

Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Winter 2009



LCG Community News: Midland, MI

I am sure that the Midland group is still adjusting to the profound loss of Bob Siegel. That was an unexpected loss for all of us. Our prayers are still with his family and friends as they work through the grieving process. We look forward to news from the Midland group for our next newsletter.

Indianapolis group (submitted by Carol Andrejasich)

We look forward to hearing from the Indianapolis Group in our next Newsletter.

Chicago area (submitted by Bob Johnson)

At our February meeting we completed reading and discussion of Merton's *Waters of Siloe* to better know the history of the Cistercian Order and the founding of our Gethsemani Abbey. We marveled at the elements of Obedience which Merton deftly wove in the book, the power of Cistercian devotion to overcome the incredible barriers of war and secular/government, and the consistent devotion to simplicity and poverty as monks maintained singular devotion to God and the daily office. Also, we continued enhancing our skills using lectio divina--reading, meditating and discussing a short passage (this time from St. Jerome) to enhance our prayerful attentiveness to a particular passage and to better assess and appreciate the many facets of a passage from our personal experience supplemented by reflections from others in our community..

Columbus, OH – (Submitted by Linda Boerstler)

Our Lay Cistercian family is growing! Our group is very active. In November, when we gathered our focus was on our own facilitator, Mary Guilbert as she prepared to have brain surgery to stop the essential tremor that she had dealt with for many years. It had gotten to the point where she had great difficulty eating, and she had not been able sign her name, nor do many other simple tasks. We were visited by Father Dan Millsnor from the nearby St. Pius parish, who conducted mass. After mass we all anointed Mary with oil.

We are very happy to report that Mary's surgery was successful. She was able to sign her name for the first time in 28 years. It was a dynamic surgery and a quick recovery. We thank all of you for your prayers, cards and phone calls. Also special thanks and gratitude goes to Natalya Shulgina a Lay Cistercian from Georgia. She attended to Mary during part of the time she was in the hospital and when she came home to recuperate. It was an unselfish demonstration of love, and the community connection of the Cistercian charism.

Northeast community: (Submitted by Jane Endriss)

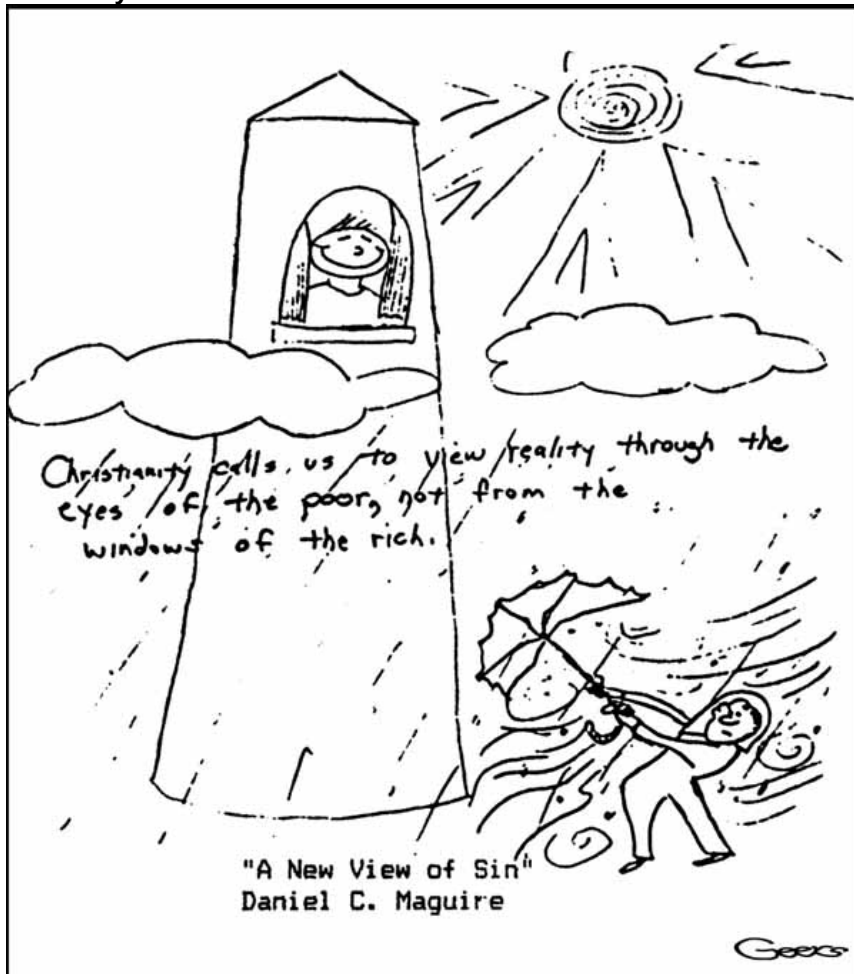
The Northeast community continues to meet via teleconference each month. Starting in February, we will be working on a book study of *"The Cistercian Way"* by Andre Louf. We may be starting a group in Baltimore, and hope to begin a group in the northern Delaware area soon. One of our candidates, Natalya Shulgina, made her commitment at the LCG retreat at the Abbey of Gethsemani this past September. We wish to congratulate her as well as the others who made their commitment that same day.

