In Memoriam, Fr. Bruno Barnhart, OSB Cam.

Monk, Priest, Prior, Wisdom Guide

We tolled the bells 84 times on Sunday morning, November 29th just after the 5:15 wake up bell and gathered at our beloved Fr. Bruno’s bedside for prayers for the deceased. We had brought him home just Friday noon and he died the next night, November 28th, at 10:48 PM. He had one of us with him the whole time and his dear friend Lynne Clarkin from Massachusetts had just arrived a few hours before. We celebrated the Mass of Resurrection with a chapel full of friends and oblates on December 3rd.

Born Arthur Paul Barnhart on April 10, 1931, in Long Island, New York, Fr. Bruno was the only child of Arthur and Julia Barnhart. (He later changed his middle name to reflect his father’s middle name, Chamberlain.) His father was a bank manager and clerical worker while his mother taught elementary school. He attended schools in Hempstead and Mineola, New York, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy for his B.S. degree in chemistry, and then Dartmouth, where he received a M.A. in chemistry. Fr. Bruno also spent one year at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Worcester, Massachusetts as a graduate assistant.

Bruno then spent two years in the Navy, working as a biochemical lab tech at Bethesda Naval Hospital. While in the Navy he met the biophysicist Manuel Morales, with whom Bruno later worked in graduate studies at Dartmouth. During his time at Dartmouth, Bruno lost an eye in a laboratory accident. A lifelong Catholic, it was during his recovery from this accident that young Arthur underwent a conversion experience that led him to explore the contemplative life. He then worked for about a year in the Brookhaven National Labs. After visiting the Trappists of Spencer, Massachusetts and Genesee, New York, as well as the Carthusians at Skyfarm, Vermont, Bruno contacted Fr. Augustine Modotti at New Camaldoli Hermitage and arrived at Big Sur on April 9, 1959.

Fr. Bruno professed simple vows in 1960 and solemn vows in 1964. He entered studies in Italy in 1962 with our Fr. Robert Hale, along with two others, Francis Gannon and Gregory Feltes, receiving a STL degree from Sant’Anselmo in Rome. He returned to Big Sur in 1966, but returned again to Rome in 1967 to serve as a member of the Camaldolese Constitutions Committee as the Congregation reworked their Constitutions. Fr. Bruno served as prior of New Camaldoli Hermitage from 1969 to 1987, making trips to Italy every three years during that time. He was also involved in formation-related activities off and on for years at Big Sur.

He published numerous articles and five books: *The Good Wine, Second Simplicity, The Future of Wisdom, The One Light* (editor), and *Purity of Heart* (co-editor). He also served as editor of *The Golden String*, the official publication of the Bede Griffiths Trust. Bruno was well known for his retreats, conferences and workshops over the years, particularly for his emphasis on a re-birth of Christian sapiential thinking. He is also remembered as a gentle confessor and spiritual guide with a wry sense of humor and a scintillating intellect.

Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter into the loving arms of Wisdom.
Thursday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time this year was just a ferial day, no special memorial or feast. Normally I would choose not to preach in that case or just to offer a few sentences of introduction, since we have rich homilies every day here at the Hermitage. But because of the confluence of the two Scripture readings of that day with current events, once I started scribbling down a few notes for my introduction, I found that a theme emerged about which I felt compelled to speak. It was a phrase that I learned from my friends who are politically active: “speaking the truth to power.”

The first reading was from the beginning of the book of the prophet Haggai. To put it in context: after the Babylonian exile, Israel starts to perceive God in a whole new way. That “God is one” meant, as the prophet Isaiah especially saw, that the God of Israel is not just the god of this particular tribe, but the God of all people, all creation and the whole cosmos. And Jerusalem and Mount Zion become the symbol for this: In the days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be raised above the hills and every nation shall come streaming, many peoples come and say, ‘Let us climb the mountain to the house of God...’ (Is 2). And so in Isaiah 45, in what may have seemed like a shock to the people of Israel, the prophet Isaiah calls Cyrus—the pagan king of the idolatrous Persians—God’s anointed one! And it is Cyrus who sends the captives back to their land and is given the mandate to rebuild the Temple in the ruins of the ancient city, which becomes the major event of the first years after the exile.

