

Dear Associates and Friends,

The Lord be with you.



The roses planted at each pillar of our inner cloister garden, have blossomed into a varied-colored display. Fr. Justin put in a lot of work last year preparing and planting the bushes...that probably was the cause of the four broken bones in his foot. Our Lady's Garden, as he called it is flourishing, and his foot bones have knit back together. Now he is going through physical therapy. He says the therapist bends his foot as if he were a ballet toe dancer. Fr. Justin's Canadian health

coverage took care of all the treatments, which our own USA doctors projected to cost between \$10 and 20 thousand dollars.



Bro. Boniface's 85-year-old brother rode a bus from California to Springfield for a visit with Boni...round trip yet! Fr. Jack (Black Jack) says he enjoys the 2½-day bus travel. He had a lot of illness (especially asthma) as a boy and a man. Now his health keeps getting better. He is amazed at how well he feels upon waking up in the morning. Fr. Jack is aiming for 100 years, but says that Bro. Boniface will not make 100, because he is too accident-prone.

A 16-inch thick, 4-foot high, concrete wall has been completed at Bryant Creek, where a trail runs upstream along the bluff. It leaves enough room for hikers, fisher folk and horseback riders to go past, but should discourage ATV's, alcohol and drug dealers.

Dick Ortez, one of our external oblates, spent a couple of weeks during Easter season with us. He renewed his temporary commitment, and took part in our monthly Homework/Accountability Community Sharing.

Fr. Alberic traveled to Holy Cross Abbey at Berryville, VA for our USA Region's novice masters meeting. They took the question of how to help new people enter into and deepen a personal relationship with Our Lord Jesus. Dom Robert, abbot of Berryville, presented his own personal experience and journey. Mother Marion, of Crozet, put forth 16 different paths or ways, by which a person could travel towards that goal.



We had a fire drill. There are fire extinguishers and garden hose hookups throughout our buildings. If these cannot stop a fire, then we use two large rolls of regular fire hose connected directly to our submerged deep well pump. We found that there is plenty of length and pressure to put a strong stream of water wherever it might need to go. We did discover a wiring problem in the pump house manual control panel. a good thing that was remedied before an actual fire developed.

Bro. Lazarus makes his retreat the week following Pentecost in preparation for his profession of final vows on May 31, feast of Our Lady's Visitation. A blessing for both him and our community.

Blessing

St. Luke tells us that Our Risen Lord led His disciples out to the Mt of Olives and lifting up His arms, He blessed them as He was carried up to Heaven.

What is this blessing?

God blessed our first parents at the time of Creation. God blessed Noah and his sons after the Flood. God said about Abraham that he shall become a mighty nation, and all the nations on earth shall be blessed in him. Isaac and Jacob followed the custom of a father blessing his sons before he died. Moses blessed each of the twelve tribes of Israel before he died.

The common element in these events seems to be the idea of fostering life-the transmission of life. The Lord God said, "This is how Aaron and his sons shall bless the people, 'The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make His Face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the Lord

reveal His Face to you and give you Peace.' "

To understand blessing as a giving of life seems to work all right when a greater person blesses a lesser one. However, there are also times when a lesser person blesses a greater one. In praying the Psalms we say often enough, "Give thanks to the Lord, bless His Holy Name...Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me...Bless God in the great assembly." In this case, the lesser person seems to acknowledge a fostering of life, which she/he has received from the greater person.

Therefore, blessing involves giving, or receiving, more abundant life. In Our Lord's lifetime, Elizabeth cries out to Mary "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of you womb." Years later a woman in the crowd cried, "Blesses is the womb which bore you and the breasts which nursed you." But, Jesus replied, "Rather blessed are those, who hear the word of God, and keep it." The apostles tried to chase little children away from Our Lord, but He took them in His arms and blessed them. One day Our Lord rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and blessed His Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, because He has hidden the mysteries of the Kingdom from the wise and powerful, and revealed them to the little ones.

When Jesus fed 5,000 in the desert, He took bread in His hands, looked up to heaven, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the people. At the Last Supper, Our Lord Jesus again took bread, blessed it, and gave it to the apostles saying, "Take This and eat it. This is My Body." He told them, "If you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." Our Risen Lord told Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe."

Our Lord Jesus, describing Himself as the Good Shepherd, said that He came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly, and the good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep.

After His passion and death, and rising to new life, Our Lord told the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father. When the Holy Spirit comes, they will receive power and bear witness to Christ all through the promised land and even to the ends of the earth.

As He was taken up to heaven, Our Lord raised His arms and blessed His disciples. They worshiped Him and were continually in the temple blessing God.

The Lord God had promised Abraham that in him all nations would be blessed. Christ fulfilled that promise when He gave His final blessing to the disciples at His Ascension. This blessing of more abundant life is the gift of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within each Christian and within the

Church.

St. Paul prays, "May the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know the hope to which he called you and the greatness of His power, Who raised Christ from the dead and made Him sit at His right hand in heaven. God made Him the head of the Church, which is His Body-the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all."

We bless the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ on the feast of His Ascension into heaven, and we pray that the Father and Son bless us with the gift of Their Holy Spirit to become a fountain of living water within us, springing up to eternal life.

In the Sacred Heart,

Fr Cyprian