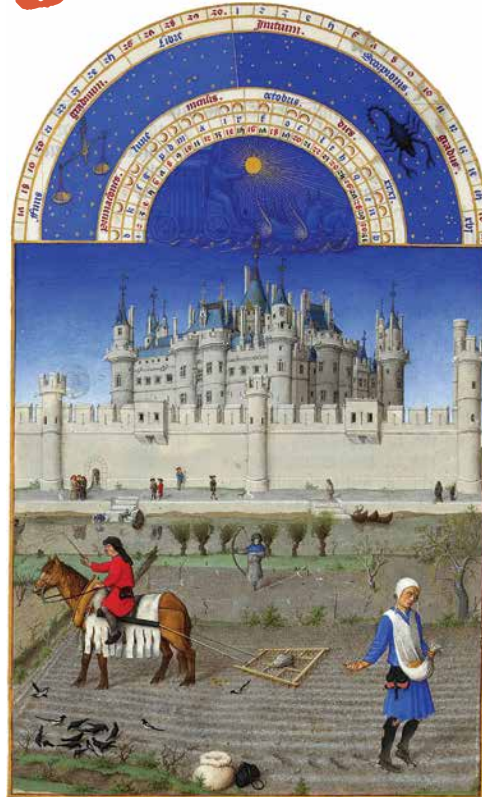
And die,

Not anywhere,
But in to Him, not gone,
But come home into Him,

Grain bursting with joy,
Even in darkness,
The unimaginable abundance

Erupts.

March 24, 2003
Valyermo
Fr. Gregory Elmer, OSB



Fr. Gregory made his monastic profession in 1970. After many years of giving retreats and spiritual direction (among other things), chronic illness led him from Valyermo to Mary Health of the Sick, a skilled nursing facility in Newberry Park, where he now lives (and where he is happy to welcome visitors).



LEFT WITH NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE, Prior Raphael took the extraordinary step of relocating the monastic community to Chengdu,¹ where Bishop Rouchouse offered the monks hospitality and financial assistance. The Japanese incursion and regular bombing of Chongqing had transformed Chengdu into a city of refuge and an increasingly important political and intellectual center. Within a few months of his arrival Fr. Raphael was invited to teach at the University of Yen-King. Over the next two years the scattered monks were able to slowly regroup in Chengdu in a house pro-

vided by Bishop Rouchouse, and, one by one, teaching positions were found for several of them. Prior Raphael and Frs. Alberic, Eleutherius, and Werner taught philosophy, language, and art history at the University and the Academy of Fine Arts. Fr. Werner also served as Catholic chaplain to the US Army troops stationed in Chengdu. In 1944 Frs. Wilfrid and Thaddeus finished their work for the Kuomintang and were able to rejoin the community in Chengdu. Three priests of the community, Frs. Hildebrand, Emile, and Paul Ou, temporarily stayed behind in Xishan with the monastic candidates.

During these first “unofficial” years in Chengdu (the canonical transfer had not yet been approved) Prior Raphael conceived the idea for an “Institute for Advanced Chinese and Western Studies.” He envisaged the monastery becoming a spiritual crossroads where the rich multicultural environment of Chengdu would facilitate ecumenical and interfaith

¹ As prior of a dependent monastery he had no authority to close or relocate the community, and the canonical transfer of the foundation from Xishan to Chengdu would not be officially recognized by the relevant ecclesiastical authorities until 1947. Indeed, the decision to move the community from the jurisdiction of a Chinese bishop to the diocese of a European bishop was criticized by some at St. André as a betrayal of the model of inculturation the community was expected to exemplify.

dialogue and research. Bishop Rouchouse was eager for the Benedictines to play an active role in the religious and intellectual life of Chengdu, and he encouraged Prior Raphael's aspirations. Although reticent to sanction the transfer from Xishan to Chengdu, the community of St. André gave grudging approval for the new Institute. The problem of finances was solved by Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, who offered Fr. Thaddeus Yang travel-money for a fund-raising expedition in the United States, from which he returned in May, 1945. Despite opposition from some clerics and prelates in the United States,² Fr. Thaddeus's "loathsome begging expedition," as he would later describe it,³ was successful; and, supported by further gifts of property from Bishop Rouchouse, the Institute and the new Priory in Chengdu slowly began to take shape.

In 1947 the canonical transfer of the monastery from Xishan to Chengdu was officially approved by the Abbot and Conventual Chapter of St. André. On July 11, 1949, the Feast of St. Benedict, the new Priory of St. Benedict and the Institute of Advanced Studies were formally inaugurated in Chengdu. However, the government of Chiang Kai-Shek was to survive for only five more months on mainland China. Chongqing fell to the forces of Mao Tse-Tung on December 10, followed by Chengdu on December 25. In light of later developments it is significant that in October, 1949 the monks had encouraged the creation in Chengdu of a local chapter of the Legion of Mary at the

Priory of St. Benedict. Members of the Legion of Mary proved to be extraordinarily successful in organizing resistance to the "Triple Autonomy" or "Three Self Movement" that required Catholics to break official ties with the Vatican. Members of the Legion were specifically targeted by the Communist authorities, and many of those who organized or supported the Legion were subjected to interrogation and imprisonment.⁴

The expulsion of the Benedictines from Chengdu by the communists was accomplished gradually, over three years. Prior Raphael was first summoned for questioning in March, 1950, and the monastery, from which all evidence of Dom Werner's work with the US army had been prudently removed, was subjected to periodic nocturnal raids in search of subversive literature. On June 18, 1951 Prior Raphael was summoned to the Office of Foreign Affairs and arrested for refusing to

denounce the Legion of Mary. After three months in prison he was tried in a "people's court" with Fr. Eleutherius, and the two were sentenced to permanent exile.⁵ One by one the same procedure was repeated for the other monks, and on March 2, 1952, the last foreign Benedictine of Chengdu, Dom Gaetan Loriens, was expelled from China. During the next

three years Dom Paul Ou and Br. Peter Zhou Bangjiu who remained behind were arrested, tried as enemies of the state, and sentenced to prison. Nothing certain would be known of their fate for the next thirty years.



DETAIL, CIBORIUM MADE IN BELGIUM FOR USE BY THE COMMUNITY IN CHINA

2 Cardinal Cushing was particularly contemptuous of a Catholic "Intellectual Apostolate" in China. Before abruptly showing Dom Thaddeus out of his office, the Cardinal railed against Chiang Kai-Shek and all those (including the monks) who opposed Mao Tse-Tung and his "agrarian reformers." T. Yong an-Yuen, *Chinese Adventures*, §6.

3 T. Yong an-Yuen, *Chinese Adventures*, §6.

4 J. P. Charbonnier, *Christians in China, A.D. 600 to 2000*, Ignatius Press, 2007, pp. 438-39.

5 Fr. Eleutherius has described the last years in Chengdu and analyzed the psychological methods employed by the authorities: E. Winance, *The Communist Persuasion, a Personal Experience of Brainwashing*, E. A. Lawrence, tr., New York, P. J. Kennedy, 1959.