Unfortunately when the exiles returned from captivity in Babylon, the revelation of God’s inclusivity turned into a cause for exclusivity instead. It is not clear who is to blame since history is always written by the conquerors. The scripture scholar Lawrence Boadt says it is clear from both Haggai and Zechariah that it was the people already in the land and the inhabitants of the old northern kingdom of Samaria who didn’t welcome the returning exiles and who tried to block the building of the temple and the new city walls of Jerusalem. Karen Armstrong (in her book Jerusalem) says it was the other way around, that when the people of Samaria offered to help in the rebuilding of the Temple they were rejected by the returning exiles. In spite of the fact that prophets such as Ezekiel saw all twelve tribes as members of Israel and worthy of holiness, the governor Zerubbabel, the high priest Joshua and their followers deemed that only the Israelites—thus the returning exiles—constituted the true Israel, and even the Samaritans were seen as enemies. (Remember how this will still be playing out during Jesus’ own lifetime.)

At any rate, this is when the prophet Haggai comes along, speaking truth to power. He tells Zerubbabel and Joshua that the reason the land is suffering from drought, hunger and poverty is because people are only thinking of their own good and have neglected the house of God. And he demands that the ruling class dedicate themselves to the rebuilding of the temple, as well as demanding that the people strive for holiness in their personal lives.

The gospel we heard that day was from Luke (9:7-9), just a few lines about Herod being greatly perplexed by all he was hearing about Jesus. Some were comparing Jesus to John the Baptist (another man who spoke truth to power and suffered for it), others Elijah or one of the other great prophets. What is clear from the gospels is that behind the scenes the religious authorities are monitoring Jesus’ activities, just as they had monitored John the Baptist’s. In all likelihood the cleansing of the temple was the reason they wanted to get rid of Jesus because it was an act of civil disobedience that challenged the religious authorities, like Herod and the high priest, who enjoyed privilege because of being in cahoots with the political powers, the Romans who were the oppressors and occupiers. It’s this wealthy minority of the priestly and lay aristocracy of Jerusalem who were worried about the Romans’ reactions to someone who is challenging the system and is now becoming a popular leader under their watch (a point that I think Reza Aslan grossly overstates in his book Zealot), partially because they depend on Rome for their favors. But Jesus was not afraid to speak truth to power.

But what was also going on in the 25th Week in Ordinary Time was Pope Francis’ pastoral visit to the US, and that very Thursday was when he had spoken to Congress. We were all riveted by these speeches. (Since we don’t have television and have very little radio signal here, we were anxiously following as much as we could via the Internet.) Here is a man who is...
unafraid—in his gentle, non-judgmental, convincing way—to speak truth to power about the integral social doctrine of the Church. (He even used that favored phrase of the late Cardinal Bernardin, “the seamless garment—tessuto insconsutile.”) I happened to be in the car for several hours on Wednesday of that week driving to an appointment up north, and so I was able to listen to both his speech on the White House lawn and his homily to the bishops that day. It was his words to the bishops, spoken in Italian as befits “the bishop of Rome,” that particularly struck me as the main reason for Pope Francis’ authority—an admonition not to “confuse the power of strength with the strength of that powerlessness with which God has redeemed us.” (Part of that discourse will follow below.)

It is astounding that we get to be alive now in this era of the Church when we have this voice to be our representative. With all due respect to and praise for his four great immediate predecessors who laid the foundation upon which Francis is building, our current pope embodies the spirit (and the Spirit) of the Second Vatican Council, particularly the spirit of Lumen Gentium and Gaudium et Spes, the dogmatic and pastoral constitutions on the Church in the modern world: “…the Church in Christ, is in the nature of a sacrament—a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and unity among all people (LG, I.1); and so “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well (GS, 1).”

Let’s hope and pray that, inspired and led by our Holy Father, this can be our collective voice, too, the voice of unity and inclusion, the voice of mercy and compassion, the voice of the humility and powerlessness that is never afraid to speak truth to power, especially on behalf of the poor and the afflicted, in the name of Jesus.

“The Strength of Powerlessness”
(Pope Francis’ remarks to the US Bishops, September 23, 2015)

Certainly it is helpful … to have the farsightedness of a leader and the shrewdness of an administrator, but we fall into hopeless decline whenever we confuse the power of strength with the strength of that powerlessness with which God has redeemed us. Bishops need to be lucidly aware of the battle between light and darkness being fought in this world. Woe to us, however, if we make of the cross a banner of worldly struggles and fail to realize that the price of lasting victory is allowing ourselves to be wounded and consumed (Phil 2:1-11). We all know the anguish felt by the first Eleven, huddled together, assailed and overwhelmed by the fear of sheep scattered because the shepherd had been struck. But we also know that we have been given a spirit of courage and not of timidity. So we cannot let ourselves be paralyzed by fear.

