



THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF  
**NEW CLAIRVAUX**  
VINA, CALIFORNIA



# GESTA MONASTICA

News from the Abbey of Our Lady of New Clairvaux



Father Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO  
ABBOT

## Welcome!

### MISSION STATEMENT

Seeking God at this place of New Clairvaux, we are a community of Cistercian monks living the Rule of Saint Benedict. We witness God's love for the world according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ by a life of prayer, labor and sustainable stewardship of our resources in simplicity and openness to the signs of the times. Our monastery welcomes all people in a spirit of hospitality, and engages others in collaborative relationships.

## Of Culture, Stone and Grapes

### FROM THE ABBOT'S DESK

Dear friends,

I am not sure when I first heard the phrase culture shock, but it was before 1995. Thank heavens I was familiar with it, even if it was only a concept, because in October 1995, I received permission from our then abbot Father Thomas Davis, to attend a four-week Spanish language course in the lovely country of Guatemala.

I remember the details of that month vividly. I arrived on a Saturday to help acclimate myself to begin school the following Monday. This was a total immersion course, no

English spoken for four whole weeks. Sink or swim, right? At the end of the first week, as I strolled the scenic streets of the city of Quezaltenango, it was as if I suddenly woke up. Yes, I woke up! I had been in culture shock for a week and realized it. Culture shock was no longer an idea, but a lived experience and I knew exactly what it was. Because of that insight, I benefited from the remaining three weeks of study and cultural experience.

The monastic world I live in is a culture of its own with special vocabulary, rhythm, food, reasoning, and relationships among other things. You may

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stop me at this point and tell me we monks are part of the USA culture, English is our language, and USA legal structures impact us. Well, yes, but no. What works in USA corporate systems, the “standard” practice for finance and business dealings, doubtlessly good in themselves, are not necessarily how monks use these principles even when we apply them.

The new church



construction illustrates this so very well. Conventional experience would likely dictate an approach different from the collective monastic wisdom, hundreds of years old that has time and again proven to be of an enduring, lasting quality. When monks speak of building for a thousand years we mean precisely that. Time is on our side, unlike projects on the “outside”. There is nothing wrong to begin and complete a project along the lines of corporate America but it is not the way monks necessarily do it.

Sometimes then the encounter with our monastic culture can be a bit disconcerting, disorienting or frustrating. That is when a person needs to know that monks live under a Rule written in the early sixth century, reflecting an even older tradition already 200 years old when St. Benedict wrote his practical interpretation of the

gospel called the Rule of St. Benedict.

This brings me to the annual blessing of the grapes that begins our grape harvest, a practice rooted in monastic culture that dates back more than 1,500 years ago. Remember, monks build for a thousand years, and our practices reflect long sustained continuity that our “throw-away” society perhaps finds baffling, but likely rather intriguing.

St. Benedict states in chapter 4:20 “Your way of acting should be different from the world’s way,” different because the monk lives in the mystery of God’s kingdom now. Every part of a monk’s life is permeated with this truth of the Kingdom of God in our midst. It is in this context we understand the blessing of the grapes. The simple act of blessing grapes, or of anything, is a statement about the Kingdom of God, a



## Capital Campaign Prayer

Blessed are you, God of all creation. You know our hearts and our desires. Guide all that we do for your glory. Bless the gifts for this Capital Campaign as you blessed the loaves and fish. Make them fruitful for the glory of your Name. We place our trust in you, O Divine Architect, that through your guidance we may use these gifts to make visible your Kingdom. May all who have begun this work be always guided by the light of faith, hope and love. Through Christ our Lord.

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moment when the Kingdom breaks into our existence, no theophany perhaps, but nevertheless very real.

This may be what brings visitors to our monastery daily as they seek a place for prayer, quiet, and solitude. Others may come to see a medieval site that holds beauty, history, and culture unable to be found elsewhere west of



*Our new abbey church is seen here with newly installed glass enclosing the gathering space and baptismal font.*



*Partnered with Aimee Sunseri, New Clairvaux wines have won several awards in both local and international competitions.*

the Mississippi. Some come to purchase award-winning wines produced with great care by monks and dedicated staff. Maybe some arrive out of idle curiosity. Whatever the motivation, no one departs the monastery the same because the person has undergone culture shock, an exposure to monastic culture providing a different perspective on life, an experience of the Kingdom of God.

Thanks for being our friend, thanks for reading. May God bless you with a wonderful summer!

*Fr. Paul Mark*



## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

For young people in our Church, that they will hear Christ's call to follow him in the monastic way of life. Send to us future generations of monks who will joyfully walk with you in vows of obedience, fidelity and stability here in Vina according to the Rule of Saint Benedict.

