

Dear Associates and Friends,

The Lord be with you!

Maple trees are not native to our Ozark woods, so we lack the brilliant autumn colors they provide. The hills and hollows here are lovely with various shades of golden leaves mingled with pine trees and some bright colors, especially on the lower levels.

There was so much rain all summer that the garden needed little watering. Our Vietnamese monks didn't get potatoes in, nor tomatoes but they had a bumper crop of lettuce, beans, melons, and sweet potatoes. Now they are spreading manure over the ground, along with compost, to loosen up the soil and fertilize it for next year.

The drain in our kitchen clogged up so badly that even a professional couldn't free it. We had to have the concrete floor cut, then we excavated down to remove the iron drain pipe. It had been eaten through by acid poured down to it for over forty-five years. From now on we use a non-acid drain cleaner. Plastic pipe was installed, then the ditch refilled, new concrete poured, and vinyl tile replaced. The silver lining to that particular cloud was that we were able to replace the badly worn counter top around the sink.

Our Bishop James Johnston has gone higher. After seven years of good pastoral shepherding in this diocese, he received the appointment to the Kansas City-St. Joseph diocese. In His parable about the talents, our Lord teaches that the reward for good stewardship is even more work. Our small diocese has been blessed with good bishops from its beginning.

Abbot Mark Scott of New Melleray made the biannual visitation of our community in mid October. The visitation is an opportunity to take stock of where we are in light of the past two years, and to chart our course for the near future. Fr. Mark interviews each man, and after reflection, presents a preliminary draft to the monks. He closes the visitation by giving his final report with evaluation, directions and suggestions. An old Irish abbot was famous for having his car waiting with motor running, so he could step out the door and depart right after reading his Visitation Report to a community.

Fr. Matthew, the recently retired abbot of Our Lady of Diving Grace in Vietnam, is living in our community for about half a year. This gives him first-hand experience of our experiment of the gradual build-up of Vietnamese monks and eventual change from a Trappist to a Cistercian community of contemplative monks. He can report back to the monks in Vietnam. Br. Pio has spent two years at our abbey in Spencer, MA studying English and preparing for theological studies. He is visiting here during November, before returning to Vietnam.

Br. Boniface gets around in a wheel chair mostly. He was becoming more unpredictable, going outside at times. We would find him fallen on the ground, after he had tried to stand up and walk. With colder weather this gave a risk of pneumonia. We couldn't just lock him up in his room, so he is residing at the Heart of the Ozarks nursing home in Ava, where Fr. Donald received such good care.

Fruit cake orders began coming in rather early this year. The bakery manager alternates between hope and despair during November, depending on what the daily email and internet bring to his desk.

The rose bushes in our quadrangle are a hardy group. In response to the change to cold days they produce a spurt of new branches and a lot of new buds and blossoms right up to the time of killing frost. They finish their course with a colorful flourish in grand style.



# A Eucharist Life

St. Ignatius of Antioch is known for his desire for martyrdom, wanting to be ground by the teeth of wild animals like grains of wheat into flour, which becomes the bread of the Eucharist, the Body of Christ.

St. Ignatius desired union with Christ in the mystery of the Eucharist. He desired to unite the sacrifice of his life with the Sacrifice of Our Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. St. Ignatius gives us a model of joyful Eucharistic spirituality.

What does our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament reveal to us about a joyful eucharistic spirituality?

First of all, in the Eucharist He is offering perfect worship to the Father. As Son of God and Son of Man He gives infinitely pleasing adoration and thanksgiving, love and reparation to His divine Father. Living a eucharistic life means that we unite our own poor personal worship with Christ in the Eucharist, as He lives all day long in the tabernacle, and especially during His Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Secondly, Our Lord present in the Eucharist is always interceding for us as the New Adam, Head of His Mystical Body the Church and the whole human family. He prays for each human being, both for those closest to Him and for those farthest away, as a compassionate Father anguishing for His prodigal children. Living a eucharistic life means that we try to be men and women of prayer, praying always in union with and in the name of our Eucharistic Lord. We pray for our own healing and growth, as well as for our brothers and sisters closest to us and farthest from us.

Thirdly, in the mystery and reality of the Eucharist, Christ humbles Himself completely, making Himself the real spiritual food and drink for the members of His Body, becoming their Bread for the journey of following Him on His road of return to the Father. Living a eucharistic life means that we always bring our hunger and thirst for life, for truth and love, for fulfillment, to Our Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, eating His Body and drinking His Blood so that we can keep His commandments of loving our brothers and sisters according to God's Will, serving our neighbors with humble loving care.

Finally, the Eucharist is a miracle of transformation. All power in heaven and earth has been given to Christ. He transforms bread and wine into His crucified and glorified Body and Blood. Living a eucharistic life means that Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is always at work transforming our fallen wounded sinful self more and more into His image and likeness. We are always putting on more and more the Lord Jesus Christ in our mind and heart and will.

St. Ignatius of Antioch, pray for us that we may live a eucharistic life, as you did: worshiping joyfully, interceding always, serving with humble love, and being transformed into Christ.

In the Sacred Heart,

Your Ava Monks