I know that you face many challenges, that the field in which you sow is unyielding and that there is always the temptation to give in to fear, to lick one’s wounds, to think back on bygone times and to devise harsh responses to fierce opposition. And yet we are promoters of the culture of encounter. We are living sacraments of the embrace between God’s riches and our poverty. We are witnesses of the abasement and the condescension of God who anticipates in love our every response. Dialogue is our method, not as a shrewd strategy, but out of fidelity to the One who never weary of visiting the marketplace, even at the eleventh hour, to propose his offer of love (Mt 20:1-16).

The path ahead, then, is dialogue among yourselves, dialogue in your presbyterates, dialogue with lay persons, dialogue with families, dialogue with society. I cannot ever tire of encouraging you to dialogue fearlessly. The richer the heritage which you are called to share candidly, the more eloquent should be the humility with which you should offer it. Do not be afraid to set out on that “exodus” which is necessary for all authentic dialogue. Otherwise, we fail to understand the thinking of others, or to realize deep down that the brother or sister we wish to reach and redeem, with the power and the closeness of love, counts more than their positions, distant as they may be from what we hold as true and certain. Harsh and divisive language does not befit the tongue of a pastor, it has no place in his heart; although it may momentarily seem to win the day, only the enduring allure of goodness and love remains truly convincing. We need to let the Lord’s words echo constantly in our hearts: “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, who am meek and humble of heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls” (Mt 11:28-30). Jesus’ yoke is a yoke of love and thus a pledge of refreshment. …

We need to learn from Jesus, or better to learn Jesus, meek and humble; to enter into his meekness and his humility by contemplating his way of acting; to lead our Churches and our people—not infrequently burdened by the stress of everyday life—to the ease of the Lord’s yoke. And to remember that Jesus’ Church is kept whole not by “consuming fire from heaven” (Lk 9:54), but by the secret warmth of the Spirit, who “heals what is wounded, bends what is rigid, straightens what is crooked.”
Siempre Adelante: At the Canonization of an Old Family Friend

Fr. Isaiah Teichert, OSB Cam.

Well, as my T-shirt proclaims, “Pope Francis in America…. I WAS THERE.” I was specifically there for the canonization of Fr. Serra, an old family friend so to speak. Serra and I go way back—I knew him even before he was venerable. One of my happy sources was my mom, who had told me stories about Serra since I was knee high to a grasshopper, and I was received into the Catholic Church right over his grave in Carmel. Not only that, Fr. Serra is something of a patron of vocations, and I remember praying to him for help in my vocation. I figured he had us surrounded here at New Camaldoli, with a mission to the north, to the east and to the south.

I was staying with the Benedictines at St. Anselm’s, Washington, D.C., perfect for walking purposes, as the monastery is only about a mile away from the site of the canonization, the national shrine. (No one would dream of trying to drive to the shrine on the day of the Pope’s visit). The weather was perfect, and one man said to me on my way over, “Have a blest day.” Seemed it couldn’t be otherwise. I was at the Basilica hours before the event, which was lucky because there were huge lines into the shrine. First I was told I could go to the front of the line as a con-celebrant, then I was told, no, I couldn’t go to the front. I waited in line about an hour and was again told I could go to the front of the line. This time I slipped in. The security was airport-tight; there was a strong no-nonsense attitude in place. Once inside the shrine, though, a kind of festive atmosphere prevailed; the Pope seemed to have gotten into the wine. Everyone was a bit giddy. The only bad thing was we had to wait for about three hours in the sun before the Mass started. I foolishly didn’t bring a water bottle, but the priest next to me generously shared his water, so I was able to bear that desert time. We’d all been issued ponchos in the event of rain, but what we really needed were parasols.

We concelebrants were told we couldn’t process in, but we were given great seats. I was only about a hundred feet from the main altar, a little to the right and in front of the Pope. (I can say now that I was for a time the Pope’s “right-hand man.”)

We could tell the Mass was about to begin when the crowd began to erupt in wild cheers as the Pope approached. First, the bishops came in solemn procession—I believe all the U.S. bishops were present—then the Pope himself. The choir was singing the most rollicking and rocking of Spanish hymns. You almost had to tap your feet. To my ears, it sounded like a tango, and I thought, “Well, yes, the Pope is coming to tango with us!” (He does like a good tango they say.)

