

Dear Associates and Friends,

The Lord be with you.

Well, I have found out how crow tastes. After we had a monk make final profession May 31, I wrote in our last newsletter that this event shows that both he and we, have the right stuff for good monastic formation. Five weeks later the poor man left impulsively, after Sunday Mass in his habit, taking nothing with him.

Our community was puzzled at first. Then when it came out that he had gone off with a woman, we felt shock and disbelief, because that was so contrary to his character and dedication. He had persevered seven years in monastic formation, accomplishing a lot and working through some heavy challenges.

The last issue of our weekly Douglas County Herald had a picture of him and the woman with Marriage Vows Read underneath. Shortly afterwards they came to talk with me here. We had a cordial sharing. He is convinced that this is God's gift to him. They want reconciliation with the Church, and intend to live as practicing Catholics. Therefore, we are taking the gradual steps needed for dispensation and absolution and eventual sacramental marriage in the Church.

There is a mystery of interaction between God's grace and human free will and between God's Justice and His mercy. We try our best to discern and to be faithful to God's Will. Yet the more we go on in life, the more we see that we need a Redeemer and Savior every step of the way. However this turns out in the end, our former monk knows that he would be welcome to return. In the meantime, prayer for them and for each other is the order of the day.

Five days after that blow, a second loss came with the death of Bro. Wally Kendrick. He was a family brother and hermit. Wally's last years were spent in our new infirmary wing. A broken pelvis, a heart attack knocking out 50% of its function, and failing kidneys from 20 years of diabetes, finally persuaded him to bequeath his hermitage to our Fr. Robert, and move into the monastery.

Wally's spunky spirit kept him going and on his feet to the end. After his late mid-day meal that Friday, he walked out to the mailbox and was coming back with his cane in one hand and his mail in the other. He fell just at the kitchen ramp. Bro. Boniface saw him on the ground. A few brothers and Jill, our health care aide, carried him into his room, but Wally was already gone.

As he aged with a neatly trimmed beard, Wally reminded us of Ernest Hemingway. Then as he

got older and a little scrawnier, he looked Willie Nelson. Wally was a great reader. His interest was broadâ€¦ from the desert fathers to the Dalai Lama and everything in between. A Navy veteran from WWII tanker duty in the Aleutian islands, he still could have an old salt's flavor to his speech at times.

Depending on which side his record was playing, Wally ranged from the idealistic old Trappist (owing his vocation to Thomas Merton) to the counter-culture free spirit. At his integrating center, he always remained the man of prayer. We trust that he is engaged in some lively disputes with his mentors in heaven.

We had a Superiors Pastoral Sharing for our monasteries west of the Mississippi-some 8 or 9 in all. This was the first that I had attended. The problem at the full U.S.A. Regional Meetings was that most of the time was taken up by business of the Order, which left hardly any time for communication on the personal individual level. Therefore, the superiors began a yearly, or biyearly, gathering of half of the region, where they could share in a way not available otherwise. It was a good and helpful experience for me.

#### The Mystery and Scandal of the Incarnation

We all know the old saying about killing the messenger who brings bad news.

This applies to Jeremiah, a very sensitive person and very expressive about the anguish he experienced as a prophet. His mission was to speak all of God's word to the people. Perhaps they would listen and change their ways, so that the Lord God might repent and turn from the evil, which He was planning against them. If they disobeyed, God's temple would be like the small earlier temple demolished at Shiloh, and the holy city would become empty and desolate.

Yet the priests, prophets, and people chose to ignore the first half of his oracle and to focus on the last half. They charged that Jeremiah was speaking against the temple and the city and so he should be killed.

The reaction to the messenger of bad news was rejection.

When Our Lord Jesus returned to His hometown of Nazareth, He healed, taught, and brought the good news that the Kingdom of God is coming. His hometown neighbors and relatives recognized the wisdom which Jesus spoke and His healing power, but their reaction to the messenger of Good News from God was rejection. "Where did He get all this? He is the carpenter's son, just ordinary folk like us."

This is the mystery and scandal of the Incarnation.

God the Son comes to us and speaks to us through His humanityâ€ through the human members of His Body. The mystery is that this is the living word of God. The scandal is that this Word is spoken by limited imperfect human beings. We must choose. Either focus on the human messenger, or focus on the living word of God.

The mystery and scandal of the Incarnation is especially striking home now for us with our Father Immediate and General Chapter closing our novitiate until the next 2011 Chapter. It is vital that we recognize this situation as the present move of God's saving action, and that His game plan is always to bring greater good out of evil, including the bad news of losing Bros. Lazarus and Wally in the same week.

We must not reject the human messengers, but keep trying to focus on God's living word, in order to hear what God is asking of us now and to keep trying to respond with the loving obedience of faith. Then our Redeemer and Savior can fulfill His side of the mystery and scandal of the Incarnation.

In the Sacred Heart,

Fr Cyprian

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Wallace Dewey Kendrick: Obituary



Wallace Dewey Kendrick was born on September 28, 1923 to Hazel Johnson and Russell Kendrick. He spent his formative years in Cincinnati, Ohio being raised by his mother and his grandparents. He became a Catholic as a teenager. Wally, as he was known to his friends made his final journey in this life on July 16, at 3:00 p.m. As he came back from getting his mail, he met the Lord to embark on his most glorious journey yet.

Mass of the Resurrection will be Monday, July 19 at 8:30 a.m. with internment to follow in the Assumption Abbey Cemetery. The body will lie in state in the Assumption Abbey Chapel beginning at 3:00 p.m. Sunday until the Mass on Monday morning.

Wally was filled with a wanderlust that took him from Cincinnati, to the Navy, and finally around the world just to watch and observe. He was a monk at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky at the time Thomas Merton became popular. His journey finally brought him to Assumption Abbey where he spent the last forty years of his life living as a Monastic Family Brother.

Wally came to Assumption Abbey penniless and found a job working in the block plant. He lived in the old monastery building and eventually with the help of the monks and other friends built his small cabin up the road from the Abbey. A fall a few years ago forced him to leave his hermitage and become a hermit in the infirmary at the Abbey. His thirst for knowledge never wavered and he spent most of his time reading and watching nature in silent prayer. Wally had finally found a place to call home.

One of Wally's favorite questions was: Everybody is saying what It Is but IT is not talking. IT just IS whenever we ARE. All I can do tonight is smile and forget their neat, tired and tidy gods and just go to bed in dumb peace and in MYSTERY.

Wally is survived by his niece and nephews, Barbara Keith, William Dunkman and Michael Dunkman, all of Cincinnati, Ohio. One cousin Richard Van Dy of Simpsonville, Kentucky and Wally's family from Assumption Abbey.

Godspeed to our beloved friend.

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Wally had some favorite sayings:

"Compassion experiences the suffering of another as a reflection of one's own pain."  
(Goldstein)

"We will see the woundedness and pain underneath the unhealthy habits." (Cooper)

"Longing for contemplation and union in our separated existence"

"Bring down the mind to a single point-I AM."

"The present moment is the only reality."

"What is IT?"

"In the great white quiet, every petty, malicious and unworthy feeling died away." (Fortini)