

Dear Friends and Visitors

The Latin antiphons at Terce for the feasts of St. Mary Magdalene and St. Lawrence have a neat parallel: *Inflammata est anima mea pro Te.*

*Incremata est caro mea pro Te.*

My heart is enflamed for Thee.

My flesh is on fire for Thee.

This year's hot spell during summer must have had those two ardent July saints smiling down on us. St. Lawrence had the martyr's sense of humor to tell his torturers, "You can turn me over. I am done on this side." Like St. Thomas More, when the executioner extended a hand to steady him, "That's right-help me up the steps. I will get down by myself." Our roasting was not that extreme, but hopefully we kept a sense of humor, which can be a saving grace.

Bro. Boniface is amazing. Here at home, he lives the lay-brother vocation to the hilt. He always attends community Mass. Before that, he is working in the kitchen with preliminaries for the day's meals. He works as cook through the later morning. After lunch, no siesta, but he is off in his 4x4 (with our dogs, Goldie, Charlie, and Elijah) to do projects around the property. At night, he usually sleeps in the former block plant garage to discourage prowlers.

Now, his lifestyle is 180 degrees different. He stays quietly with Bro. Dominic in the nursing home's double room. Always ready to look after Dom's needs, Boni just sits in the room reading or praying. Some say he looks ten years younger.

Both Brothers Dominic and Boniface are at peace. It is a blessing that Dom has no special pain, and is able to sleep well at night. His myeloma causes him to become always weaker, but he enjoys watching the birds at the feeder just outside his window. He is also quite satisfied with the health care and the meals provided for him.

Terrance Monaghan spent some six weeks living in our community. His home is in Kentucky. He wanted to prepare for his travel to Spain for the World Youth Day to be held there this fall. He accomplished his spiritual desert journey of forty days in the monastery and departed ready to enter the promised land of Spain.

Eric Grimes spent a week in our guesthouse getting to know us, as we were getting to know him. He will return as a long-term retreatant, but not as a candidate.

Rozanne Elder has graciously agreed to come the first week of January (Wisconsin weather permitting) to give conferences on the topic that she is researching: Abelard, Bernard, Heloise, William of St. Thierry, etc. What is it that they were in controversy about?

A number of our Associates came the weekend before the feast of the Assumption to renew their Covenant commitments. Tammy Reeder found one of her four new tires flat. A tooth-like stone stuck its fang into her tread. Nothing and no one is open on Sunday in our area. We used a tire plug kit to seal the puncture. She set off for Columbia with a pressurized can of sealer liquid on the seat beside her as insurance.

The General Chapter meets in Assisi during September. We shall see what the Chapter Fathers and the Holy Spirit have in store for our community at Ava. We covet your prayers to help us sincerely and rightly discern God's Will regarding the reopening of our novitiate.

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Elijah, Paul, and Peter

Today we have two men who would soon end their lifework and one man who would soon begin his lifework.

First Elijah. He seems to be a failure. He tells God that Jezebel has killed all the prophets in the land, and he alone survives. Now, she is pursuing him. Elijah comes to Mt. Horeb/Sinai where the Lord God revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush. Now the Lord God reveals Himself in a quiet gentle breeze. God tells Elijah that the Lord will bring His divine victory out of Elijah's human defeat. Elijah must return to the land of Israel, and anoint a king to replace Ahab and Jezebel, and anoint Elisha to replace him and continue his prophetic mission

The second man, who is close to the end of his lifework, is St. Paul. He has traveled his world, preaching the Gospel some 25 years. His experiences and reflections have shaped a master plan in his mind about God's work of creation and salvation. Paul spells out his vision of faith in his masterpiece, The Epistle to the Romans. Today's passage tells of Paul's heartache over the failure of Israel as a whole to recognize and accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah. As he wrestled with this negative mystery, St. Paul reached the conviction that, in the end, God's mercy would prevail over His justice, and Israel would be reunited to her heritage of the patriarchs and covenants. Paul said this would be a resurrection from the dead. God in Christ bringing His divine victory out of human failure.

Lastly, we hear about Peter, who is just beginning his life work. He is in emotional turmoil—a storm on the sea, a ghost walking on water, and Jesus calling out, "Take courage, it is I, do not fear." Peter spontaneously says the first thing, which comes to mind, "Lord, if it is You, bid me come to You on the waters."

Our Lord replies "Come." Never lacking in bravado, Peter starts walking on water toward Jesus. Now, his mind begins to catch up with his heart and will, "Hey, where in the world are you taking me? What are you doing? How can I keep my balance with these tossing waves and winds?" Peter falters. He begins to sink. He cries out, "Lord save me!" Jesus catches his hand and admonishes Peter. Not for his bold action, but for his failure to keep his eyes on Jesus, as the goal of his action, and his failure to believe that, once Our Lord gave Peter the Word to come, then Jesus would provide what was needed.

This event at the beginning of Peter's mission teaches the same lesson as Elijah and St. Paul learned at the end of their missions, which is that God's game plan, always bringing greater good out of evil, involves God bringing divine victory out of human defeat. This is Christ's Paschal Mystery.

This September the World Youth Day will gather young people to Spain from all over the world. Our Holy Father is preparing for the event, not knowing how it will turn out. He does know however that this is one further step in working out God's plan of salvation—Christ's ongoing Paschal Mystery.

This September our Order's General Chapter will bring Trappist/Cistercian abbots and abbesses to Assisi from all over the world. Our community of monks have been preparing for this event, not knowing how it will turn out. We do know however, that God is asking us to truly seek His Will. God has led and carried us 60 years here. A mingled record of successes and failures. We have experienced God bringing greater good out of evil all along the way. Our role in this latest chapter of Christ's ongoing Paschal Mystery is to keep trying to focus our eyes on Our Lord Jesus—; to speak the truth boldly in gracious charity—; and to accept the result with the obedience of faith. Then Our Lord Jesus is free to continue the good work He has begun in us, and to bring it to completion for the glory of his Father.

In the Sacred Heart

Fr Cyprian, Abbot