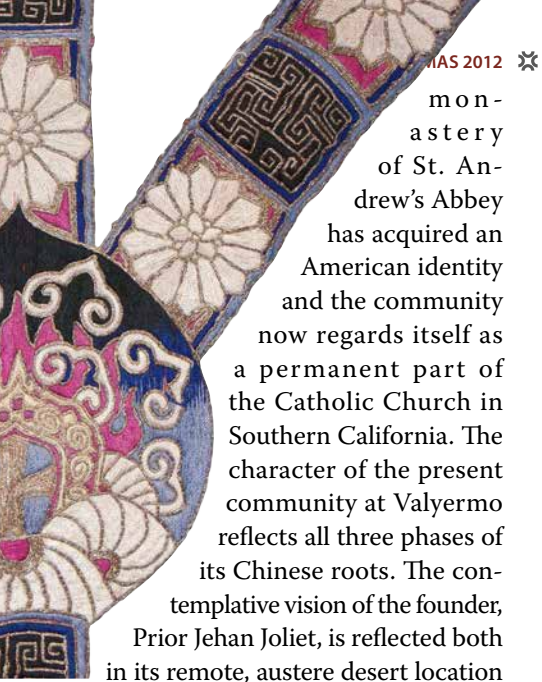
Epilogue and Conclusion

In 1955 the Priory of St. Benedict in Chengdu was canonically transferred to Valyermo in the high desert of Southern California, where it was dedicated as St. Andrew's Priory (now St. Andrew's Abbey). The ranch that became the new monastery was chosen by Fr. Vincent Martin, who had traveled to Harvard to complete a PhD soon after being released by the Japanese at the end of World War II. He was joined at Valyermo by Prior Raphael and Frs. Eleutherius, Alberic, Gaetan, Werner, and Wilfrid; Frs. Emile and Hildebrand elected not to join the reconstituted community.⁶ Two young Chinese in triennial vows, Brs. Felix Tong and Bernard Wang, had been sent from Chengdu to the United States before the community was expelled: they completed their studies, were ordained, and rejoined the community in Valyermo. News was eventually received that Fr. Paul Ou had died in prison, but that Br. Peter Zhou Bangjiu had survived and been released after twenty-seven years of imprisonment that included two years of solitary confinement. Following a complex series of political machinations Br. Peter was able to join the community at Valyermo in 1984.⁷

Although it was originally envisioned that the relocation of the monastery in Southern California would be temporary until such time as a return to China became feasible, the

6 Hildebrand Marga returned to St. André in Belgium. Emile Butruille stayed in the Far East and became an early member of St. Anselm Priory in Tokyo (a foundation of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville), where he remained until his death in 1965.

7 Br. Peter's autobiography provides a vivid, first-hand account of these years: Peter Zhou Bangjiu, *Dawn Breaks In The East*, Serenity Press, 1992.



and in ministries of spiritual direction and hospitality that invite guests to share in the daily monastic rhythm of silence and speech, prayer and work. Prior Gabriel Roux's commitment to theological education is continued by monks who teach in the diocesan seminary and other institutions of higher learning. Prior Raphael Vinciarelli's openness to pastoral ministry is actualized by monks who assist, chiefly on weekends, in local and distant parishes. Although it appears unlikely that in the foreseeable future direct assistance to the Church in China will again be possible for the community at Valyermo, the monks will always remain grateful to the culture that nourished and challenged their community in its youth; and the Chinese people will always remain in their prayers. ✠



Fr. Luke has been a monk of Valyermo since 1980. He teaches moral theology and church history at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, and serves the monastic community as librarian.

DETAIL, SILK CHASUBLE USED BY THE COMMUNITY IN CHINA.



PHOTO: JOHN MATTERA

Greater Love Hath No Man

A REFLECTION ON THE EUCHARIST

PART 5 OF 5:

"A PLEDGE OF FUTURE GLORY IS GIVEN TO US..."

BY BR. CASSIAN DIROCCO, OSB

THIS REFLECTION CONTINUES OUR LOOK at the Eucharist through this beautiful antiphon of St. Thomas Aquinas, sung during the Magnificat of vespers for the feast of Corpus Christi, *O Sacrum Convivium*:

*O sacrum convivium! in quo Christus sùmitur:
Recólitur memória passiónis ejus:
Mens implétur grátia:
et futúrae glóriæ nobis pignus datur, allelúia.*

O sacred banquet! in which Christ is received,
the memory of his Passion is renewed,
the mind is filled with grace,
and a pledge of future glory is given to us, alleluia.



Our reflections to this point have focused on many aspects of a Eucharistic life, including a sacramental life flowing from and ordered to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, communion with God and one another, contemplative prayer, Eucharistic adoration, and several other facets of the diamond that is the Catholic Christian life. In this last reflection, the final line of Aquinas's antiphon, "A pledge of future glory is given to us, alleluia" (*et futúrae glóriæ nobis pignus datur, allelúia*) will point us in the direction of what are commonly known as "the promises of Christ."

As our antiphon hints, Christ's promises are "pledges." These pledges which were given to his apostles and dear ones throughout his active ministerial life reveal *all* that was being prepared for them (and us!) during salvation history's unfolding, and most particularly, during Christ's own hidden life in

Bethlehem and Nazareth. While the active years of our Lord were his most dynamic and visible, his hidden years were the most potent. As the Bread of Life, his *human* life had a natural period of preparation and maturation which readied him to be able to give himself unequivocally when "his time" arrived (cf. Jn 2:4 and 5:23). What might those hidden years with Joseph and Mary have looked like? For all the heights of holiness that would have been the basic tenor of their lives, we can also readily imagine the normalcy of the Holy Family's life: the sounds of gentle laughter that filled their walls, the sweet silences punctuated by the mood of pure conversation on the good things of life that they would have known and enjoyed together, the smell of sawdust wafting in from a hard day's work, and the basic savor of simplicity that would have been such a staple of this "earthly Trinity."¹ It was the earthiness of these proverbial four walls which cultivated the contemplative preparation of the boy who was also the second person of the Trinity. The hidden life he lived

¹ On this theme cf. the Papal addresses of Pius XII, Dec. 30, 1957 & John Paul II, Feb. 9, 1992, as well as J. M. Blanquet, *La Sagrada Familia, Icono de la Trinidad* (Barcelona: Gráf. San Sadurní, 1995), the Acts of the Congresses on the Holy Family organized by the Sons of the Holy Family; and the studies of T. Fitch on the mystic Bernard Rosa, all of which are cited in Tarcisio Stramare, "I Santi Sposi Maria e Giuseppe: Rinnovato 'Sacramento' dell' Amore Originario," paper presented in lecture form as part of the series "Maria Santissima e San Giuseppe di Nazaret: Il Ciclo di Conferenze Profili di Santità coniugale, 19 Maggio 2011, Istituto di Giovanni Paolo II per Studi su Matrimonio e Famiglia.

was a protection which allowed him to grow to be the man who would give his life for the world. The apex of this “hiddenly-prepared readiness” was tested up to and beyond the point of death, manifesting in the singular gift of self that invited his disciples and their spiritual progeny to feed on him and to enjoy his eternal presence among them under the form of bread and in the Pentecostal gift of his Spirit’s sending. From the sweet hiddenness of family life came *this* gift, which was the invitation written in blood for all people to be one *eternal* family—the Church. From the family in which Jesus learned the value of promises made and kept, he learned also how to be *the* promise offered once and for all to a world in waiting. And so were formed in the hiddenness of simplicity those pledges of presence and glory which give Christian hope its surest security, and which (as we will see) are especially fulfilled in the Eucharist.

We have likely heard of, and prayed, the hopeful Christian’s plea to “be made worthy of ‘the promises of Christ.’”² But just what *are* the promises of which we speak here? Because the love of God in Jesus is incalculably deep and wide, we can’t know all of the promises that Christ has in mind for the ones he loves (isn’t it true that the best of lovers keep the most delightful promises from the eyes of their beloved until they are ready to know the secret of their deepest love?), but he was specific about several of them, which can be grouped into the following short list: Jesus promised his faithful followers peace, joy, the Cross, and his eternal presence.³ These

promises have as their ultimate end a life in Heaven, lived forever with the Blessed Trinity, the angels and the saints. But Heaven is prepared for *here* through a life of true love lived *now*, and so these promises have an earthly component, too. Jesus says what he means (good shepherds do that), so we can take him at his word that these promises are true. But we must be interiorly conditioned to receive his word—these promises and pledges—as *he* intends. In other words, *our* “vision” of peace, joy, presence, even the cross, may look very different than what Christ would have it mean. But what *does* it mean?

