

Dear Friends and Visitors

The first Sunday of June this year was the Solemnity of the Holy Trinity. In a sense, this solemnity is the pinnacle and conclusion of the first great movement of the liturgical year, beginning in Advent and running through Easter and Pentecost. In Advent, the plan of the Father is made known, the people of God, with Mary, preparing for the future incarnation of the Son by the secret act of the Holy Spirit. At Christmas, the Son stands out in flesh like our own. In Lent, again, the mysterious design of the Father to be accomplished by the Son is foreshadowed by the Prophets whose words are inspired. At Easter, the Father raises the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit, while at Pentecost the Spirit Itself is experienced without mediation. Trinity Sunday, then is the magnificent Doxology, ("Praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever," as the monks sing, standing, at the end of each Psalm of the Office) to this first part of the year. The year then continues with Ordinary Time, as we call it, but Ordinary takes on an extraordinary splendor for Christians.



The weekend of Trinity Sunday was the occasion here at the Abbey guesthouse for a retreat precisely on the mystery of the Trinity. Six men and women participated in the retreat, beginning Friday evening and ending Sunday after Mass. As they have done with great finesse and enthusiasm for other such retreats, two of our Associates organized and facilitated this retreat. Three of the monks, Br Francis, Fr Alberic, and Abbot Mark, each made a presentation, a meditation

on the living God who is Trinity . The retreatants throughout the weekend participated in the prayer of the monks, and enjoyed ample periods to solitude and silence, as well as occasions of fellowship and sharing among themselves. Our Family Brother, Father Paul Jones, delivered a memorable homily at the mid-morning Sunday Mass.

On the day following the retreat, Fr Mark drove to Holy Angels Convent in Jonesboro, Arkansas. There, he was graciously received by the Olivetan Benedictine Sisters of the Convent, who had invited him to give them their annual retreat. The Sisters of Jonesboro have a one-hundred-twenty year history, beginning in the late-19th century with the arrival to the "new world" of the pioneer sisters from Switzerland. This history of the community in many ways is the history of the Church in the Midwest and especially in Arkansas. At present, the Sisters number around 100. As well as working as teachers and catechists, they administer St Bernard's Regional Medical Center in Jonesboro, where half-dozen of the Sisters also give pastoral care to the patients and staff. Fr Mark's retreat consisted of two conferences per day, delivered in the

community chapel, plus daily Mass and homily, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and private meetings with individual sisters. The Jonesboro Olivetans are a dynamic and diverse group of Benedictine women, living a intentional monastic life of prayer and service on their 160 acres of woods and farm land in north-central Arkansas.



In mid-month, Father Mark Tilia dropped in for a brief visit. Fr Mark, a member of the Kansas City Diocese, has been serving as a priest and pastor in Brazil for over 25 years. He used to be a member of the Ava community (Fr Odo), and, in fact, was ordained in our abbey Church in the same ceremony as Fr Theodore Koster (d. 2002) and Fr Richard Fox.

Just after the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart

and Father's Day, Abbot Mark again departed, this time to Spain and the Order's monastery of San Pedro Cardeña near Burgos. The occasion was the Central Commission meetings of the Order. The Central Commission is made up of one representative from each of the Order's "regions" (the geographical groupings of monasteries around the world). Its task is to prepare the agenda and details for the next General Chapter, which will be held in Assisi, Italy, in September, 2008. Fr Mark had been chosen to represent the seventeen monasteries of the Order in the US (the USA Region).

The meeting began June 19 and concluded in the afternoon of June 27. The Commission, with the Abbot General and his permanent councilors, were in session six hours each day, except for the Sunday when they had a free afternoon for rest and sight seeing. As the basis of its main task, the preparation of the General Chapter, the Commission uses the discussions, suggestions, and requests supplied it by the various Regions who have already had their own preparatory meetings. In principle, then, depending on how things happen on the local level, not only each Region, but also each individual monk and nun and each monastery of the Order, have a voice in the agenda and eventual conclusions of the General Chapter, which is otherwise attended only by the abbots and abbesses of the Order, who have voting rights, and a delegate or two from each Region (without voting rights). Fr Mark took the opportunity to visit the monastery of San Isidoro, home in the 1930's to Beato Rafael Arnaiz Baron, an oblate of the Order beatified in 2002.



June 19 is the anniversary of the death in 1998 of Br Christopher Danz. This year, it was noticed that precisely on that day, lovely Missouri blackeyed Susans began to bud on his grave in our cemetery. At the beginning of July, there is still a happy bouquet of the sunny yellow flowers, most of them clustering around the cross that is the grave marker. None of the other dozen graves has any flowers on them.

Much rain, with typically dramatic thunder and lightning displays, fell on our part of the Ozarks in the latter half of the month. We wish our friends and visitors a safe and refreshing summer season.

Fr Cyprian, Abbot