



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

# GESTA MONASTICA

News from the Abbey of Our Lady of New Clairvaux

## FROM THE ABBOT'S DESK

To our cherished friends,

It is fall again which is a time of transition, preparing for a change in season, and an opportunity to give "thanks". Do you know that the word "thanks" is actually German? It means gratitude and is a cognate of the Latin verb *tongere*, meaning "to know", the implication being "to think". Perhaps the saying, "think before you speak or act" is related. And isn't it true that to give thanks I first have to know what I am thankful for, and to know to be thankful implies that I must first think of what it is I have received. I am thankful, because I know what I think and that is to say THANK YOU, to each of you for your friendship, your prayers, your support through this our second year of a world pandemic.

As you peruse the pages of this issue of the Gesta you will read about past harvest seasons in the monastery, you will see views of the planned new



senior wing we eagerly wait for, what monks read these days, and to hear the aspirations and hopes of two of our four new postulants who begin their monastic journey this year.

Wherever this copy of the Gesta finds you please know you and your intentions are remembered in our daily prayers.

Please have a safe autumn. Stay well and stay in touch. We enjoy hearing from you.

Thanks and God bless,



*Fr. Paul Mark*

Father Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO  
ABBOT



## Looking Back ...

Over the years, the Abbey of New Clairvaux has had a variety of industries and crops, in an effort to be self-supporting. When the property was purchased in 1955, the property included a plum orchard and dehydrator for producing prunes, as well as a large dairy herd and a few bulls.

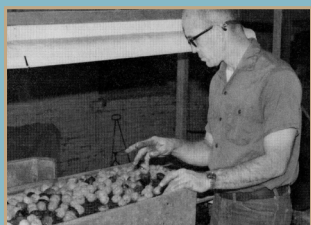
In 1963 the monks gave up the dairy operation. Once the cows were gone, more trees were planted. Over the years, we have had fields of beans, strawberries and corn. In 2000, the vineyards were re-planted for the first time since 1916. Currently, we have walnut and plum orchards, as well as our vineyard, spanning a total of 586 acres.



1958 Dairy Cow



1961 Plum Harvest



1975 Walnut Harvest



2021 Grape Harvest

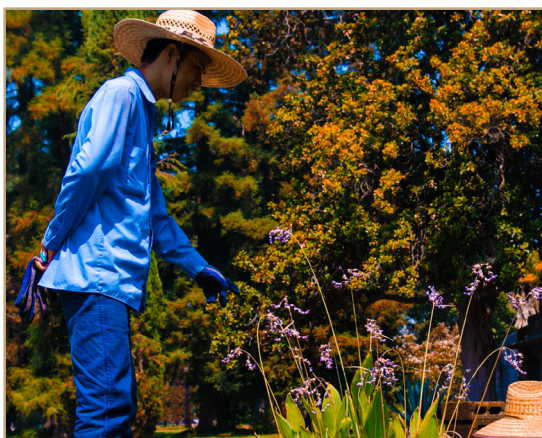
# AROUND THE ABBEY CLOISTER



Procession for the Harvest Blessing.



Procession toward blessing site.



Observer Duc oversees cloister fountain cleanup.



Observer Curtis catching koi fish in our fountain.

## ABBAY CHURCH, GUESTHOUSE, WINERY & BOOKSTORE

Earlier this summer, our abbey church re-opened for self-guided tours from Monday to Saturday, 2:30 pm - 5 pm. Holy Mass is always open for public attendance. Sunday Mass is at 7:30 am, while Mass on Monday through Saturday is at 7:00 am. Masks are required for all visitors.

The Church is closed on Monastic Solemnities, Community Retreats, and Holy Days. For the rest of 2021, these closure dates are November 1, November 14-21, November 25, December 8 and December 25.

Docent-led group tours remain unavailable until further notice.

Our Guesthouse is open with limited capacity. Please call the guesthouse at (530) 839-2434 or email [reservation@newclairvaux.org](mailto:reservation@newclairvaux.org) for more information or to make a reservation.

Our wine-tasting room also is open daily from 11 am - 5 pm.

The bookstore is fully open and situated next to the Welcome Center. Please call Br. William at (530) 736-3292.

Check our website for any immediate updates in planning your visit.

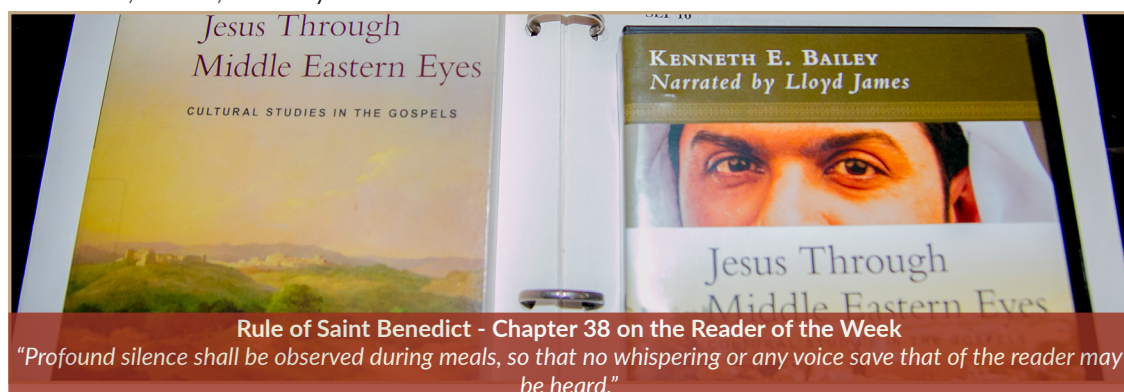


Our bookstore features Cistercian monastic authors.