The peace of Christ is, as he says, “not as the world gives.” Make no mistake about it, the world does give *a* peace. But it is far different from *the* peace of Christ, the “Prince of Peace.” The world’s peace is a transient peace, a false peace. It is the peace of a false calm before a bitter storm, whereas the peace of Christ is a true, soul-centered calm *within* the storm. The peace of the world is the cheap peace of inertia, juxtaposed with the peace of Christ which is the well-earned peace of intense life and spiritual fullness. This divine peace of Jesus is fully present among us in the Eucharist, for (and this always bears reminding when our senses may lend to our forgetting!) the Eucharist *is* Christ. The Eucharist does not “stand for” peace; it is not a “symbol” of peace. The Eucharist is peace among us, for the Eucharist is *Christ* among us. Stop for a moment and think of what it is like to walk into a dark, candle-lit church from a busy workaday world. The silence is almost deafening, and blessedly so. We stop. We breathe. We whisper a wordless prayer. And our soul instinctively “seeks” the red burning lamp that indicates the Presence. The Blessed Sacrament fills that church with the peace of the risen Christ. Without that Presence, yes, there would still be a quiet place to pray. But *with* that Presence, there is the

be baptized” (Mk 10:39). On his eternal presence: “I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt 28:20).

eternal embrace of a living peace that will not die, a peace that the world longs for but cannot give. Pledge fulfilled.

But what about that second promise, joy? Can we dare speak of joy with any integrity as we live with “terror on every side” (Jer 20:10), in the midst of so much cynicism, violence, and filth? I’m reminded of a wise old priest I met several years ago who said that while it was en vogue (albeit true) to speak of a “culture of death” encroaching on society, perhaps it was more true to speak of a “culture of ugly.” Oh yes, death stalks, and life *is* threatened on all sides and in all forms today. But so is beauty, so is genuine loveliness. What is the remedy to this stripping of the sacred, this pillaging of the beautiful that roars through so many sectors and strata of society? The remedy is genuine Christian joy which, when courageously lived, touches and interpenetrates all levels of the human person and human culture: physically, emotionally, intellectually, artistically, spiritually, expressively, and unabashedly. But this joy is supernatural, and so while it is designed by God to “live” within the human person, it does not naturally, in life after the Fall, spontaneously arise and remain within the human person. No, we need a source, a divine source that feeds soul *and* body and teaches us from the inside out how to spread the gospel of joy. For this source, we turn to the Eucharist. The Eucharist is Christ in his entirety—body, blood, soul, and divinity. When I receive the Eucharist, I receive the whole Christ, and he touches and teaches, changes and transforms the “whole” me. Opening my heart to the gift of his healing fire is my end of the bargain. His is to fill me with a joy-making light, a light shared with every human soul I see or pray for as from one candle to the next, and renewed every time I receive him in his sacrament of divine love. As the best of our spiritual tradition will tell us, Christian joy is a Eucharistic joy, and it is not for the faint of heart.⁴

4 In the Byzantine Church, the post-communion prayer of St. Simeon Metaphrastes captures this dynamism well,

Joy strengthens. And it must, for in the Christian life, the next promise of Christ is as intimate as it is inevitable: the Cross. The Cross is the matrix through which genuine joy is rooted in our life, because it is the altar on which our spiritual freedom was won. Our freedom from sin and death is cause for the deepest joy, but the fact remains that this freedom and joy was won through the deepest suffering and sorrow. This truth of suffering—part and parcel of the truth of love—is often the biggest stumbling block for well-meaning seekers of spiritual truth. How can a God who is good allow not only *us* to suffer, but also allow the same for his only Son, who unlike us, did *nothing* to deserve it? The only adequate answer to this good and honest question is *true love*, because *that’s what it took* to free the human heart from the tyranny of sin. Because God loves his children *that much*.

But this love of which we speak here is decidedly *not* “love” as the world understands it. Love as the world understands it is the stuff of Hallmark cards, and it has a very short shelf life. It also has little patience for suffering or the Cross or Christ who hung on it. The world’s icon of love is a puffy heart and a fat cherub. The Christian icon of love is the wounded Sacred Heart and an adoring, sorrowing host of angelic choirs. There is a big difference here, and that difference is the fact of the Cross. It is the Cross that is the great difference and deal-breaker between Christianity and New Age (for Christianity without the Cross is nothing more or less than this), between authenticity and plasticity, between integrity and compromise, between truth and lie. The suffering of the son of God is the pattern of the truest love that man can know. It is more than an example. It is a blueprint. It is the path

praying “Though who art a Fire... pass through all my body parts, into all my joints and marrow, my veins and my heart. Burn thou the thorns of all my transgressions, cleanse my soul, and hallow my thoughts... Enlighten as one my five senses... chasten me, purify me, and control me. Adorn me, teach me, and enlighten me. Show me to be a Tabernacle of Thy Spirit...”

2 For example, as part of the Angelus’ closing prayer, “*Ora pro nobis sancta Dei Genitrix, ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi*” (pray for us, o Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ”).

3 Brief (and non-exhaustive) examples include: On peace: “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give unto you” (Jn 14:27). On joy: “These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full” (Jn 15:11). On the cross: “The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will

to life born through self-giving death, and it is the way to the glory which is promised after this earthly pilgrimage to those who dare to hope in and live the pattern of suffering love of the one who is our life. All of this the Cross would hold for those who choose to hold it in turn. And all of this is present in living, real time in the Eucharist. When we receive and adore Christ in the Eucharist, we receive and adore Him in every phase and facet of his life. In the Eucharist, Jesus exists for us risen and glorified, but His *whole life* is present there, too: His hidden years, his miracles, his tears, his longing,⁵ his abandonment, his suffering and death, his Cross, and yes, blessedly, his Resurrection that waits just on the other side. This is the Catholic Christian life: it is a “package deal,” an integral way in which we can’t pretend to pick and choose what we like or don’t like without turning it into something else than what Christ intends it to be. Because it is centered completely on him, it is at once Eucharist and Cross-bound, and so is forever filled with the suffering of true love.⁶

This brings us to the last of Christ’s promises, and the heart of the last line of our antiphon, “A pledge of future glory is given to us.” The greatest gift that a lover can give to his beloved is not “something,” but *someone*; that is, his very self. Christ’s promise to remain with us forever is a “whole-person promise.” He is with us in the Eucharist in the fullness of his being so that we can receive him in the fullness of our own. A “purely spiritual” gift would not satisfy the human person, who is *not* pure spirit. We are soul *and* body, intimately united. We have a hunger that is both spiritual and bodily, and

nothing but Jesus with his Father and their Holy Spirit can fill this God-shaped yearning. The Eucharist—Jesus under the form of simple bread—is designed to fill us and to keep us moving toward union with the Blessed Trinity and to keep us in communion with one another. The irony of this yearning, this great hunger of the human heart, is that when we are filled with the Bread of Life, we are not satiated, but rather with renewed evangelical thirst are enlivened and inspired to be carriers of grace in love and prayer to whomever we meet and wherever we go. While we can’t live our whole lives in a Church (*truly* “perpetual adoration” is reserved for the angels and saints in Heaven... and some day, we hope to join them!), we *can* be “adorers in spirit and truth” (Jn 4:23) by following the soul-stirring counsel of Mother Luisita Josefa who tells us to “form a rich and beautiful tabernacle for our Lord in your heart, and then *do not let him go*.”⁷ In this way, we experience the gift of being not only recipients, but true sharers and bearers of the great “promises of Christ” through our full participation in his Eucharistic life. As our antiphon’s last word so joyfully proclaims, “*Alleluia!*” ✠



Br. Cassian is a monk of St. Andrew’s Abbey in Valyermo, CA. He entered the Abbey in 2007, and these days spends the better part of his time in Rome residing at Sant’Anselmo (the “mother house” of Benedictine life in the “Eternal City”) and studying at the Pontifical Institute of John Paul II for Studies on Marriage and the Family.