LCG Forum: (Web discussion group) (submitted by Jane Endriss)

If anyone would like to join the LCG forum web discussion list, please send an email to Jane at JEndr@aol.com

From our members:

From Ray Geers



Always lighter, littler, in order to be lifted more easily by the breeze of love.. Teresa of Lisieux

True Love (submitted by Linda Boerstler)

I carry in my heart
 a flame –
the fire of love.
 and I pray for its consumption.
Ever increasing burning –
 I will not quench it
but will add the fuel of His love
 day after day.

I hunger deeply
 this bitter longing –
this insatiable desire
 to hide in His bosom
to meld my soul to His
 until I am no longer
and He is one with me.

Breath of my breath
 Spirit rising –
Into the pleasant aroma
 of His presence
filling my nostrils
 with fragrance
sweeter than any perfume.

O my Jesus!
 to say your name –
is like honey
 on my lips.
Let my praises be
 a joy to you
my one and only love.
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The following is a homily from Father Michael that was given during the month of October 2008

^a“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!”¹

We have just heard the beautiful words of Jesus telling us of how he yearns to gather his people as a hen gathers her brood under her wings. Isn't this what he continues to do each time we gather to celebrate the Eucharist around this altar? For as often as we gather here, we make present the very death and resurrection of the Lord, are gathered under the wings of his/her loving care, fed as beloved children, protected from every harm that may befall us this day. As we die with him we are constantly being filled with the new and ever-lasting life of the Spirit. For as St Paul reminded us, the real struggle of our everyday lives, is a battle with principalities and powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness. The forces we are up against are far stronger than any of our human strength can contend. It is by the power of God, by being in Christ and under his loving protection, that we may hope to overcome, to be victorious. For in him we become shares in God's own divine life, become more than a match for the forces with which we have to deal.



He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.
Jim Elliot

Pray for these monks in February.

Fr. Anton Rusnak
Br. Aaron Schulte
Br. Gaetan Blanchette
Fr. Peter Tong
Br. Stephen Batchelor

^a Matt. 23:37–39; 2 Chr. 24:20, 21; 36:15, 16

¹ *The New King James Version*. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1982, S. Lk 13:34



UPCOMING EVENTS

Announcing the dates of the 2009 retreats.

RETREAT THEME: Humility

DATES: This year there will be two retreats for our Lay Cistercians:

(Please choose only 1 retreat weekend.)

*(*Note; The retreats are open ONLY to Lay Cistercians, Friends of LCG and Candidates.*

- June 26 through June 29
- September 25 through September 28

RESERVATIONS: EMAIL only please – through Grace Worthem at gralinc@bellsouth.net; (No phone reservations will be accepted.)

