

Dear Associates and Friends,
The Lord be with you.

Fr. Peter must have an inside track on the Lord's weather control. He plants a row of new seed, and then it rains. He plants another row a day or so later and it rains again. This has been going on for a month. The result is that his garden has a fine beginning, but poor Elmer cannot cut the water-logged lawns. A full grown deer was grazing on the new patch of grass, which Bro. Tom seeded last summer. It had not been cut yet this year.

The Superiors of our U.S.A. Trappist and Trappistine monasteries gathered at Our Lady of Mepkin, SC for a week and a half. This regional meeting is in preparation for the General Chapter of our whole Order next September. Each community composes their House Report, giving the developments and situation in their monastery since the last General Chapter three years ago. Our American superiors are able to share and give mutual support on our regional level, before the state of our worldwide Order is reviewed next autumn.

Our Vietnamese Frs. Thaddeus and Basil were invited to take part in directing a retreat for a group of Vietnamese men and women in preparation for the feast of Pentecost. This was an opportunity to spread the word about our program here of gradually blending American Trappist and Vietnamese Cistercian monks into one new whole community. There is not a sizeable group of Vietnamese people in Southern Missouri, but there is an active network of communication among the good number of Vietnamese communities across the United States. Spreading the news can help foster future vocations to our monastic life or family brother life.

On the Eve of Pentecost the Vietnamese Sisters of Mary Queen in Springfield had a triple celebration: the fiftieth anniversary of Sr. Marguerite's Profession, the twenty fifth anniversary of Sr. Martha, and the first Religious Profession of Sr. Maxine. Fr. Peter and Bro. Roberto, along with Fr. Cyprian, as designated driver, attended the Mass, which Bishop Johnston offered at St. Agnes Cathedral. The church was filled. The Sister's small communities in St. Louis, Kansas City and Texas had practiced the music and ceremonies beforehand. The combined result during the Mass was beautiful and prayerful. The Sisters also provided a festive meal in the school cafeteria following the Mass. A large number of the Vietnamese priests from Carthage were present. On Pentecost Sunday Bishop Johnston ordained four new priests for their Congregation.

The Holy Spirit keeps deepening and purifying the Church in old areas, and spreading the Gospel message into new areas.

The New Garden of Eden

Fr. Peter is planting a garden behind the Monastery. Bro. Thomas spread black dirt. Elmer and helpers are putting up a fence complete with an electric wire on the top and bottom to discourage unwelcome animals. There is an underground water line and an entrance gate at one corner.

Genesis tells us that in the beginning God planted a garden in Eden. There were trees and plants with fruit, pleasing to the eye and good for eating. A river ran through the garden for watering. God placed our first parents there to live and care for the garden. God created them in a state of Union with God—a relation of friendship. God would walk and talk with them in the cool of the evening. Somehow an enemy of God, a serpent, slipped into the garden. The serpent deceived Eve and Adam into eating the one forbidden fruit. They disobeyed and lost union with God. They lost their home in the garden and would suffer death, having no access to the tree of life.

Yet God did not leave them without hope. God put enmity between the woman and the serpent...between the serpent's offspring and her offspring. The serpent would strike at his heel, but he would strike at the serpent's head.

In the fullness of time God sent the New Adam, the Offspring of the Woman.

In a Garden of Olives at night the serpent struck at his heel. The Son of Man was sorrowful unto death. He prayed to God, His Father, asking that the cup of suffering might pass over him. Yet, He did not yield to the

serpent's deceit. He held fast to His Union with God—by obeying His Father's Will. The powers of darkness arrested him, took Him out of the Garden, and condemned Him. They fastened Him to a tree of death and pierced His heart with a lance. Blood and water flowed out. They took His body from the tree.

There was a garden nearby and in it a new tomb. They laid His body in the tomb. The New Adam rested there for three days in the tomb, in the garden after all His work for the New Creation. On the third day, He transformed the Tree of Death into a Tree of Eternal Life. He rose glorified from the tomb.

He still had his wounds, but they were transfigured. They gave the conviction of faith to His doubting disciples. The blood and water became fountains of living water in Baptism and Eucharist, springing up unto Victory. He breathed on His Apostles, saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit." As the Father had sent Him, so He was sending them.

He told them that He would not leave them orphans, but would ask the Father to give them another Paraclete, Spirit of Truth, Who would be with them and in them. On that day the Indwelling Gift of the Holy Spirit would reveal to them by experience, that the Father was in the Son and the Son was in them. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the River of Life flowing through His New Garden of Eden, which is Holy Mother Church. The Spirit of Christ dwelling in us is stronger than the spirit of evil dwelling so much of the world today.

In the Sacred Heart,
Your monks of Ava