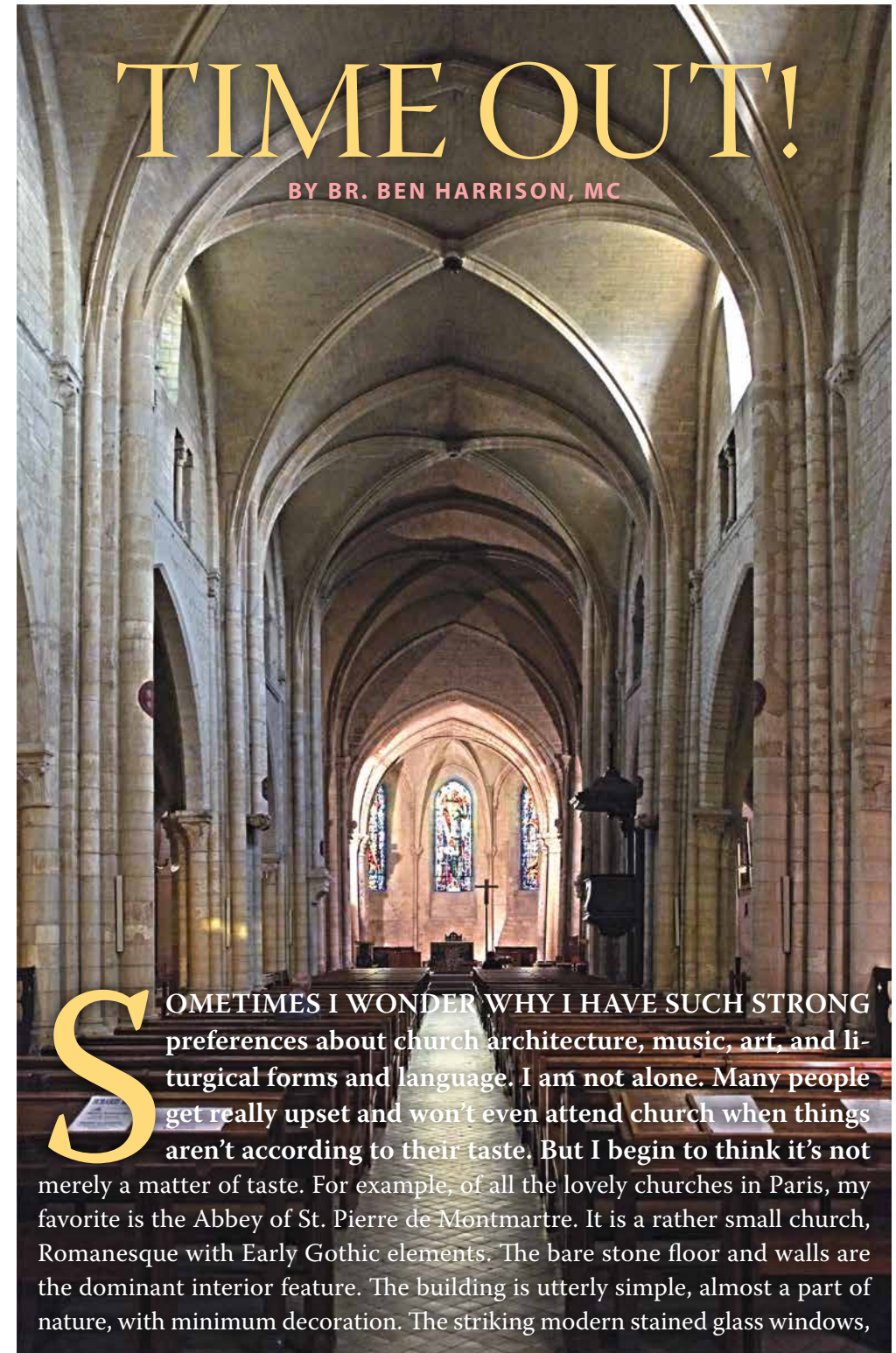
5 “Earnestly have I longed to eat this Passover with you before I suffer” (Lk 22:15). “O Jerusalem... how I have longed to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not!” (Mt 23:27).

6 This integrity and interpenetrating realism of “Cross-Suffering-Love” was so ingrained in the lives of the saints, that it led St. Teresa of Avila to ardently want only one thing in her life, “to die or to suffer” (cf. Teresa’s *Life*, 40).

7 Mother Luisa Josefa of the Blessed Sacrament, Letter 12, October 5, 1925. The entirety of the beautiful letter in which this advice is given can be found at <http://www.carmelitesistersocd.com/Foundress/writings.asp> (see volume 1 of her letters).

TIME OUT!

BY BR. BEN HARRISON, MC



SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY I HAVE SUCH STRONG preferences about church architecture, music, art, and liturgical forms and language. I am not alone. Many people get really upset and won’t even attend church when things aren’t according to their taste. But I begin to think it’s not merely a matter of taste. For example, of all the lovely churches in Paris, my favorite is the Abbey of St. Pierre de Montmartre. It is a rather small church, Romanesque with Early Gothic elements. The bare stone floor and walls are the dominant interior feature. The building is utterly simple, almost a part of nature, with minimum decoration. The striking modern stained glass windows,

the square enameled altar, and a stark crucifix above a plain tabernacle serve to accentuate the simplicity. The little abbey is like a cave, a womb, a quarried refuge from time's vagaries. Why does it move me so? Not because it is ancient but because it is timeless, or seems so to me. There are older churches that do not speak to me in that way. And there are some modern churches that have the same impact on me.

It is not a question of antiquity or of modernity but of timelessness. The problem is that different styles evoke timelessness for different people. For me highly decorated Baroque or Neoclassical interiors seem like period pieces, while Romanesque or Gothic interiors evoke the timelessness of ancient forests and sunlit canyons. The case may be the opposite for others: statues of cherubs and paintings of heavenly throngs may take some people beyond the reach of their daily worries.

It is the same with religious language. For some people Carolingian Latin *mea culpas* or Elizabethan English vouchsafes and beseechthees bespeak the immutable dignity of worship and for others such language is irritatingly pedantic or just plain outré, obscuring the directness and clarity of contemporary English. For some the draped folds of flowing vestments provide an aura of changeless dignity, whereas for others the Baroque minimalism of the fiddle-back chasuble does the job.

Sometimes it may seem that religious people have a tendency either to idealize the past, dreaming of some golden age, or to long for some glorious future free of conflict and strife. My theory is that what we are really seeking is something that speaks of the timeless, the eternal. What we really want is time out from the mad frenzy of life.

For life in our present world is frenzied: not only are there the obvious burgeoning technological changes, but there are huge shifts in demographics, cultural expression, economic conditions, environmental balance, weather, morals, political structures. And it often seems that the changes we call progress are counterbalanced by those that seem decadent or downright destructive.

When a bus is careening down a narrow, bumpy mountain road, you tend to grab for anything firm: the overhead strap, the seat ahead, even your neighbor's knee. How often I hear it said that the pace of change is causing people to latch on to anything that seems to offer stability—religions, ideologies, ethnic identity, scientific certainties, land, gold. Skeptics often claim that religion is the preserve of the insecure, and to some extent they are right. But I would say “belief” rather than “religion,” because the proponents of nonreligious ideologies and philosophies are equally insecure. It is natural for people to want to know the firmest foundation on which to base their decisions. In my experience everyone is looking for some solid truth, some firm footing, some enduring vision that they can trust as a secure foundation on which to build their future. Secularists, atheists, and materialists say all religions are deluded, but they themselves seek certainty in science, which is a body of knowledge that is itself in constant evolution, regularly unearthing enigmas that call previous certainties into question. And these firmly nonreligious types can be as doctrinaire and intolerant in their pronouncements as the most rabidly religious. What we are all seeking is some timeless truth. The problem is that what evokes timelessness for one seems dated or old-fashioned to another.

