

Dear Friends and Visitors

Here in the Ozarks, the days are getting shorter, the temperature has cooled to comfortable levels, and the leaves are starting to change to their brilliant fall colors. The pages of the seasons are turning as they tend to.

Our General Chapter began the first week of September. For the third time in succession, it was held at Assisi. We have speed traps in the USA, but Italy has an ingenious tourist railroad trap. You buy your ticket, and then find the right track and correct train. Climbing aboard, you are pleased with the padded, comfortable, roomy seats. Eventually the ticket-taker comes by and they look at your ticket (10 euros from Rome to Assisi- about \$15 USA- a very reasonable fare). Then you are told that you must pay a 50-euro fine, because you neglected to stick your ticket in a little yellow box on the station wall. This stamps and "validates" the ticket. You protest. You are told that if you do not pay, there will be a citation for 100 euros.

Assisi is St. Francis and St. Clare country. After his conversion the little poor man heard Our Lord say, "Rebuild My Church that is falling into ruin." On the plain, below the medieval town, which clings halfway up the slope to a mountain top fortress, there was a dilapidated 25 yard square stone chapel. It was dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. Francis began restoring the chapel. As disciples began following him and his notoriety grew, Francis came before the Pope, who recognized and approved this movement destined to rebuild the medieval Church, which needed reform. Today a lovely basilica rises above and around the original Little Portion Chapel. Sounds tacky, but it works.

It was a long month with many decisions being made. The good news is that the monks and nuns now have one united General Chapter. The bad news is that our novitiate was suspended for another three years. We did have some superiors that understand our situation. However, as our ancestors that came before us, we keep praying and serving Our Lord. We accept this as God's Will for now and we begin attending to Plan B, which is to build up a group of family brothers. After the session a number of superiors expressed their sympathy or support "I think they should have followed your appeal"- "It was good you spoke up; a superior should contend for his community."

Many more African and Asian monks and nuns are attending General Chapter. We avoided the inflated cost of using the parish church nearby. We celebrated the Eucharist in a large chapel in Domus Pacis. There is a mural extending around all four walls of St. Francis sitting under a triple-trunk tree with a small bird in his hand and a panorama of the rugged and colorful

countryside of Assisi all around, complete with sunflowers and swallows in flight. It invites praise, though one person said she felt the lack of a tabernacle among so many sunflowers.

Quite a few took a tour bus to see Rome, Monte Cassino and Norcia, and Florence. All are cities of significant beauty. The Pope was unable to give our Order an audience this year. Some, including me, chose to stay at Domus Pacis.

The General Chapter was focused on formation. This has been an ongoing subject for some time. We also approved new foundations and approved a fourth house of Trappistines to fuse with three others in Europe to form one new community. We accepted two other houses as Abbeys.

Each General Chapter seems better organized and flows more smoothly—a developing skill. One of the topics worked on was the Statute on Foundations, and another was the Father Immediate. (Formulating the votes, after hearing peoples' opinions in the general assembly, is like trying to herd cats, according to Dom Elias of Gethsemani.)

Some of the news from the meetings is on this website: <http://ocso-mgm-en.blogspot.com/>. You may also see pictures from this year's sessions.

The bakery is getting ready for the fruitcake season ahead of us. We have been very blessed in being able to keep enough monk-power for our season. Michael and Bro. Joseph have the fruitcakes down to a fine art of baking and shipping.

Bro. Dominic is still in his twilight of cancer. He keeps his sometimes sunny, sometimes grumpy moods going. We are blessed that he is still with us. Bro. Boniface stays at his side, tending to extra needs as they arise. Fr. Donald is still in Ava at the Heart of the Ozarks. He keeps his happy disposition with a greeting of "Welcome to Heaven!" as we approach his room. Jill still tends to his extra needs as they come up.

Family Brother Joe Reisch moved into Nazareth Hermitage on September 14. He has three years of living the hermit life before he and they are satisfied that he should make final vows, there in our bishop's hands. Joe will continue to bake fruitcakes a few hours daily with us, both to provide income for Nazareth, and to help our monk-power need.

Paul Schmitt has chosen to move back to California. Eric Grimes is attempting to join another monastery. We wish them the best in their new endeavors. Elmer, our groundskeeper will take on some of the duties that Paul had been doing. Dick Ortez was here with us for two weeks in

September. He is a wonderful presence in our abbey. He works as a cook when he comes for his visits, if needed.

Our guesthouse renovation has pretty well been completed. The guest rooms, the floors, the kitchen and the parlor have taken on a brighter look. The guesthouse library is a little more comfortable and more user friendly. Gena and Tom Valli do good work. They now will give their renovation attention to the Family Guesthouse.

In the Sacred Heart

Fr Cyprian, Abbot

P.S. The following is a letter written to us by the General Chapter

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The General Chapter of 2011

Assisi, Italy

September 25, 2011

To the Brothers of the Community of Assumption Abbey

Ava Missouri, USA

Dear Brothers:

It is in the great compassion of the Lord Jesus that we write to you. The General Chapter has heard all the various reports concerning your situation. These included the passionate appeal of Dom Cyprian, your superior, directly before taking the vote on whether to continue the suspension of your ability to receive candidates. He has represented your position well and spoken from the depths of his heart. Our own hearts go out to you in this situation.

At this point, the Chapter has spoken and given its own conscientious decision. This decision was taken in faith and flows from a deep desire on our part to respond to the Spirit as to what is best for the Church, what is best for the Order and most of all, what we deem is best for you, the monks of Assumption Abbey and the people in whose midst you serve.

We believe it is of the utmost importance for you to receive this decision in the same lively spirit of faith. You have the opportunity to make something creative out of your present

situation. When one door is shut, another is opened. Appealing to the deep monastic call that is yours, appealing to the years of faithful and fruitful lives you have lived, we invite you to allow God to continue to speak his word of life to you. Nothing is outside the Providence of God and we believe this word from the General Chapter can give new impetus to the search for God's will at this moment in your history. We recommend that you continue the use of an outside facilitator in order to face the present reality of your situation as outlined in the terms of Constitution 67.1.

Where will this lead? We do not know. But we urge you with all our hearts to seek new ways in which your presence among the people of southwester Missouri may be continued and flourish.

We will be supporting you with our prayers and seeing what wonders the Lord will work among you as you move forward in faith and love.

In the joy that flows from Jesus,

Your brothers and sisters gathered in General Chapter