

Dear Friends and Visitors

The Lord be with you—

Bridget, our long-time guesthouse manager, decided that it is "time to fold, not to draw." Our Thanksgiving dinner tradition of sharing the turkey and all the trimmings with retreatants, Franciscan friars, and elderly neighbors that are alone, became Bridget's farewell banquet. We were not able to get an Irish fiddler for the occasion, but she did get a couple of Balleek vases. She was born in North Ireland and is partial to that type of North Ireland porcelain. In addition, she received a pendulum clock with different tunes at each hour, a Philippine handmade rosary, an angel playing an Irish harp, a bag of mixed nuts from the Philippines, her separation bonus and a finely illustrated Papal Blessing.



Bridget scared us by going to the hospital on Sunday night and having an angiogram Monday. She then had an angioplasty on Tuesday. We had cancelled the retirement cake. She then phoned on Tuesday evening, "I am out of the hospital. Everything went fine and I will see you on Thursday." The bakery managed to reschedule the cake.

Donna and Tim Hobart came down from St. Louis to give our monks their annual blood work, flu shots, tetanus and pneumonia shots, as needed. Tim brought a supply of squeeze apples for hand rehab. Donna recently had rotor cuff surgery on her right shoulder. She had surgery on the left shoulder a few months ago, and is now on an exercise program like Bro. Boniface had. We certainly appreciate the Hobart Health System's yearly donation and contribution to our monk's physical well-being.

Joe Reisch graduated from scooter to motorcycle, (riding it for a 3 week vacation to Aspen, CO) from external oblate to family brother candidate, from baker to guest master. He will still live at our Family Guest House, but be on duty for 7 or 8 hours at the guesthouse wing here. Sr. Anne Marie will continue living in room #1 at our guesthouse as the Night Portress.



Bro. Lazarus becomes the full-time baker, except on Tuesday, when he does laundry. Fr. Alberic will keep his own baking skill in tune every Tuesday. Other monks will rotate as assistant baker.

It looked like Indian Summer skipped us during a long cool and rainy October, but it showed up with warm days and sunny skies in November.

Bro. Thomas will fly home to Wisconsin for a visit with his sister Grace, who is under Hospice care for cancer. Fr. Justin strained his foot doing garden work, and hobbles about on one foot with the help of one crutch and a cane. A tote bag swings from his shoulder to carry the items he needs for monastic liturgy, lectio and labor.

Our bakery did not miss a single day of production, even after the warehouse arson fire. We do have a fair number of fruitcakes in red tins, which the can company had on hand to deliver to us right away while they made up our traditional black and white tins. Our bookkeeping crew alternates between euphoria and despair, depending on a day's amount of phone calls, of mail, and internet orders. Time will tell if we manage to sell out this Christmas season.

St. John tells us that God is love and that he shows His love by giving us His Son as Redeemer and Savior. St. Paul quotes an otherwise unrecorded saying of Our Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Goodness overflows and gives, but to graciously receive is also an act of charity to the giver. The Holy Trinity lives out giving and receiving in divine fullness. The Father is complete Giving of Himself to the Son, the Son is both fully receiving of Himself from the Father, and also fully Giving of Himself with the Father to the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit is complete Receiving. Thanksgiving flows from us to God, for what do we have that we have not received. Bless God for the U.S.A.'s Thanksgiving Day.

Yet there is one form of giving which the Holy Trinity does not realize within the divine family circle. God created the human family, so that He could carry out that special form of giving love, which is called forgiveness.

It is human to err and sin, but divine to forgive. God knew that by creating us, He would have to forgive without measure. Our gradual reform and transformation into God's image and likeness grows as we graciously receive from God and others, and as we generously give of ourselves to others and to God. Especially when we forgive God, others, and ourselves, as God has forgiven us in Christ.

In the Sacred Heart,

Fr Cyprian