I was half expecting the Pope to spend a little time schmoozing with the crowd, telling us how great it was to be in Washington, etc. But there was none of that. He dove right into the Mass proper, in what I’d describe as a reverent but business-like manner. He looked drawn and tired at this point in the day, but he entered gracefully into the ritual. After the boisterous tango, we almost immediately plunged into a solemn Gregorian chant invocation of the saints, all in Latin. I felt especially moved when the American glories were invoked …Sancta Catarina Drexel: ora pro nobis! Sancta Elisabet Anna Seton: ora pro nobis! Sancte Damiane de Veuste… and on and wonderfully on.

Then came the canonization itself, which was formally pronounced but with no special fanfare. (There was a “Viva Junipero!” from some monk sitting where I was sitting). When the minister general of the Franciscans wrote to Pope Francis in 2014, he presented Serra as “a religious man exemplary for his spirit of humility, penitence, boundless generosity toward the poor, strong during suffering, loyal to the teaching of the Church, an ardent missionary, zealous preacher, courageous proponent of the Christian faith, tireless evangelizer and true apostle of the Indios.” I’d call that a strong letter of recommendation. I remember, too, John Paul’s words about Serra, spoken when the Pope visited the Carmel Mission: “Much to be envied are those who give their lives to a cause greater than themselves, in loving service to others. This more than words or deeds alone is what draws people to Christ.” Much to be envied!

The relics of Serra were then presented, carried with great dignity by a Chochenyo Native American. He wore an ordinary suit with a kind of cape of eagle feathers placed over it. This man enthroned the relics, moving just so. The whole Mass seemed

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from the pages of...

Vita Monastica

Four giants, ancient and modern, converse in this article from 1975 entitled “Prayer as the Experience of Ecclesial Communion.” Don Benedetto Calati is quoting from the great liturgist Cipriano Vagaggini’s text The Theological Sense of the Liturgy which was foundational for the reform of the liturgy at the Second Vatican Council, in turn is citing John Cassian’s Conference 10; and then Benedetto adds a quote from Isaac of Ninveh as well! This section concerns itself with the natural movement from lectio to the “pure prayer” of contemplation.

At a certain point our mind comes to that pure prayer, when the Lord grants it to us, in which not only does one not stop at the consideration of any image but, beyond that, when we do not formulate any expression of voice or words. Rather, with inexhaustible joy of spirit, one exclaims with ineffable ecstasy of soul in the fiery tension of the mind, so that the mind—leaving behind all senses and all visible things—pours forth before the Lord in inexpressible groans and sighs.

It is in this atmosphere (that the method which remains classic for leading to the experience of prayer that coincides with what the medieval called the “schala,” the so-called “Ladder of Paradise,”) is brought to maturity, that is: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation or perfect charity.

Reading is the first encounter with the sacred text. The regularity with which it is done and the constancy that it requires implies a true exercise of asceticism, renunciation. We learn from the life of St. Jerome what ascetical importance Studium (study) of the scriptures had.

When the reading is “masticated,” it becomes meditation, also called “rumination” on the Word of God. Isaac of Nineveh tells us that “in meditation the words acquire a particular softness in the mouth, and we can repeat the same holy word interminably, becoming sated by it.” At this point we are already praying: the word returns to God. It could be in the form of a question, a supplication, adoration, asking for pardon, or thanksgiving.

Then, according to the ‘interior senses’ that mature in the believer by the power of the Holy Spirit, we can speak of contemplation or perfect charity. The best ‘word’ could be silence.

(For Fr. Bruno)

“Heaven is the place where you think of no place else.” (Pico Iyer)

My mind floats to a heaven that resides in my heart, a place called home, up a winding, narrow path to the Hermitage. There is where Love is, startling silent, rapturous and haunting in its harmony and disharmony of lives joined one to another in some mysterious friendship of soul and spirit.

This is where memory takes me. It is where you are. Waiting. It is where I wish I could be if only to sit. Waiting for a voice.

Seeing you clothed in your faded blue jacket like those blue jays everywhere there. Together, the blue waters below, the indigo birds fluttering in the woods and at the edge of the road you walked hundreds of times down to your place hovered by saints and deer.

You waiting now for something to open, but only my arms fling around you and swallow…me devouring what any of us seek. Isn’t it holy love? You must know that love has been with you always….. Shhh… my arms hold you and the voice you seek calls, but my heart will not be the same when you answer.

– By Hunter Lillis, long-time friend and oblate of New Camaldoli

Siempre Adelante: – Continued from page 4

to me a kind of ballet, where everyone knew their steps and precisely where they were meant to proceed. I was almost in tears, remembering a line from the good book, quoted to such effect in Chariots of Fire: “He who honors me I will honor.”

