

Dear Associates and Friends,  
The Lord be with you—

An old nonsense rhyme goes; *“Spring has sprung, Fall has fell, Summer is here, and it is hot as...what do you want—poetry or prose?”* This year we got poetry, plus droughts. Dana Maanum, our neighbor and farming friend, has expressed prayers for the end of the drought at almost every Sunday Mass, but still only one respectable rainfall all summer.

Bro. Boniface traditionally picked wild blackberries on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. This year he found only shriveled thorny branches, but our Franciscan Friars next-door gathered several gallons of blackberries from a shaded area near a field pond. Thanks to their generosity, Bro. Boni was able to bake a few of his famous pies for us.

The project of transferring our monastery to the Vietnamese Cistercians has taken a couple of small steps forward. Their Abbot Matthew informed us that the four monks chosen to come here are his Prior (dual citizenship), Sub-Prior (and business manager), a deacon (now newly ordained a priest), and a 30 year old solemnly professed monk. The right way to make a new beginning is to send your best men. They are gathering the data needed to obtain permission from the governments of the USA and Vietnam, and hope to arrive next year. In the meantime, Abbot Matthew and his Prior Fr. Peter intend to visit us this October.

Our diocese has a fine training program for all of its members and staff regarding appropriate behavior and safeguards against sexual abuse. Ms. Karen Pesek gave the workshop to some half of our whole group, and will make that same presentation to the other half soon. Our Lord tells us to clean up our own backyard first.

The roughnecks are gone from the creek, making it a welcome haven for children and family activities. Unexpectedly, Jackie, our security guard, was found to have heart blockages and this led to a five-way bypass surgery early in August. The surgery went well, but breathing problems keep him on oxygen support. Little by little, he is regaining strength and will be returning to his Security work.

Fr. Paul is transferring the wood working shop from areas in the monastery and family guesthouse basements to a section of our garage, across from the bakery building. It is quite an operation. He and the crew made a good beginning during Fr. Paul’s week here in August. Now Elmer and our family brothers, Mike and Greg, continue the work until he returns in September.

A number of Assumption Abbey Associates from St. Louis, Cuba, West Plains, and Springfield made a retreat at our guesthouse the weekend after Our Lady’s Assumption. Some made temporary covenant renewals, and three Associates, Mary Runde, Pauline Pearson and her husband, Allan (in absentia, since he lives at a nursing home), made life time covenants.

Our superior, Fr. Alberic, traveled to our abbey of Genesee in upstate New York for the Abbatial Blessing of their newly elected Rev. Fr. Gerard d’Sousa. He mentioned that this year four novice directors in our USA houses have become superiors—Mother Rebecca (O.L. of Mississippi), Mother Vicky (O.L. of Santa Rita), Dom Gerard (O.L. of Genesee) and of course, Rev. Fr. Alberic of Assumption Abbey. A second note of interest is that two superiors are Asian born: Dom Gerard of India and Fr. Alberic of the Philippines.

## Saint Bartholomew

The Gospels tell us about two contrasting visions at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. Matthew and Luke describe the devil taking Our Lord up on a high mountain and showing Him a vision of all the glory of this world's kingdoms. The devil's challenge during his temptations was, "If You are the Son of God..."

John has Nathaniel call Jesus the Son of God, but Jesus calls Himself the Son of Man, and says that Nathaniel will see a vision of the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Our Lord is applying to Himself Jacob's vision at Bethel, where he dreamed of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven and angels ascending and descending on it. Jacob said, "This is the House of God, the Gate of Heaven." In John's Gospel Jesus says, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise up another." He was speaking of His Body as the new Temple, the new House of God, where human persons are united with God. In St. John's Gospel Our Lord also says that He is the Gate for His sheep to enter eternal life, the Kingdom of Heaven.

So, Jesus shows the devil that He truly is the Son of God by rejecting the false glory of worldly kingdoms and choosing to fulfill the Father's will. Then he tells Nathaniel that He truly is the Son of God by identifying Himself with Jacob's vision of the House of God and Gate of Heaven.

Today's first reading from the book of Revelation gives a vision about the final completion of Our Lord's mission. An angel takes John up a high mountain and shows him the Bride of the Lamb coming down from heaven, shining with the glory of God—the New Jerusalem, the House of God, where human persons are united with God. The city has twelve gates—three gates in each of the four square walls inscribed with the names of the twelve apostles of Israel. The city is built on the solid foundation of twelve layers of stone, inscribed with the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb.

The outer gates inscribed with the twelve tribes of Israel are open to all points of the compass. God's earlier covenant with Israel promised and prepared the way for the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God become the Son of Man. He is the inner gate to the Holy of Holies, the Throne of God.

At the Last Supper, Our Lord told the apostles that just as the Father had given Him a kingdom, so He was giving them a kingdom. The Church is the Kingdom of God on earth, founded on the apostles, whose mission is to preach the Gospel to all nations, shepherding them all to the Kingdom of God in heaven.

During each of the twelve months of the year, Holy Mother Church celebrates the feast of at least one of the apostles—a number of them on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month, looking ahead to the 25<sup>th</sup> day of December, when we celebrate the first Coming of Christ.

Today, August 24<sup>th</sup>, we honor St. Bartholomew, and ask him to pray for us to persevere in our own very small share in his apostolic vocation of proclaiming salvation in Our Lord Jesus Christ to all peoples.

In the Sacred Heart,  
Your monks of Ava