Among Christians there are the usual questions of what will stand firm against the ravages of relativism. Scripture? The Church? Morality? Tradition? The faith of our fathers? Catholics say that their faith distills the wisdom of all ages and is destined to endure like rock. While some Catholics find the Latin Mass a potent embodiment of changelessness, many converts are attracted by the solid teachings of the early Fathers of the Church, which marry the enduring wisdom of the Ancients with the timeless revelation of the Gospel. More socially concerned Catholics often see such discussions of liturgy and tradition as passé and tangential and look toward a new social order based on unchanging ideals of justice and right.

Among the followers of Mohammed there are many who feel the corrosive effect of western secularism. Such believers know that it's unlikely they will be able to reinstitute the Caliphate, but Sharia can be a symbol for them of the absolute demands of faith. However, for others of their number Sharia seems to put non-Muslims at an unfair disadvantage and to apply outdated tribal sanctions to crimes such as theft and adultery. And so it goes. Each school of religion offers its take on the unchanging truth that stands above and beyond the ten thousand things. And each philosophy or ideology seeks principles that are absolute. Everybody is looking for something firm, somewhere to escape, even briefly, from the tempestuous surgings of time. When it all becomes too much we shout in frustration, “Time out!”

But everything, in fact, changes. For me personally, nature has always been a powerful symbol of the timeless. And yet I know that the vast forests of the Appalachians have lost once dominant species like the indigenous elm and chestnut, and that even now blight is killing huge stands of hemlocks. Even the majestic Grand Canyon, standing in abashed humility with its geologic strata descending into the inconceivably distant past exposed for all to see, is a creature of time, of wind and water. The entire continent of Antarctica is undergoing huge transformations caused by climatic conditions. Everything changes. Even our most cherished tokens of timelessness change, for they are all merely symbols and proxies of what is truly changeless.

Some say change is the only constant and try to make change itself the principle of stability. After all, life is motion, creation is action, to be is to change. We try to stop resisting and go with the flow. We make an effort to get comfortable while the white-water raft slips and churns through the gorge of becoming. But most of us can only manage that kind of radical surrender for a short period. Then we curl in on ourselves and make our own survival or security the sole aim of our lives. Where, then, can we find *terra firma*? Is there nowhere we can go for a respite?

Our Christian faith teaches that there is only

one who is beyond time. When we think of God we often imagine him alongside his creation, more or less equal to it or slightly larger. But that is a dangerously inadequate perspective. In contrast to the enormity of the mystery of God's being, the whole history of our universe, from its Big Bang beginning to its presumed distant demise, is less than one faint blink of one firefly among thousands on a still summer evening after rain.

God is the context, the infinite vastness of No-where and No-when that lovingly harbors our little cosmos somewhere in its wondrous depths. How can we, creatures of time and space, reach that sea of serenity that is his being?

There is a bridge from Nowhere. The one whose idea we were speaks a Word that causes to erupt into being something where there was nothing. At a crucial point in time that Word, we Christians believe, infiltrated his world as one of us and holds open for us the veil that stands between our world of time and space and the other reality which is utterly unfathomable to our minds. Jesus Christ is that Word, that bridge from Nowhere. In himself he is the Eternal Word of God, “the same yesterday, today and forever” (Heb 13:8). Yet his footsteps pass through every age and in each age he appears in clothes cut from contemporary cloth and speaks the language of that generation. Of these outer phenomena that mean so much to us, whatever seems timeless to me or you is not in fact timeless. Among the creatures of time there are some more enduring than others, and some that may endure until the end, but none are of themselves timeless. The only way we can really take time out from the rushing river of the passing now is to shelter within the deep now of Christ's eternal abiding in the One. We can ask him to take us up into his heart, and, for as long as we are there, we are beyond the sway of time.

He is the one whose very mission it is to straddle time and eternity. In the words of the Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, it is the “stress” of his presence in our world that invites us, nudges us, attracts us beyond ourselves and our headlong racing rush to death. That fact

Please turn to page 17.

“...And God Meant It For Good”

BY FR. ISAAC KALINA, OSB

AFTER MOM DIED IN JULY OF 2006, it seemed as though everything else paled in comparison in terms of life-changing events rupturing you with the deep pain they can bring. Since then, it has been more difficult to make sense of a lot of things in my own life, why certain things happen to some & not to others, and how it all makes one a changed and better person. I admit that Mom was often the gifted one in the family who put things in better perspective for us. Without her in that role anymore, I've had to rely on other resources in trying to make sense of what happens on this journey; namely, my remembrances of her and the lessons she taught along with the great faith she shared and passed on to me. I'm grateful for having the Mom I had; that alone has changed and made me a better person than I had ever hoped to be.

On Holy Saturday in the Spring of 2012, after a long illness, I was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma. All I really know is that it happened, and it happened to me. And now that I have cancer and am faced with my own dying or possible death, I find myself still wanting Mom to fulfill the role she once had, and to build me up with consolation and encouragement with that “look” of hers and how she said, “Come, let me fix you something.”

Gratitude and surrender are two of the things that come to mind as I reflect on my illness. It strikes me as a kind of wisdom to



cultivate an inner acceptance of the things I cannot change. Illness became that for me, a part of my life in time, one of its conditions, but it never defined me as an individual. I knew there was something deeper, more essential to my person in & outside of time.

*This is the culmination
of a life lived well,
following in the steps of
Jesus, our own sharing
in Jesus' crucifixion.*

By focusing on this moment, it dawned on me that I wasn't surrendering to the idea of “being sick,” but I was surrendering to “right now” and how it was taking shape. There's nothing like allowing the little pains and discomforts of an illness to force you into the present moment. And I wanted to use it for good. Surrender does not transform your reality, gratitude does. Surrender transforms us. When you are changed, your whole world is transformed, because the world is just a reflection. My illness was not the problem. I was the problem as long as my mind was left in control. It's God's voice I hear now reminding me not to feel that I had failed in some way by getting sick, not to feel guilty; not to

blame life for treating me unfairly, but not to blame myself either.

Like the story of the Patriarch Joseph in Egypt, anything “bad” that happened in his life, he used for good, the way God meant it. If you have a major illness, use it for the good. After all, wouldn't you want to warn your friends, those you love about what lies ahead on a dangerous road? Be convinced that God meant it for your good now! Whenever any kind of disaster strikes, something goes wrong; an injury, disability, loss of home or job or an identity, a breakup or divorce, the suffering of a loved one, or your own impending death... KNOW THAT THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO IT, that you are just a step away from something incredible, something miraculous. That step is called surrender. Knowing that what *is* cannot be undone, you say Yes to what is. Eventually you arrive at the realization then to do what you have to do, whatever the situation requires. This is the culmination of a life-lived-well, following in the steps of Jesus, our own sharing in Jesus' crucifixion. We can pray that it become our Resurrection, too! As inseparable as time and pain are for us here, they will never be found later in heaven. They will no longer be of any use to us there. Instead, there will arise an incredible stillness from within us, and there we will find a great peace. Within that peace, we will discover unfathomable joy. And within that joy, such a deep love—one we have never known before on earth. And at its innermost core, there is God waiting for us. ✠



Fr. Isaac made his monastic profession at Valyermo in 1986 and was ordained priest in 1989. Active as a retreat master and spiritual director, he has also served the community in various capacities over the years (including as prior, kitchen master, novice master, and—currently—junior master).

Time Out! continued from page 15

of his being God-with-us, though “It dates from day/Of his going in Galilee,” refuses to be relegated to one moment or one life-time. Rather, “it rides time like riding a river.” Christ the Time-Straddler stays with us every moment, riding time and mastering it, but he also abides beyond time, reposing in the Father's bosom. From every moment, by faith, we have free entry to God's presence, because our life “is hidden with Christ in God” (Col 3:3).