The readings were so fitting for the new saint. The first being How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, from the prophet Isaiah. The second reading was from Philippians, Rejoice in the Lord always. The Gospel was Matthew 28: ‘Go out to all the world and make disciples of all nations.’ The Pope preached very simply and to the point. We, like Serra, are to proclaim the good news. “The joy of the Gospel is something to be experienced, something to be known and lived only through giving it away, through giving ourselves away.” He ended by quoting Serra’s motto Siempre adelante, always go forward. “For him, this was the way to continue experiencing the joy of the Gospel, to keep his heart from growing numb. He kept moving forward because the Lord was waiting…. he kept moving forward because his brothers and sisters were waiting…” I believe the Pope sees in Serra a kindred spirit.
By Paula Huston, Oblate, O.S.B. Cam.

Before arriving in Shanghai, we had been in Beijing, jostling elbows with the massive crowds of Tiananmen Square and squeezing our way through the packed aisles of mega-supermarkets. By now we had a clear and visceral sense of the sheer number of people in China. But this was beyond belief: a many-acres shopping district where the moving bodies were crushed so tightly together that you could literally be lifted off the ground if you weren’t careful.

That night, gazing out at the futuristic-looking megalopolis of Shanghai from our thirty-second story hotel room window, I found myself longing for the American West, with its vast sweep of basin and range, its endless miles of solitary splendor. I thought with yearning of the Big Sur coast: vertiginous cliffs plunging into the sea and a lone eagle wheeling through the bright sky. The bigger the crowds, the more I seemed to need the respite of being alone.

Solitude provides breathing space in a jam-packed world, but it is also crucial component of the spiritual life, one that we often fail to practice. Like Jesus, we need regular times alone with God and unless we make this a priority, we lose out on a necessary Sabbath rest from the rush and roar of a people-oriented life. On occasion, we are meant to temporarily disconnect from the social web—to withdraw into our hearts, the place we can most clearly hear God’s still, small voice. After his long hot hours among the surging crowds, Jesus retreated to the mountaintops to pray. The Desert Fathers and Mothers fled to the Sinai wilderness in order to be alone with God. And for centuries, monks have understood that peace and quiet are necessary for a viable prayer life.

Unless we know better, it’s easy to confuse the ancient spiritual discipline of voluntary solitude with the loneliness of urban disconnection and alienation. In many ways, the two kinds of aloneness look much the same, which is why even we Christians tend to shy away from too much time on our own. Being quiet by ourselves, we think, invites the possibility of despair, so, like the rest of society, we make sure we are either keeping busy or entertaining ourselves. Yet Christianity insists that we are never alone, even in solitude.

First, we are in relationship with the Triune God, even when we try to resist or ignore the hovering presence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in our daily lives. Because we are in an intimate, personal relationship with God, our efforts to live well and do good, even when they are clumsy or inept, can never be in vain. Everything we do has the potential to radiate holiness and thus to affect other people.

Second, we are in relationship with our fellow human beings, even those we will never meet. For we have all come from the hand of the same Creator, are made in same image, and have been invited to enter the same Kingdom. The Bible refers to a great “cloud of witnesses” watching over us (Heb. 12: 1). Many of these witnesses—often ordinary, anonymous people—have worked, suffered, or died for our sake, and their example can give us the courage to live in faith, hope, and love.

Even we are physically alone—old and by ourselves, single because of circumstances beyond our control, or desperately missing the physical presence of a deceased spouse or dear friend—our spiritual health still requires times of deliberate withdrawal into the desert. For it is only when we practice the discipline of solitude that the lonely clamor of the marketplace—the hard, despairing glare of Shanghai—begins to fade and we are freed up to experience true communion: with God, with our fellow human beings, with that ever-present cloud of witnesses, and with our own deepest hearts.

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Pewter Moon

Pewter moon lustrous half-awake, half-full.
The bull in the pocket of Orion.
In the concrete silence
I try to name the color of this darkness.
Nearby, a small bird
announces itself
trilling night into day.
I bow, kneel, touch my head to the ground.
Rise into this dawn
arms lifted in wonder
we make one song.

– Ziggy Rendler-Bregman
Lectio Divina

“In the ocean of this reading the lamb can paddle and the elephant swims.”
  – Bernard of Claivaux

First Reading (Acts 22:5-11) for the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, January 25th:

Paul addressed the people in these words:

“…I received letters to the brothers and set out for Damascus to bring back to Jerusalem in chains for punishment those there as well.

