

Dear Associates and Friends,

The Lord be with you.

The celebration of our 60th anniversary gave a sense of coming full circle. We got in touch with Joe Pierson's (our property donor) 90-year-old daughter Mary Garrick and two of her sons, Fr. David and George. Amazingly, a professor at Missouri State University in Springfield had an English translation of Cicero on his shelf with the inscription "Joseph Pierson, 1900, Chicago, IL" in the handwriting of Mary's father. Dr. Joseph Hughes connected the dots, and sent her father's high school textbook to Mary via Sr. Pauline Nugent, a fellow professor and friend of our community.

We also got in touch with Katie Altic, the 14-year-old daughter of Joe Pierson's adopted daughter, Marla. Marla died of cancer a few years ago. It was good to be able to express our gratitude to Joe and Lily through Mary and Katie.

The Alumni Reunion also brought us full circle in renewing contact with Fr. Matthew (Jerry) Reidy, one of the earliest pioneers here and Fr. Emmanuel (Dale) Tachney. This also renewed contact with some of the former novices-Jerry Miller, Gene Lo Presti, Fr. Benedict (Lee) Clevenger, and Bro. Bernard (Kevin) Fitzgerald, who perfected our fruitcake.

It was a time of counting our blessings.

October, like March came in like a lamb, quiet after the activity of September, but went out like a lion, with a new flurry of events. Friday, the 15th, was the monthly Homework Sharing, moderated by Sr. Rachel and attended by our retired Bishop John Leibrecht. He had been close and supportive of us for over the 20 years as our diocesan shepherd. He is acquainting himself with our community more fully, so that he can be a more informed new member of our Commission of the Future and be ready for our next meeting in January.

Then came a day visit from a Vietnamese Common Observance Cistercian Abbot and his Novice Master. There are seven monasteries of monks and four houses of nuns there with 900 members. The Trappist abbey at Spencer, Massachusetts has hosted a pair of Vietnamese monks twice for a two-year period, so that they can learn English better and can experience how Trappist life goes after the Vatican II renewal. They asked if we would also accept a pair of their monks for a two-year period. Our community will come to a final decision after Thanksgiving.

The Abbot General of our Order, Dom Eamon Fitzgerald arrived October 18 for a friendly visit. He had been abbot of our Irish grandmother house, Mt. Melleray, in County Waterford for around 20 years. He was elected the first Irish Abbot General in our Order in 2008. This also closed a full circle. St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh, visited St. Bernard at Clairvaux and brought monks to found the first Irish Cistercian monastery of Mellifont. Later Malachy died at Clairvaux. St Bernard had him buried in the tomb prepared for himself. His visit at Ava gave both Dom Eamon and our community the opportunity to know each other personally, rather than only at a distance.

Dom Eamon and his Canadian monk secretary, Fr. William, left October 21st and I left October 22nd for the Pilippines. Dome Fil, the abbot of O.L.P. met me at Manila in San Beda Benedictine monastery and college. We visited one of his monks engaged in a special program and then flew to Iloila and O.L.P. We celebrated All Saints and All Souls before starting Visitation.

In the Sacred Heart,

Fr Cyprian