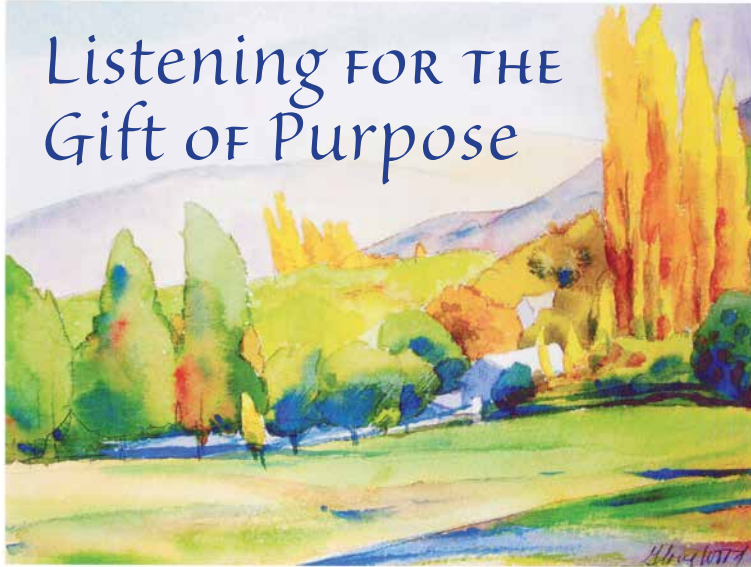
Therefore, to my original observation about the conflicting tastes of Christians regarding the way we experience our longing for the timeless, the solution is not either/or—nor is it both/and. The solution is “deeper in.” Whatever speaks to us of the timeless we must appreciate as a gift but also accept as an invitation—a summons to pass beyond the signs and symbols of timelessness and enter into the very depths of the One Who Lives Beyond Time. And if our brothers and sisters in Christ are moved by different signs and symbols, let us pray that the Spirit will draw them too, deeper in, into the living depths of the unchanging Christ.

Whether we move out from ourselves in prayer and contemplation, in praise and acts of mercy, in study and work, in fasting and penance, in joy and celebration, we can, in whatever we are doing, as whoever we are being, let ourselves be drawn deeper into that timeless mystery. “My best friend lives beyond time. Whenever he lets me I can be with him there. And when my time in time is over, that friendship stands.” ✠



Brother Ben Harrison is a Missionaries of Charity Brother. St. Andrew's has been an important place for him since 1972, as he searched for, found and followed his vocation to serve Christ in the poor in LA, Sicily, and now again in Manchester, UK.

Listening FOR THE Gift of Purpose



slender hopes that no one else knew. That morning I felt empty as I discovered that I was found out. The phrase that spoke to my need was “*I will fulfill my purpose for you*” (Ps 139:8). Not my plans, not my purposes, but the purpose of God in whom I had put my trust. It seemed he knew my inmost thoughts and dreams and chose to encounter me with his plans,

BY GLORIA WOOD VAHLE, OBLOSB

IF LIFE IS A GIFT FROM GOD, and I truly believe it is, then why does everything sometimes seem meaningless or hum-drum even for sincere and faithful believers? And yet there are moments when the veil is pulled away and we see that someone purposeful has our lives in his hands.

I had a moment of such revelation one day many years ago and it has impacted the way I have seen my life since then. I was working in an animated film studio just off Sunset Blvd. One day at break-time I walked to Schwab’s, a well-known drug store. I sat down at the counter and ordered a bran muffin and a cup of coffee. This was all very routine until I opened up a small Bible I carried in my purse and read a Psalm. One phrase hit me like a brick, shattering my well-defended self-image as a woman in control of her own life, pursuing a successful career in my chosen profession and active in the life of my church.

My naïve hopes had been shaken the night before. I got a phone call from a friend, the sister of a young pastor at our church, telling me that he had gotten engaged. I had admitted to myself that I had a crush on him, but thought that was my secret. I had very real but

not my own. God had hopes for me, if I would only trust him to redirect my energies to his will as he revealed it step by step. I learned years later at St. Andrew’s Abbey that his form of prayerful reading is called *lectio divina*. *It is a reading that listens for God’s purpose.*

It was years later that I was given a clear sense of direction to go back to school and prepare myself for whatever ministry God had for me. I knew this was an unfolding of God’s purpose. After I graduated from Fuller Seminary, I was ordained to the job of Chaplain at Hollywood Presbyterian/Queen of Angels, even though I hated hospitals. I knew God was leading me toward his purpose. A few years later when I took the pastorate of a very small church in the Antelope Valley, again I knew that he was directing me toward that purpose. That pastorate was a mixed experience of effective ministry as God met the needs of hurting people, and conflict, leading to my leaving the position. The path continued to unfold as I married the dearest man I ever met, a leader in the church, who had become my best friend. We became oblates of St. Andrew’s together and later we both were given a sense of being guided to join the Roman Catholic Church. A new direction and yet the same purpose is

being fulfilled, not by me but by the one who said, “I will fulfill my purpose for you.”

The word “purpose” is one of a series of words that are often translated “counsel” and are related to the word for “desire.” They have in common the suggestion of desire or decision based not in feelings but on reason and careful thought and resolve. Isaiah 14:26–27 reads,

This is the purpose that is purposed concerning the whole earth. And this is the hand that is stretched over the nations. For the Lord of hosts has purposed, and who will annul it? His hand is stretched out, who will turn it back?

The Almighty God, who makes plans to deal with the whole earth and its nations, also looks down on one small person of no obvious earthly consequence and makes plans, has desires for that person’s place in the order of things. In Ephesians we read that God has both destined and chosen those of us who are believers to be God’s adopted children and to be holy and blameless according to the purpose of his will. This purpose is an expression of his love and for the praise of his glorious grace. He wants us to study the Bible, his Word, and as we do he also wants us to listen to what he would say to us personally through that Word. ✧

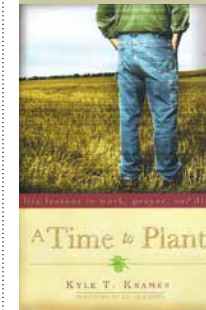


Gloria graduated from Chouinard Art Institute and worked for many years in the animated film business as a background painter and color stylist. She studied at Fuller

Theological Seminary for ordination as a Presbyterian minister and later returned to complete a doctorate in Christian spirituality. After serving as a hospital chaplain and as pastor of a small church for ten years she is now retired, though she continues to give spiritual direction.

QUARTERLY BOOK REVIEW

by fr. philip edwards, osb



**A TIME TO PLANT:
Life Lessons in Work,
Prayer, and Dirt**
by Kyle T. Kramer
Sorin Books: Notre
Dame, Indiana, 2010

A (FAIRLY) RECENT (JULY 30) ISSUE OF *The Christian Science Monitor* featured “New West Ranching” in Montana and Colorado: “They manage the land in benevolent ways—and learn how that can help them thrive.”

John Yemma’s opening editorial puts it well: The Muir—and Pinchot—in all of us: “The two rival strands of American environmentalism—nature untouched versus nature managed—can be traced back to John Muir and Gifford Pinchot.”

Muir, founder of the Sierra Club, was a purist. Brought up in a strict religious household, he found spiritual uplift in wilderness, especially in the American West. The mountains and streams of the Sierra Nevada were his church; the forest was sacred. He wanted nature reserves left alone and believed the only resource humans should harvest from them was the restoration of the soul.

Pinchot, the first head of the US Forest Service, was pragmatic. The son of a wealthy developer of land and lumber, he saw forests and wild lands as assets to be exploited—albeit carefully and with consideration of the needs of future generations. Conservation, to him,

was not about sequestration and prohibition. It was husbandry on a grand scale.

Let’s be honest. It is impossible to choose either philosophy exclusively.... We may drive a hybrid, choose organic vegetables, and scrupulously recycle, but even the greenest among us

has to admit that natural resources feed the superstructure of the civilization in which we live.