“On that journey as I drew near to Damascus, about noon a great light from the sky suddenly shone around me. I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ I replied, ‘Who are you, sir?’ And he said to me, ‘I am Jesus the Nazorean whom you are persecuting.’ My companions saw the light but did not hear the voice of the one who spoke to me. I asked, ‘What shall I do, sir?’ The Lord answered me, ‘Get up and go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything appointed for you to do.’ Since I could see nothing because of the brightness of that light, I was led by hand by my companions and entered Damascus.”

Paul’s experience was momentous and most of us will not have had a similar experience. Yet, the last line makes this story a universal one and has a lot to say about the ongoing process of conversion, a topic central to all monastics, to all with a monastic heart.

We come to God and continue to come to God through the help of many brothers and sisters. Although we have a direct and personal relation with God, God’s presence, love, will, and compassion are also mediated by those around us. We all need to be helped to see what God has in store for us, and our surrender and openness to the help of our brothers and sisters strengthen us all and help us and sustain us in the building of the Kingdom.

Jubilee Year of Mercy
Annual Assembly and Retreat for Oblates and Friends
July 15-17 2016
St. Francis Retreat Center, San Juan Bautista

We would love to celebrate with you this summer at our annual assembly and retreat. Please hold the date. This is a rare and much loved time together when we gather in prayer, reflection and conversation about ways in which the Camaldoli charism and the third good are lived out in the world by YOU, our beloved friends and Oblates.

At this retreat, our prior Fr. Cyprian, along with Bede, Raniero, Michael and others, will explore with us their thoughts about what Pope Francis is calling us all to in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. It will also be a time to deepen relationships, share the many ways you take into the world all of what New Camaldoli represents. Registration details will be coming in Spring, but we ask you to consider making a commitment now to gather with your New Camaldoli family next year. Together we will continue to build synergy among us as we gratefully utilize our talents and energy toward assuring the sustainability of the Hermitage for years to come. We hope to see you there.
As the old year comes to an end and a new year dawns, it is good to look back on many blessings and achievements and to look ahead to what the future may bring to New Camaldoli.

Some of the highlights of 2015 included an open house at the Hermitage, an “afternoon with the prior” reception in Los Angeles, and the renovation of the retreat hermitages.

On Sunday November 8th New Camaldoli hosted its first open house in over fifty years. One hundred guests from surrounding communities enjoyed a wine and cheese reception with the monks in the cloister garden behind the chapel and a “behind the scenes” tour of the enclosure, including the working bakery where the Holy Granola is made, the monastic library with its framed photographs of monasteries around the world, one of the newly renovated monastic cells, and the new private retreat hermitages below the chapel.

Renovation of the monks’ cells as well as the guest quarters has been an urgent priority this last year: much work has been needed to bring the accommodations, especially for the elder monks, to a higher standard of safety and comfort. The new retreat hermitages should be ready for occupancy early in the new year and will be worth the wait.

After the tour, Father Cyprian and Brother James gave a special concert for the monks’ guests in the chapel; the day ended with Vespers, for which many of the guests remained.

On Sunday October 12th Karen Judson, a long-time friend and oblate of the community, hosted an “afternoon with the prior” at her home in Los Angeles. Guests and friends from Los Angeles and Orange County enjoyed an afternoon of music and prayer and conversation in Karen’s lovely shaded garden. We hope to be able to continue such “meet the prior” events in the new year to enable those people who find it difficult to travel to New Camaldoli to stay in touch with the community. (If you would be interested in hosting such an event, please let me know.)

All the monks are grateful for the generosity of their friends and benefactors who gave to the Wish List appeal: donations exceeded $44,000 from more than 250 donors. The brothers and I are deeply aware that maintaining and sustaining and expanding New Camaldoli would not be possible without so many of you supporting the monastery and its work in the world.

Please feel free to contact me personally at jill@contemplation.com or 831.667.2456.

Best wishes for a wonderful year ahead for you all.

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**Honey Available at Hermitage**

We are excited to announce that for the first time in our history here in America we are able to offer honey to our visitors! This pure, raw, unprocessed liquid sunshine was made by our own honey bees right here on the sacred and beautiful lands of the hermitage in Big Sur.

We give thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of our bees and our beekeeper Vickie Conte. Our goal is to help strengthen and increase the population of honey bees in the area and perhaps accept a little honey as our humble reward. We are hoping to have enough honey to sell outside of the bookstore by late next spring, but for now it’s only available in our store. Pray for our bees!
News from Monastery of the Risen Christ

Fr. Daniel Manger, OSB Cam.

