

Dear Friends and Visitors

Not too many miles south of us a monster tornado devastated our neighbors in Joplin. St. John's Hospital was hit directly. The building itself did not collapse, but everything within it was trashed. All of the windows were shattered and some people were pulled out of the windows. At least all of the medical records were preserved, because they had transferred to electronic recording. Our bishop asks each parish to take up a special collection for the relief effort at Joplin. A number of local people have gone down as volunteers to help with the clean-up work. Please keep the citizens of Joplin in prayer as they try to put their lives back together.

Bro. Boniface comes back for a long weekend here when we run out of his homemade bread. This gives him (and Bro. Dominic) a periodic change of live-in companion at the nursing home. Boni also got his partial fitted at the dentist's office on his most recent visit. Dr. Klayman's wife is a stained-glass artist. They gave us a lovely panel of a Guardian Angel protecting two little children on their way. A sort of thanksgiving gift for his escape from death or worse injury. A car crashed into his head-on. Broken bones punctured one lung and the other lung collapsed. He would have died, if the helicopter had not had breathing equipment on board for the airlift to the hospital.

Rev. Brian Beckett, a family brother from Ohio, spent almost a full week with us at the same time as Fr. Paul Jones came for his monthly live-in week. Our Family Brother from Oklahoma, Dick Ortez, arrived the next week. Barney Hall finished his time with us, and now we have hired Paul Schmidtt.

Bill Dore, a neighbor was found unconscious, lying on the floor of his home. His faithful dog had lain beside him to keep him warm. The Catholic priest was not on duty during weekends at the hospital 80 miles away. They phoned us at 11 pm asking if we knew of any Springfield area priest, which might be available. I gave them our retired Bishop Leibrecht's phone number. He was home, and came right away to anoint Bill, who had suffered a massive hemorrhage in his brain. The doctors could do nothing for him. Bill died two days later. He had asked to be cremated. Since he had never married and came almost daily to pray at our Abbey, his sister Pat asked if his ashes could be buried in our cemetery. We had the Mass of the Resurrection for Bill here, and now his ashes along with a portion of his mother's ashes, which he had at home with him, are at rest near Dorothy Nash's ashes in our cemetery.

Jill Johnson, our health worker, secretary, and stand-by cook, is taking good care of the monks and guests during Bro. Boniface's stay with Bro. Dominic. She does not try to continue his baking peanut butter and oatmeal-raisin cookies, but keeps us happy with a variety of dishes,

which go beyond Boni's repertoire.

Your prayers are appreciated during the first two weeks of June, when our appeal/request case for reopening our novitiate will be presented to our abbots and abbesses at the USA regional meeting--a preliminary to the September General Chapter.

FIFTY DAYS

Did you know that there are five Gospels? St. Luke wrote a second volume, which is usually called the Acts of the Apostles. Sometimes it is called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit.

During the fifty days after Easter the Mass readings run on two parallel tracks: the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, and the second reading from a Gospel.

The account of Peter and John returning to the assembled disciples, after healing the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and after being commanded not to preach or teach anything in Jesus' name, is seen by them as the fulfillment of Ps. 2--"The kings and princes of the earth gather against the Lord and His Anointed One." They all pray for courage to preach Jesus' message, and they ask God to put His seal on their preaching by healings, signs, and wonders. Then they experience a little Pentecost--the building shakes, and they are filled with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit's gift of fortitude. The Holy Spirit is beginning to move them forward to be Christ's witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

That Mass reading is paralleled with the Gospel event of Our Lord Jesus beginning to teach Nicodemus about the mystery of the Kingdom of God--a person must be born from above. It is not enough to be born of flesh and blood. One must be born of water and the Holy Spirit. We enter God's Kingdom born from above into God's family as adopted children, by the action of the Holy Spirit. Baptism is the beginning of our new life in the Spirit of Christ. This life is meant to grow and develop into an always greater Christ-likeness. The Indwelling Holy Spirit, makes His presence known, to help us recognize and do God's Will. It is like the presence and action of the wind. We feel and hear the wind, but we do not know from where it has come, nor where it is going. The wind is a natural mystery and reality, just as the presence and action of the Holy Spirit is a supernatural mystery and reality.

Holy Mother Church gives us these parallel readings about the Holy Spirit and Our Lord Jesus during Easter season to show us that the Paschal Mystery does not consist only in Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, but that the Father's and Son's Gift of Their Indwelling Holy Spirit to each Christian, and to the whole Church, is an essential part of the Paschal Mystery.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit is our share on earth in Christ's victory over evil, sin and death.

The opening prayer for the above Mass readings (Monday, 2nd week of Easter) is:

Almighty and Everliving God,
Your Spirit made us Your children,
Confident to call you Father.
Increase your Spirit of filial love within us.

The post communion prayer is:

Lord, look upon your family with kindness
and by these Easter mysteries
Bring us to the glory of the resurrection.

In the Sacred Heart

Fr Cyprian, Abbot