We are John Muir when we take a weekend walk and are awestruck by an encounter with a fawn. We are Gifford Pinchot when the alarm goes off on Monday morning. Everyone of us balances purist aspirations with practical needs.... Green ranching is where Muir and Pinchot blend. Humanity and nature can't be separated. But nature can be handled with care.

In his Introduction, Kyle T. Kramer is mindful

that talk of 'simple' or 'sustainable' living can easily evoke slightly mocking images of a niche pursuit (or worse, a mere hobby, easily discarded) of educated professionals with a surplus of capital leisure: people who donate to the Sierra Club, remember to bring cloth bags to the grocery, and purchase expensive products from environmentally conscious companies.... In writing this book, I hope to reach those who, like me, haven't read quite enough self-help books (or followed through on their advice), who don't quite have it all together, whose bank accounts are not flush, who aspire and hope but also stumble and sin. Because my own life includes both the pragmatic concerns of farming and family-raising among no-nonsense rural neighbors, as well as the world of Catholic ministry and spirituality, I'm interested in how simplicity and sustainability can become not just a genteel hobby, or even an earnest, well-thought-out lifestyle choice. I'm interested in home economics as a *spiritual discipline*, as well as a realistic, practical, truly democratic trend.

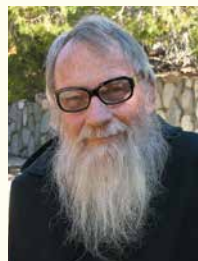
At the same time, I do admit that deep down, I am a rather unapologetic idealist. It was naïve idealism that motivated me to take the leap of faith that crash-landed me in the life that I now lead—a life that, I have come to realize, is exactly the life I needed and (I believe) was called to lead. I suspect that ideals are the true drivers of both a well-lived life and any real cultural progress. It is a flat and dull life that has no idealism burning in its core. (pp. 7–8)

He is a man with a message, but a message made flesh out of his own lived experience. As a reviewer, I should quote you more directly his told story itself to whet your own interest, but

I am still in the process of digesting the whole pudding, and so not ready to shake out a savory plum or two. Oblates should appreciate his Benedictine rootedness and relationship with St. Meinrad's as well as his commitment to lay ministry. As one who admires his zeal and concurs with his beliefs and concerns, I am perhaps too uncritical of the rhetorical flourishes and the predictable pattern in the telling of his story, but it is a true story worth hearing and pondering, rooted in the earth reaching to the skies.

Bill McKibben, the "global warming man," has written an ingratiating Foreword for this earnest first book:

This is a very lovely and heartening book, and it should remind us of several things. One is that we need to be open to learning—to mentors of all kinds.... Two is that we need to be open to where the Lord is leading us.... It seems to me in reading that the author has done a more-than-average job of listening for that still small voice, and paying attention even (especially) when the advice it offers is not precisely easy to follow.... Three is that the world we are now moving into will demand of us different skills than the ones we grew up assuming we'd need.... This book and the story it tells may seem in some sense quiet, mostly confined to a small parcel of land. But it strikes me as a fine and hopeful adventure, one that should give heart to all kinds of people as they try to figure out where they're called to be. It's written with a generous spirit, less instruction and exhortation than the slightly subversive insinuation that something fine and lovely is within our grasp as well. (pp. xi–xii) ✠



Fr. Philip was born the year this monastic community was founded in China. Newman—especially his *Grammar of Assent*—was important in his own intellectual formation. He made his monastic profession at Valyermo in 1962.



HOMILY Preached by the Most Rev. Gerald E. Wilkerson at the Ordination to the Diaconate of Brs. Cassian and Bede

AUGUST 19, 2012

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE FIRST WORD of the Holy Rule of St. Benedict is? (I may be preaching to the choir here but there's nothing like getting off to a positive start!) That word is "Listen." We are here today because Br. Bede and Br. Cassian have been listening to the wisdom of God at work within their minds and hearts, and now they offer themselves for the ministry of word, service, and sacrament in Holy Orders. True wisdom is a wise woman, as we hear in today's first reading, who leads us to God. In the letter to the Ephesians, we are told that true wisdom causes us to live in such a way that we are led to do the will of God.

There is a well-known story by Søren Kierkegaard which has been used by Harvey Cox and Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. It seems that a traveling circus had set up in a large field outside a village in Denmark. For some reason, a fire started and the circus manager sent the clown, who was already dressed and made up for the performance, into the

neighboring village to get help, especially as there was a danger that the fire would speed across the fields of dry stubble and engulf the village itself. The clown hurried into the village and asked the people to come as quickly as possible to the blazing circus and help to put the fire out. But the villagers took the clown's shouts simply for an excellent piece of advertising, meant to attract as many people as possible to the performance; they applauded the clown and laughed until they cried. No matter what he did, the clown could not convince the people that there really was a fire. His efforts only increased the laughter; people thought that he was playing his part splendidly—until finally the fire did engulf the village; it was too late for help and both the circus and the village were burned to the ground.

Don't misunderstand the point of this story. It is not that people will burn in hell if they don't listen to my homily. It's rather that the world is in need of Jesus. And it needs to hear the messengers of God. If our message and our witness as disciples is rejected, or ignored, or laughed at, like the clown from the circus, then we have to become more credible, more believable. By our holiness of life, by our profound identification with Jesus and his mission, we must reveal the living God and his Son Jesus Christ to others.

And I think that the words of today's gospel point us in the right direction. There is a saying: "You are what you eat." Whatever we eat is changed into our human body and blood. When we eat and drink the Body and Blood of the Lord, however, he is not turned into our human flesh, but we are turned into him. So we need to ask ourselves: what are we feeding on? Some feed on fame in order to live; some feed on power; some on money; others on sex, or drugs, or alcohol, or have some other addiction in order to live; some feed on their own selfishness; others are fed by hate or prejudice; others on gossip or lies or dishonesty; others on some other habit of sinfulness. You are what you eat!

Now, as in every community where believers gather, there are among us sinners and saints, the shameful and the shameless, true believers and hypocrites, rich and poor, famous and unknown, hot shots and nerds, the successful and the failures, the proud and the humble—but all are equal here right now. We've left all distinctions outside and here we are, all of us, simply and profoundly, a vulnerable and needy people of God each hungering and seeking something in his or her own way. So we ought to listen to the Word of God and to one another.

And here we are nourished by the Eucharist. Two thousand years ago Jesus broke the same bread and shared the same cup as we do and told us to do this in his memory. And we do. Through this Eucharist we are connected to him and to one another and that makes us an ancient people wired to an ancient tradition. We are still fed with the Great Presence as countless believers have been and are today.

Yet, there is one more powerful hunger to note, one that is highly dangerous, one that you are exposed to and reminded of every time you come here. You and I are exposed to the hunger of God. And that terrifies us. God is, in the imageries of many stories, the Hound of Heaven, the Stalker, the Shepherd, the Seeker, who for some reason which escapes us, is madly in love with us and is hungry for our companionship.

Br. Bede and Br. Cassian, it is in service to the Body and Blood of the Lord for which you are ordained Deacons today, whether that Body and Blood be found here at the altar or in human flesh. Listen well to your God! Listen carefully to your brothers and sisters! If you indeed become the Body and Blood of Jesus, then you must feed others; you must bring Jesus to them, especially the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, the last, the littlest, and the least.

In a few moments you will lie prostrate before the altar. This is a profoundly moving and meaningful gesture. For it says that, having listened carefully, you are now willing to follow Jesus in laying down your life out of love for others. God has called you, he hungers for you. Today he breathes his Spirit upon you, conforming you ever more closely to his Son Jesus Christ.