# 2016 DONOR RECOGNITION

*We are pleased to acknowledge and thank our special friends who have supported our Capital Campaign with gifts during 2016. We would like to express our extreme gratitude to everyone who has been a part of this effort, and indeed for every gift of every size. In thanksgiving for this generosity, the monks of the Abbey of Our Lady of New Clairvaux remember the intentions of all our benefactors in our daily prayer.*

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Michelle Nagy - Porter of the Abbey

If a time of retreat is something which may be of value to you, please contact the Abbey Porter, Michelle Nagy, at **530-839-2434** or email at [reservation@newclairvaux.org](mailto:reservation@newclairvaux.org). Due to limited number of available rooms, please schedule in advance.

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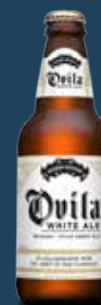
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Have you included the Abbey in your will or trust? Let us know so we may thank and welcome you to the St. Bernard Society.

Mike Prym

Tel: 530-839-9936

Email: [mikeprym@newclairvaux.org](mailto:mikeprym@newclairvaux.org)

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For inquiries about entrance into the monastic way of life, please contact our Vocation Director, Brother Christopher.

Email: [godseeking@newclairvaux.org](mailto:godseeking@newclairvaux.org)

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## ABBEY TOUR INFORMATION

Guests are welcome to take a self-guided tour any time between 11-5. We are open 7 days a week. A guided tour can be arranged through the Development Office for groups of 20 or more. A suggested donation of \$10 per person assists us toward the completion of our new abbey church.

**For information contact the Development Office or visit our website: [www.newclairvaux.org](http://www.newclairvaux.org).**



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## GIFTS IN KIND

Rev. Louis Corddaire

*The categories listed above are based on donations received from the Capital Campaign, Unrestricted Gifts, Gifts In Kind, Estate Distributions and Retreat.*



## CONTACT INFORMATION

### DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - Brother Gueric, [gueric00john@newclairvaux.org](mailto:gueric00john@newclairvaux.org)

ASSISTANT TO DIRECTOR for DONOR RELATIONS - Carissa Anderson, [carissaanderson@newclairvaux.org](mailto:carissaanderson@newclairvaux.org)

Telephone: 530-839-9936

# WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU

Dear Donors and Friends,

We are dedicating this edition of our newsletter to all of those who have so generously supported our mission to create a truly sacred space - our new abbey church.

The success of a project of this magnitude is 100% dependent on the support we receive from donors like you.

Your faithful stewardship affirms the monks' vision to implement the Master Site Plan, the first phase of the plan being the new abbey church.

This historic building incorporates a completely restored 12th-century Ovila Chapter House that was originally part of a Cistercian abbey in Spain.

The Ovila Chapter House is the oldest building in the state of California, as well as the only Medieval Gothic style in the United States.

Fr. Paul Mark and his brother monks remain grateful for your overwhelming generosity this past year and years to come. You are a blessing to them.

Trusting in God, they make no little plans. Ever faithful to their monastic charism and history, our Monks of Vina are building for the next 1,000 years.

We look forward with eager anticipation to completing each phase as we strive to fulfill the charge of preserving our past and preparing for a bright and relevant future.

We invite all of our friends to join us in pray and support as we continue the good work that the Lord has set before us.

Mike Prym  
Director of Development



## Bookstore & Giftshop

Here at the guest bookstore, we carry a well-rounded selection of books. We have a good cross section of books and Bibles from some of the top Catholic publishers.

Father Anthony's pottery is always sought after because people are looking for that special gift.


Included in the bookstore are Trappist Jams and Jellies (all varieties). They are made by the Trappist Monks of St. Joseph's Abbey.

Honey, and copies of the Icons written by Sister Susanne, Loving Mother, Mother Do Not Mourn, are from the Redwoods Monastery,

We also carry, embroidered baseball caps, vests, jackets, and t-shirts with the New Clairvaux logo. Olive oil and mugs are also included. Please consider this an invitation to visit our monastery bookstore giftshop.

[guestbookstore@newclairvaux.org](mailto:guestbookstore@newclairvaux.org)

NEW CLAIRVAUX  
VINEYARD



**BLESSING *of the* GRAPES**

SATURDAY, JULY 22<sup>ND</sup> 2017  
ST. JAMES BLOCK ■ VINA, CALIFORNIA

LOCAL MARKET OPENS AT 9 am  
BLESSING AT 10:30 am  
TASTING AND FOOD 11 am-2 pm

The monks and staff of the Abbey of New Clairvaux invite you to our annual tradition of the Blessing of the Grapes.

# Abbey of New Clairvaux

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NEWS FROM THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX

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