Much continues to happen, by God’s grace, at the Monastery of the Risen Christ.

In terms of our physical plant, the labyrinth and the Stations of the Way of Resurrection have been completed, thanks to our oblates Ron and Mary Pat George and students from St. Williams’ parish in Atascadero. The walking path has been surfaced with wood chips, and the meadow only awaits a bit more landscaping before we dedicate it in the summer.

In terms of our monastic ministry, Father Stephen taught his first online class in theology, attracting students who come from all over the world. He met most of them in Los Angeles in late November and received good feedback on the classes. Father Stephen has also given retreats for laity and religious at Saint Andrew’s Benedictine Abbey in Valyermo. He also gave a parish mission at the Holy Redeemer church in La Pine, Oregon, and days of reflection to several oblate groups in California.

Father Ray gave a “healing the family tree” Eucharist attended by about seventy people and continues to make himself available once a week to pray with people who come to our chapel.

Father Daniel taught a Noel Series on the infancy narrative in Luke’s gospel during Advent and also said Masses for various parishes in the deanery.

Father Daniel and Father Ray also attended the rededication by Bishop Richard Garcia of a private chapel in Shandon, near Paso Robles, to the glory of God and Saint Junipero Serra. The small private chapel, known as Chapel Hill, was built by William Clark, an advisor to President Reagan, on Clark’s ranchland from the remnants of Hearst Castle. Father Ray was a long-time friend of the Clark family and served as priest at the chapel for many years. Used for weddings and other events, it also now serves Hispanic families living in the area.

We look forward to what God will do among us here at the Monastery of the Risen Christ in the coming year and are grateful for the support of our many benefactors.

Incarnation Monastery – By Br. Ivan Nicoletto, OSB Cam.

At Incarnation Monastery, after a quiet Summer, the Fall was marked by a better attended celebration of the daily liturgy and Eucharist and by a remarkable presence of people at our twice monthly Quiet Days and Saturday Contemplative Retreats that will continue until June 11. In November, a small group of us resumed for the third year our monthly meeting on non-violent communication focused this year on Martin Luther King, Jr.

In November we also welcomed the collection of homilies by Br. Ivan, Journey of Faith, Journey of the Universe: the Lectionary and the New Cosmology issued by Liturgical Press. On December 13 we met with the Advisory Board discussing some important aspects of our journey as an expanded community of monks and oblates.

Our Advent and Christmas season have been gladdened by the presence of many oblates and friends, and also our Christmas potluck was joyous and abundant.

The long-term or temporary guests are also an important presence for us, and we are happy to be able to offer this ministry of hospitality and dialogue.

In addition, we continue to be available for those seeking counseling for Spiritual Direction.

In these months we had the joy to welcome at the Monastery Br. Bede, Fr. Cyprian, and Fr. Michael Fish, and all of us have celebrated at New Camaldoli a joyful and participatory moment on Dec 28-30.
What first brought me to the Monastery (and what brings me back)

(Originally presented in spoken form at the Millennial Assembly in 2013.)

About 14 years ago I was listening to a tape by the Franciscan priest Richard Rohr. On that tape he quoted from Father Bruno Barnhart’s book, *Second Simplicity*. Richard recommended the book so I got a copy and read it. I liked it and sent an email to Fr. Bruno, letting him know that I appreciated his writing.

This is from the email he sent back to me:

“It is so good to hear from someone who has a feeling for the reality and power of Sophia. That whole dimension of Sophia-Spirit, of the feminine aspect of God and its relation to the corresponding dimension in ourselves—communally as well as individually—is a great unrealized part of Christianity, like part of a human body that has never awakened from sleep, or at least has never become conscious of itself.

As to where to go from here – that’s the toughest question. But to participate actively in the enlargement and deepening of one’s consciousness of the Mystery is not a bad start. Then perhaps each person, each couple must find their own way.

May the Lord’s Spirit guide you and your husband and open before you the doors which must be opened.”

That email was sent in August 2001. I carried it in my pocket at work for 3 years. I had studied the Rule of St. Benedict, looking for one of those elusive ‘containers’ for my life and prayer that Bruno had alluded to. Then I looked up the New Camaldoli website and found the Brief Rule of St. Romuald. I knew at once that this was the community for me. Soon after, my husband and I made our first trip to Big Sur to visit the brothers. I became an Oblate in 2005.

