

Dear Friends and Visitors



The month of June was pretty much taken up by our Regional Meeting at St. Benedict's Abbey in Snowmass, Colorado. The superiors from our twelve monasteries of monks and five abbeys of Trappistine nuns in the USA met. Joining us was an abbot from Canada (who reminded us that he is British, riding his bicycle from the Retreat Center to the abbey.) An abbot from Bellefontaine in France also joined us. Bellefontaine is the motherhouse of Spencer. We met to review the present situation of each house as a preparation for our Order's General Chapter in September.

The scenery is spectacular at Snowmass. The weather was pleasantly cool-even snow flurries one day. The monastery is set like a modest jewel in their sacred valley. The meals at the Retreat Center were a bit more than simple monastic fare. All agreed that our meeting was especially cordial and beneficial.

Fr. Justin Trinidad has arrived here after a two or three day bus ride from Vancouver to begin his six-week Observership. This is a live-in trial run of our monastic community. Fr. Justin's family is Filipino, and has become Canadian citizens. He is a diocesan priest of the Vancouver archdiocese. He earned a degree in Philosophy in the Philippines and taught there before coming to Canada and doing his priestly studies. Now he is discerning a call to the contemplative monastic priesthood.

Bro. Francis Flaherty has been helping us some five years now. He was on loan from New Clairvaux Abbey in California. This June he made his vow of Stability here at Assumption Abbey. The vow of Stability means that a monk chooses this community and this monastery as his spiritual family and his spiritual home. Usually we spend our life at the original house of our monastic vows. There are always exceptions when a new foundation is made or other circumstances intervene.



Bro. Francis is serving us well as Vocation Director, Work Secretary, and Guest House assistant. In a small community (like a family), each member wears more than one hat. A number of

friends and Associates came to share in our celebration of Bro. Francis' change of stability.

The feast of Sts. Peter and Paul this year fell on a Sunday and was the beginning of a Pauline Year...celebrating his birthday. That must be quite a cake with 2000 candles on it.

Imagine what would have happened if Our Lord had chosen St. Paul as one of the original 12 Apostles. James and John getting their mother to ask for thrones at Jesus' right and left hand and Peter boasting at the Last Supper that, even if all the others denied Jesus, he never would. These episodes of jockeying for position would be nothing, compared to the squabbles that Paul would have stirred up.

Sts. Peter and Paul are two of the main witnesses for Christ. Both were martyred at Rome on the same date, but different years. Yet they were two very different men and they both knew Our Lord Jesus in very different ways.

Peter was a natural leader, big and hearty, always the first to speak up and the first to act. At the same time, he was "a good old boy" who got along well with others, so that people were drawn to gather about him.

Paul was more of a loner; very competitive with a lot of drive, well educated, very opinionated and proud of being both a Jew of the strict observances and also a Roman Citizen. You either loved him or hated him.

Peter knew Jesus especially in His humanity. Jesus was a common man of Galilee like himself, who mixed easily with others as he did. Peter walked the roads and by-roads of the Holy Land with Jesus. He saw Jesus bone tired after long days of preaching and teaching the Good News of the Kingdom. He saw Jesus thirsty and hungry on the way, moved with compassion by illness, moved with anger at stubborn spiritual blindness, moved with grief at the death of His friends- John the Baptist and Lazarus. Peter saw the Father/Son relationship Jesus had with God. Peter also saw His need to go off into solitude to be alone with the Father. Peter was with Jesus on the last night of His life. He knew Jesus especially as the Good Shepherd who laid down His life for His sheep and the One who gave Peter the role of Chief Shepherd of His flock.

Paul knew Jesus especially in his divinity. It seems he never knew Jesus living on earth. His first meeting was traumatic, like being struck by lightning. Saul was then thrown to the ground and blinded. He knew that this was an act of God.

"Who are you, Lord?" he asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, Whom you are persecuting." This was a

personal spiritual experience for Saul, but it was more than that since Paul would insist he was a fully equal Apostle with the Twelve, because he had also seen the Lord. The Glorified Christ came to Paul at least two other times. At Corinth when he was meeting a lot of opposition, Christ appeared to him and said, "Take courage, I have many friends here. No one will hurt you." Paul stayed two more years preaching and teaching the Gospel. Later at Jerusalem when Paul was in jail after a riot, Our Lord came and said, "You have borne Jesus good witness to Me here, now you must do the same at Rome." Paul knew Jesus especially as the Glorified Suffering Servant Who had fulfilled God's promise of sending a Redeemer to Israel and Who now was sending Paul to continue His same mission of salvation to the Gentiles.

Sts. Peter and Paul were very different men and they knew Jesus in very different ways. The whole Body must have many different members with different functions in order to reach full growth and maturity. Their faith and union with Christ transformed both men. Simon bar Jona became St. Peter, and Saul of Tarsus became St. Paul. Both had fallen and knew themselves to be forgiven sinners, so that they could have the compassion of Christ on their fellow sinners. Both Peter and Paul had personal experience that the Messiah opened the way to redemption and salvation through the Paschal Mystery, and that those who follow Our Lord Jesus are called to live out that same Mystery of suffering with Christ and of sharing in the glory of His Resurrection, His victory of eternal life.

Both Sts. Peter and Paul put the seal of truth on their witness to Our Lord Jesus by their deaths. Peter was crucified upside down as a cruel joke, when he protested himself unworthy to suffer the same death as his Master. Paul was beheaded by the sword--a more dignified form of execution reserved for Roman citizens.

And who are we? Each of us is a little red blood cell in the Body of Christ. A very small contribution, but a body cannot live without blood circulation. Daily we carry out our little tasks: bringing a molecule of oxygen to a brain cell or to the heart, bringing a bit of nourishment to a muscle cell or a bit of antibiotic to an area fighting infection. One day each of us will be called to an injured area, where we must form a clot to shield the wound for healing. That is when we will be asked to lay down our life for the good of the whole Body. We can ask Sts. Peter and Paul to pray for us that we fulfill our own vocation to the end for the love of Jesus Christ as they did.



Fr Cyprian, Abbot