Abbot John Klassen, OSB (Abbot of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville) spoke these words:

Now we are convinced that we have found a treasure, a pearl of great price in our monastic call, in the rich tradition that we have received. With St. Paul we rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, and persevere in prayer. We know that Christ will be with us to support and sustain us on this journey. Abundant blessings have been poured in our lap because of the graced commitment of these men who have preferred nothing to Christ. ✠

A native of Des Moines, IA, Bishop Gerald Wilkerson attended St. John's Seminary and was ordained in 1965 by Cardinal James Francis Cardinal McIntyre. He served in the Archdiocese as associate pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe, La Habra; St. Michael, Los Angeles; and American Martyrs, Manhattan Beach; and for 15 years at Our Lady of Grace Church, Encino as administrator and then pastor. In 1996 Bishop Wilkerson was named Episcopal Vicar for the San Fernando Region and then ordained auxiliary bishop the following year.

around & about THE MONASTERY

SUMMER GOINGS-ON

Below are photographs of several events mentioned by Fr. Abbot in his letter.



FR. PHILIP'S GOLDEN JUBILEE

TOP: FR. PHILIP PREACHES AT HIS JUBILEE MASS. BOTTOM LEFT: THE VALYERMO DANCERS AT THE JUBILEE MASS. BOTTOM RIGHT: FR. PHILIP RECEIVES THE CUSTOMARY GOLDEN JUBILEE WALKING STICK. PHOTOS: BOB STACHNIK.

DINNER WITH CARMELITES



SOLEMN PROFESSIONS



MONKS' FEAST DAYS

October	4	Fr. Francis
	18	Fr. Luke
November	3	Fr. Martin
	4	Fr. Carlos
December	20	Fr. Isaac

ONGOING STUDIES

Br. John Mark Matthews returned this fall to St. Joseph Abbey and Seminary College in St. Benedict, LA, to continue his studies in philosophy. **Br. Cassian** returned to Rome for further studies, as mentioned earlier in this issue. And **Br. Bede** continues his priestly formation here at home under the direction of tutors. Please pray that these brothers might gain in wisdom for the good of the Church and the world.

FR. MATTEW'S RETURN

After a period of discernment with Incarnation Monastery in Berkeley and extended visits with family in Canada and the Philippines, **Fr. Matthew Rios, OSB**, returned home in August.

A VISIT WITH FR. GREGORY

Mary Gannon, OCDS, and two friends spent some time with Fr. Gregory not long ago. Mary writes of the visit (abridged by the editor): "Father exuded a stable resignation, dignified presence, and engaging spirituality. He retained his sense of humor... Sayings of two saints come to mind: 'Preach the Gospel and if necessary use words,' from St. Francis of Assisi; and 'A soul enkindled in love is a gentle, meek, humble, and patient soul.' Wordlessly, those two exalted states were encountered in our visit to a very special servant of God."

OBLATE NEWS

This year's remaining oblate meetings held at the Abbey will take place on, Oct. 14, Nov. 11, and Dec. 9. 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 e-mailing retreats@valyermo.com.

VOLUNTEERING

The gift of time cannot be measured and the work of volunteers provides essential assistance to the monastic community. To offer your time, call Carolyn Jordan at (661) 944-2178, ext. 112 or e-mail her at carolyn@monksofvalyermo.com.

SEND US YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Please help us stay current with your updated postal and e-mail 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 or use the form printed in this newsletter.

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 automatically donate 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 e-mail 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. ✠

OUR MAILING LIST IS USED EXCLUSIVELY
BY ST. ANDREW'S ABBEY. WE DO NOT
SHARE IT WITH ANY OTHER PARTY.



RETREAT CENTER Calendar FALL 2012

For full details visit saintandrewsabbey.com and hover over "Retreat House."
For reservations, please call (661) 944-2178.

OVERNIGHT RETREATS

PROTESTANTS ON MONASTICISM

Friday, September 21 – Sunday, September 23
Presenter: Rev. Greg Peters, ObIOSB, PhD
Room, board, and tuition:
\$250 single; \$200 each shared

WORK AS SACRAMENT

Wednesday, September 26 – Friday, September 28
Presenter: Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB
Room, board, and tuition:
\$200 single; \$175 each shared

LIKE COMING HOME: A COOKING RETREAT/WORKSHOP

Monday, October 1 – Friday October 5
Presenter: Fr. Isaac Kalina, OSB
Room, board, and tuition:
\$400 single; \$350 each shared

UNEXPECTED SALVATION*Friday, October 5 – Sunday, October 7*

Presenter: Fr. Luke Dysinger, OSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$250 single; \$200 each shared

DISCERNMENT IN DAILY LIFE*Monday, October 15 – Wednesday, October 17*

Presenter: Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$200 single; \$175 each shared

EDITH STEIN: HER JOURNEY FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT*Monday, October 29 – Thursday, November 1*

Presenters: Fr. Joseph Brennan, OSB;

Cheryl Evanson, ObIOSB;

Michaela Ludwick, ObIOSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$300 single; \$262.50 each shared

AUTUMN LANDSCAPE PAINTING*Monday, November 5 – Thursday, November 8*

Presenter: Deloris Haddow

Room, board, and tuition:

\$300 single; \$262.50 each shared

THANKSGIVING AT VALYERMO*Wednesday, November 25 – Friday, November 27*

Room and board:

\$250 single; \$200 each shared

VISIONS OF HEAVEN*Friday, November 27 – Sunday, November 29*

Facilitator: Fr. Luke Dysinger, OSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$250 single; \$300 each shared

PRIESTS' RETREAT*Monday, November 26 – Friday, November 30*

Presenter: Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

Room, board, and tuition: \$400 single

ADVENT RETREAT*Friday, November 30 – Sunday, December 2*

Presenter: Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$250 single; \$200 each shared

ADVENT SILENT RETREAT*Friday, December 14 – Sunday, December 16*

Presenter: Fr. Isaac Kalina, OSB

Room, board, and tuition:

\$250 single; \$200 each shared

**DAY RETREATS****FAITH AND TRUST IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY***Saturday, October 27 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.*

Presenters: Fr. Patrick Sheridan, OSB;

Fr. Isaac Kalina, OSB

Tuition: \$40 includes morning beverages and lunch

DANCING LESSONS AND CAROLS: A FULL-BODIED CELEBRATION OF THE WORD MADE FLESH*Saturday, December 8 9:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.*

Presenter: John West, ObIOSB

Tuition: \$40 includes morning beverages and lunch

FOR COMPLETE DESCRIPTIONS
OF OUR OVERNIGHT AND DAY RETREATS,
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

SAINTANDREWSABBEY.COM

FOR RESERVATIONS,

CALL THE RETREAT OFFICE: (661) 944-2178

**DONATION FORM****YES**, I would like to support the monks and their ministry by donating the following amount each month:**PLEASE CHECK ONE DONATION BOX:**
☐ \$1 a day (\$30 per month)
 ☐ \$2 a day (\$60 per month)
 ☐ \$3 a day (\$90 per month)
 ☐ Other (\$_____ per month)
PAYMENT OPTIONS:**MONTHLY CREDIT CARD PAYMENT**

Charge the marked amount to my credit card each month

☐ VISA
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 ☐ DISCOVER
 ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE

SIGNATURE

OR**MONTHLY CHECK TRANSACTION**
☐ ENCLOSED IS MY VOIDED CHECK. By sending this check, I authorize St. Andrew's Abbey to withdraw the marked amount from this account each month.

☐ MONTHLY CHECK. I prefer to mail my check each month.
*To change or stop your donation at any time, simply call St. Andrew's Abbey Development Office at (661) 944-8959.***DONOR INFORMATION**☐ CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

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PRAYER REQUEST

ABBOT DAMIEN, please include the following prayer request for the monks to keep in prayer:

*Your donation is tax deductible. • Thank you for helping us to preserve this house of prayer.**If you wish to remember the Abbey in your estate planning, please call (661) 944-2178.**You do not need to make any donation to ask for our prayers.**Please place this card in the return envelope provided.*



St. Andrew's Abbey
PO Box 40
Valyermo, CA 93563-0040
RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

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