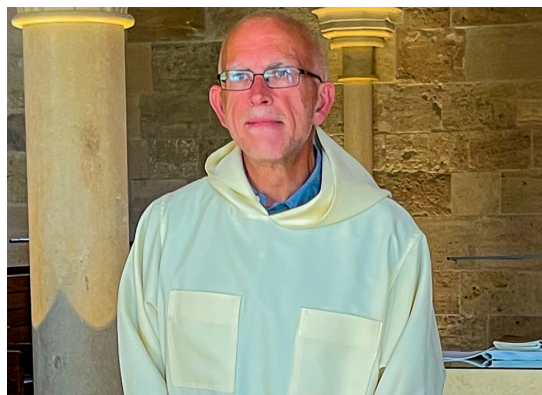


# WHAT MONKS ARE READING

During our midday meal in the refectory, we monks typically eat in silence while listening to a book being read by a brother or an audiobook that is played over the speakers. So while our bodies are being fed, our minds too, are being nourished. We are currently in the middle of the book entitled "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" by Kenneth E. Bailey. Bailey provides a uniquely fascinating perspective into familiar Gospel passages such as the infancy narratives, the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer and others. Drawing upon ancient Syriac and Arabic Christian scriptural texts as well as years of experience growing up, living and teaching in the Middle East, the author presents an insightful commentary on the life of Jesus against the backdrop of Middle Eastern culture. As monks who "chew" on God's words in scripture daily, this book can have a profound impact on how we approach the Gospels and understand the person of Jesus. Indeed, we are given a new set of "eyes," so to speak, through which we can ponder the man called Jesus reaching across the centuries through the pages of scripture and connecting us to the mystery of the Incarnation through Middle Eastern life, custom, mentality and culture.



## POSTULANTS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS



Father Steve entered the Postulancy in April.  
To read more, visit our blog at [newclairvaux.org](http://newclairvaux.org).

What does it mean for me to be at New Clairvaux? For the last five years I have wanted to enter a monastery and give my life over to God in prayer and solitude. As I understand it, the spirituality of the Cistercian comes down to learning to do the will of God who is love. I know this life ahead of me is going to be tough. But I can also see how I am already being transformed. At this point I can only guess what is coming next for in formation. But I trust the brothers here at New Clairvaux. They are very human but from what I can see, they have also allowed themselves to be seriously formed by the Rule of St. Benedict. What does it mean to be at New Clairvaux? It means a chance to reach Eternal Life.



Eric entered the Postulancy in July.  
To read more, visit our blog at [newclairvaux.org](http://newclairvaux.org).

To the surprise of my colleagues and friends, I left everything behind and moved literally to the other side of the world. From the tropical heat and chaotic environment of urban Manila and the very demanding business setting of the corporate world to being here in a remote area of California at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, I experience the joy and peace of a simple life. Most of my time is being spent in communion with the Lord in prayer, sacred reading, and dedicated manual labor. Not even a radio, television, going out to movies or enjoying everything that modern life has to offer are available to distract this communion. Although I am still at the very early stages of transformation and conversion in monastic life, the question remains: "Will I endure and persevere?" Each and every day that passes will be counted as God's grace if I succeed in perseverance. And I will be here for as long as my daily prayer remains and that I experience everyday life with Christ.

TO CONTACT THE VOCATION DIRECTOR: [godseeking@newclairvaux.org](mailto:godseeking@newclairvaux.org) or call 530-736-9074

## Looking Ahead ...

We highlight the plans for our future Senior Wing below. In his Rule for Monks, St. Benedict states that "care for the sick ranks above all else" and "let a separate room be designated for the sick" (RB 36). Here at New Clairvaux, the needs of our senior monks have made it necessary to plan for a well thought-out building that would not only house our elderly monks but also provide a better workspace for our healthcare givers. The new Senior Wing includes a small chapel, solarium, physical therapy room and a cloister garth fountain.



Senior Wing - North Exterior



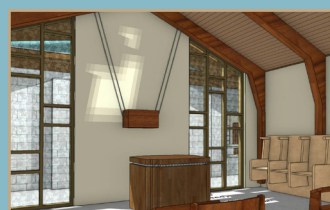
Cloister Garth Fountain -  
Senior Wing Chapel Exterior



Senior Wing - Hallway Interior



Senior Wing - Cell Interior

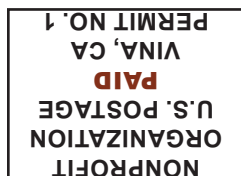


St. Joseph Chapel



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# Gesta Monastica

NEWS FROM THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF NEW  
CLAIRVAUX

[www.newclairvaux.org](http://www.newclairvaux.org)

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**DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

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