As to what brings me back to the monastery, I return again to Bruno’s words in 2001: “To participate actively in the enlarge-

I believe I come back to the monastery because time spent there supports that “participatory deepening” of my awareness of what the Spirit is doing in my life, as I find my own way forward.

I returned to the monastery last September to hear Fr. Bruno speak. He began his workshop with the words:

“What is this wisdom theology?
   It’s the Big Picture.
   It’s everything at once.
   It’s comprehensive and participatory.

Jesus is something New and the continuing event of Christ never stops its creative emanation. This newness allows us to move forward and exercise ourselves in hope. As we move forward, we pick up this wisdom theology.”

And I add to Bruno’s insight: As we move forward and pick up this wisdom theology, I experience myself being picked up by this wisdom much like a leopard cub being picked up by her Mother.

I come back to the monastery because somehow nothing I have found anywhere else supports and deepens my awareness of the Mystery like sitting on the floor in the dark sanctuary with everyone else during evening Adoration.

Jane Kincaid has been an oblate for 10 years. A retired nurse, she lives with her husband in Phoenix in a tiny apartment with lots of books. Jane has been working with metal in a local art center for 6 years. “This craft has given me the opportunity to ‘pierce’ or saw labyrinths and fold-form copper for small frames for icons. I use scraps a lot and it is curious to see what develops.” Jane and Daniel study French together with a neighbor using an online course from Yale. “It has been fun seeing how much progress we’ve made building on the skills we learned in formal language classes years ago.”

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Camaldolese Monks, OSB 
Community, Solitude, Mission

New Camaldoli Hermitage, 
Big Sur CA

Incarnation Monastery, 
Berkeley, CA

Monastery of the Risen Christ, 
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In September…
Br. Michael went to Michigan to visit family and attend his high school reunion. Fr. Isaiah and Br. Isaac were both in Washington for Pope Francis’ visit!
Sangha Shantivanam from Santa Cruz came to the Hermitage for a day of reflection with Fr. Cyprian.
Fr. Raniero and Br. Gabriel attended the Four Wind Council meeting at Tassajara Zen Mountain Monastery.

In October…
Br. Bede led an oblate day at the Monastery of the Risen Christ in San Luis Obispo.
Cyprian spent some days in southern California for a benefit concert with Br. James, a conference, and a gathering with our friends and oblates.
Br. Emmanuel turned 88!
Dr. Lee Klinger gave the monks a conference on oak trees and our ecosystem.
That same day Bede gave a day of reflection at Incarnation Monastery titled Spirituality, Solitude, and our Inner Life.
Joshua spent some time with his family.
Frs. Andrew and Arthur, and Toni Bettchart (Obl OSB Cam) gave a retreat here titled Darkness: Fertile Ground for God’s Creativity.

In November…
Br. Benedict spent two weeks with his family in Philadelphia.
Cyprian visited his family, and then attended a meeting with Oregon Catholic Press, who publish his music, and gave a retreat at the Shalom Center in Mount Angel, OR.
Bede and Paula Huston (Obl OSB Cam) gave a retreat titled Prayer - for those who have been at it for awhile.
As usual, we celebrated Thanksgiving with a wonderful meal prepared by our cook, Chris Fenton.

In December…
Bede visited his family in Milwaukee. Much to his dismay, but to the great joy of his family, it was warm and dry.
Elizabeth Danze and John Blood, both architects from Austin, TX, spent some days with us considering how we might develop a master plan for our current and future building needs.
Continuing a wonderful tradition, the owners of Lucia Lodge invited the monks to come down the mountain for a festive Christmas meal. Wonderful as always!
We had our annual cookie baking and tree trimming party. Surprisingly, there were even a few cookies left for our gathering after Midnight Mass!
Another beautiful celebration on Christmas, and another great meal prepared by Chris.
We ended the year with an All-Camaldolese Chapter here at the Hermitage with all of our brothers present from north and south except for Isaiah who was back in Washington DC for a niece’s wedding.

The Reading List
What the monks are reading these days.
Fr. Thomas: Confronting Silence, Toru Takemitsu.
Br. Michael: From the Sacred Heart to the Trinity, Fr. Gabriele of St. Mary Magdalene.
Fr. Isaiah: Lord of the Rings Trilogy, J.R.R. Tolkien; Living with Wisdom: A Life of Thomas Merton, Jim Forrest.

Please consider remembering us when making or revising your will.

Our official name is: Camaldolese Hermits of America
Our federal ID # is: 94-6050278
– Photo by Debi Lorenc