

**Dear Associates and Friends,
The Lord be with you!**

Fr. Alberic our Superior left in September to attend the Trappist General Chapter at Assisi. Our community's vote to dissolve itself, in order to make room for our Vietnamese brother monks to make a new foundation here in the monastery, was presented for the General Chapter's acceptance. They gave their almost unanimous approval. Now the question will go to Rome for a final decision.

The seven or eight Vietnamese monks here have been guests in our Trappist community. After the transfer the four or five American Trappist monks will remain as guests in their Cistercian community. We can say it stays all in the family.

This year they did not plant sweet corn nor melons in our garden. The raccoons and deer persuaded the gardeners to put in leafy green vegetables and sweet potatoes and pumpkins. The rain was abundant without the usual mid-summer droughts. But Br. Gabriel was hit hard by chiggers. Still he said they were not going to keep him out of the garden.

Fathers Thaddeus and Basil drove to South Carolina to assist at a parish mission over a long weekend in September. Br. Ambrose went along to gain more experience driving on highways and in towns. Fr. Bruno and Br. Gabriel have passed their written drivers tests, but must practice more actual driving before getting their licenses.

Peter Vo has been making an observership in our community. He will soon gain American citizenship. Then he will go to the mother house, Our Lady of Divine Grace in Vietnam, to do his novitiate. After that he can return to continue his monastic formation here.

Fathers Thaddeus and Basil have applied for Permanent Residence (Green card). Four new Vietnamese monks have been chosen to become the next members in our community once they receive their visas as Religious Workers.

A number of our Ava Associates gathered here for their annual retreat at the feast of Our Lady's Assumption. Fr. Paul directed them. Not long after returning to his hermitage Fr. Paul lost an upper portion of his thumb in a table saw accident. Our old Irish carpenter, Br. Ailbe, went to heaven with two short thumbs. That seems to be an accepted occupational hazard for wood workers. Of course St. Joseph and apprentice Jesus did not have to contend with electric table saws.

Fr. Leon has been little by little gaining strength. The nuns from Nazareth Hermitage come to our infirmary three times a day for his Mass, his noon and evening meals. He hopes to be able to move back into his hermitage by mid-November. The Hospice care people have their six month evaluation then.

It is time for our fruit cake fliers to go out by mail to our customers. The inventory has been building up all year. There is an aging period for the flavor to blend and mellow all through a cake. We don't sell one until it has aged at least six weeks. Recently a frozen fruit cake was found in an Antarctic station over one hundred years old—possibly from Robert Scott's expedition. They claim it looked and smelled in good condition. However we limit our period within two years.

FULFILLMENT

In our spiritual life we may start out with more of an Old Covenant relationship with God, and gradually grow into a more true New Covenant relationship with God as the years go on.

God comes to Moses and to the People of Israel in the appearance of a burning bush. Fire is the most natural created symbol of God...an all-consuming power giving light and heat for life or death. But this bush was not being consumed—a sign that union with the true living God does not destroy but gives life.

The Lord tells Moses that He has seen the heavy burden of slavery afflicting His people in Egypt. God will afflict Pharaoh and will deliver His Chosen People, bringing them into a

Promised Land flowing with milk and honey. Moses protests, "Who am I to go before Pharaoh?" God simply reassures Moses that He will be with him.

Jesus comes to the people of Israel in the form of a traveling preacher and healer, teaching that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He is a sign of contradiction. He does not approach the political and religious leaders, but is moved with compassion for the poor and lowly. He requires His disciples to leave everything, take up their cross daily and follow Him. Jesus invites us to have a change of mind, becoming humble and lowly of heart—as He is—in the presence of His Father's Will. In that way our heavy burden of labor will become a light yoke and an easy burden...because He gives peace and rest for our souls.

In the Old Covenant the Lord God dwells in heaven and in a dark cloud. In the New Covenant the Word of God becomes a man and dwells among us. In the Old Covenant the Lord God saves His people from physical slavery by inflicting punishment on the slave drivers. In the New Covenant the Son of God delivers His people from the slavery of sin by taking our sins on Himself. In the Old Covenant the Lord God brings His people into their own promised homeland. In the New Covenant the Son of God gives a kingdom, which is not of this world, because the world and all which belongs to it is passing away.

In the Old Covenant the Lord God is *I Am who am*. In the New Covenant the Son of God is Emmanuel—God is with us. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life, Who brings us into union with the Father dwelling in Him and He dwelling in us.

The Old Covenant is the beginning. The New Covenant is the fulfillment.

In His Sacred Heart,

Your Ava Monks

