

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,

The harvest season is over, summer heat is history, and the cool, wet days of late autumn are upon us.

When the brothers were occupied harvesting and crushing grapes, I was in Europe, attending the General Chapter of our Order, which is normally held every three years. Due to the pandemic, it has been five years since the superiors of the Order have met again in the beautiful city of Assisi, Italy. I took

the opportunity to visit Germany and Rome prior to traveling to Assisi.

The theme of our General Chapter emphasized synodality and the sharing of dreams as we, as an Order move forward to live the Cistercian vocation for the 21st century. During the Chapter the participants (some 230), had the great blessing to have a private audience with our Holy Father, Pope Francis, as we did in 2017.



Abbot Paul Mark greets Pope Francis during a general audience with Trappist Superiors in Rome.

Picking up on the Chapter's theme, the Holy Father listed four dreams, "a dream of communion, a dream of participation, a dream of mission, and a dream of formation." He had this

(continued on Page 2)

Looking Back ...

Since 1955, visitors have been welcomed here at the Abbey's Guesthouse/Retreat Center. Offering hospitality is a fundamental aspect of monastic tradition. Chapter 53 of the Rule of St. Benedict opens with "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ, for he himself will say: I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matt 25:35)."

Many retreatants have shared their experiences with us, including Cynthia Peden, who would visit her uncle, Br. Dominic. Others have shared through contributing to our book: "Maintain a Light Burning: Notes from the Monastery".

"When I enter the gates of New Clairvaux it feels like God is waiting on the other side to embrace me. This welcoming embrace fills me with peace and serenity. I can feel my self-imposed rules and the stress and anxiety from the outside world melting away. I let out a sigh of relief. It is as though God whispers to me, Psalm 46:10, Be still, and know I am God." - Katherine Bogue



Cynthia Peden with Brother Dominic (right) in 1963.

(continued from Page 1)

to say about the dream of mission: "A monk praying in his monastery plays his part in bringing the Gospel to that land, in teaching the people who live there that we have a Father who loves us, and, in this world, we are on our way to Heaven." It is important to remember that in any form of evangelization "the primacy is always God's" and that "in the whole life of the Church it must always be made clear that the initiative is God's, that it is He who has loved us".

I think you will agree this is a timely message for all.

Know of our love and prayers for each of you, as we begin the journey to Christmas and towards a New Year.

Thanks for reading!

Fr. Paul Mark



ABBEYS AND VINES OF FRANCE

Join Father Paul Mark and winemaker, Aimee Sunseri on a unique wine cruise / tour featuring privately hosted visits to the medieval Cistercian Abbeys of Citeaux and Lerins. Included in this tour is an exclusive VIP experience to the esteemed Chateau Clos de Vougeot.

There is still time, but space is limited to join Fr. Paul Mark Schwan and Aimee Sunseri, who will be leading a custom river cruise-tour of France visiting Cistercian Abbeys in Burgundy (Citeaux) and Provence-French Riviera (Lerins). They will be learning about the wines of

those regions in their "Abbeys & Vines" trip next April 2023.

Kindly contact Robin Morales of Gallivanting Gourmets - Travelwize.

Email: robin@gallivantinggourmets
Tel: 415-269-3993



NEW NOVICES JOIN THE FLOCK

After a year of postulancy, Brother Eric, Brother Isaac, Father Aelred and Brother Simon all received the novice's habit consisting of a white robe, a white scapular worn over the robe, a cloth cincture around the waist, and a cloak. The clothing ceremony of the novices takes

place in the Chapter Room, where monks are formally received into the monastic community. As novices, they undergo further training in the observance of the Rule under the guidance of the novice director, teaching of the abbot, and learning to love Christ above all.



Novices with Abbot (left to right)

Father Aelred, Brother Eric, Father Paul Mark, Brother Simon & Brother Isaac

A SUMMER IN ROME

By Father Gueric Llanes

I was warned that Rome in September would be hot. I thought my 14 summers in Vina, CA, made me impervious to any climate change. However, being in Rome in September, I realize how unprepared I was for the sweltering heat of the city. Be that as it may, I was primarily in Italy for a course sponsored by the Order of Cistercians. There were close to 40 monks and nuns from across five continents - North and South

America, Africa, Europe, and Asia. The courses, conducted in Italian, covered topics such as liturgical theology, the Rule, and



monastic spirituality. Since all our Trappist-Cistercian superiors in Assisi were coming to Rome for an audience with the Pope, I was permitted to join them for the occasion. The heat was unbearable but making friends with monks and nuns from around the world and meeting the Pope were unforgettable.



Retreat Experience

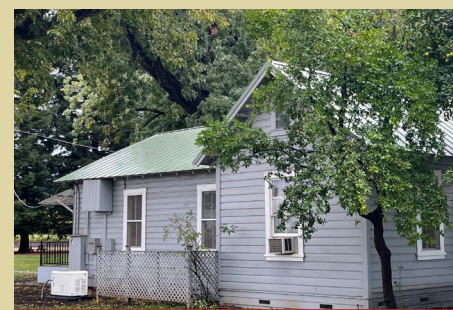
Our successful 2021 fundraiser allowed us to install generators at our Guest House facilities, which were recently completed.

Retreatants continue to share their experiences, most recently by Alexa Mergen.

"Each day began with coffee in our travel mugs and a stroll around the grounds ... Listening comes to life in this setting. Birds call across the field. The lotus-filled fountain splashes ... The remainder of our days passed with reading and contemplation, worship, alone in nature and in community in the tranquil, elegant cathedral, sitting adjacent to the brothers as they tenderly sang psalms."

To read more of Alexa's writing, please visit our Facebook Page @ Abbey of Our Lady of New Clairvaux.

The Abbey continues to offer a variety of retreat opportunities. For more information, please visit www.newclairvaux.org/ visit, email reservation@newclairvaux.org, or call the Guesthouse at (530) 839-2434.



St. Luke's Dining Hall
with new generator.

Abbey of New Clairvaux

Abbot Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO
26240 7th Street
Vina, CA 96092-0080
Tel: 530-839-2161

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VINA, CA
PERMIT NO. 1



Gesta Monastica

NEWS FROM THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX

www.newclairvaux.org

📺 monksofvina | 📘 newclairvaux.abbey | 🐦 @godseeking2 | 📺 new clairvaux abbey