AGENDA: Many of our members requested that our LCG retreats include more time for silence and prayer. In order to accomplish this, our retreats this year will be have a different format than our previous retreats. This year, our retreats will be very similar to individual retreats at the abbey, but will include a talk from Fr. Michael and will include a time for meeting other members of the LCG.

SPECIAL NOTES regarding the 2 LCG retreat weekends:

- **No transportation available:** There will be NO transportation to or from the airport this year – So please make your own transportation. The monks are not available to pick up anyone.
- **Making your commitment?** If you are planning on making your commitment, please ask your local group coordinator to call Mary at 1-800-276-0006 so that cards may be made.
- **Last minute cancellations:** If for some reason you must call to cancel at the last minute or for some other reason or questions, please call Mary Guilbert at 1-800-276-0006. This is her business line. If the line is busy please leave a message and please MENTION THAT YOU ARE A LAY CISTERCIAN.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE ABBEY WITH ANY CHANGES OR TO REQUEST A RESERVATION.

CISTERCIAN HISTORY



The golden age (1134-1342): The establishment of the general chapters and the abbot's visit to the daughter houses.

The general chapters were held every year up to 1411, when they became intermittent. Their decisions were codified. The first codification was that of 1133, under the title "Instituta Capituli Generalis". The second, which bears the title "Institutiones Capituli Generalis", was commenced in the year 1203 by the Abbot Arnoud I, and was promulgated in 1240. The third, "Libelli Antiquarum Definitionum Capituli Generalis Ordinis Cisterciensis", was issued in 1289 and in 1316. Finally, the general chapter of 1350 promulgated the "Novellae Definitiones" in conformity with the Constitution of Benedict XII, "Fulgens ut stella" of 12 July, 1355. The regular visits also contributed much to the maintenance of unity and fervour. Every abbey was visited once a year by the abbot of the house on which it immediately depended. Cîteaux was visited by the four first fathers, that is to say, by the Abbots of La Ferté, of Pontigny, of Clairvaux, and Morimond.

"The Visitor", say the ancient statutes, "will urge the Religious to greater respect for their Abbot, and to remain more and more united among themselves by the bonds of mutual love for Jesus Christ's sake . . . The Visitor ought not to be a man who will easily believe every one indiscriminately, but he should investigate with care those matters of which he has no knowledge, and, having ascertained the truth, he should correct abuses with prudence, uniting his zeal for the Order with his feelings of sincere paternal affection. On the other hand, the Superior visited ought to show himself submissive to, and full of confidence in, the Visitor, and do all in his power to reform his house, since one day he will have to render an account to the Lord. . . [The Abbot] will avoid both before the Visitor and after his departure everything that will have the appearance of revenge, reproach or indignation against any of them" [sc. his subjects]. If the visitor should act against prescriptions, he was to be corrected and punished according to the gravity of his fault by the abbot who was his superior, or by another abbot, or even by the general chapter. Likewise, the abbot visited should know that he would become grievously culpable before God by neglecting the regular form of visit, and that he would deserve to be called to account by his "Father Immediate" or by the general chapter.

Thus everything was foreseen and provided for the maintenance of good order and charity and for the preservation of the unity of observance and spirit. "No one then ought be astonished", says the author of "Origines Cistercienses", "to find in the Cistercian abbeys, during their Golden Age, so many sanctuaries of the most fervent prayer, of the severest discipline, as well as of untiring and constant labour. This explains also why, not only persons of humble and low extraction, but also eminent men, monks and abbots of other orders, doctors in every science and clerics honoured with the highest dignities, humbly begged the favour of being admitted into the Order of Cîteaux." Thus it was during this period that the order produced the greatest number of saints, blessed, and holy persons. Many abbeys -- such as Clairvaux, Villiers, Himmerod, Heisterbach, etc. -- were so many nurseries of saints. More than forty have been canonized by the Holy See. The Order of Cîteaux constantly enjoyed the favour of the Holy See, which in numerous Bulls bestowed upon the Cistercians the highest praise, and rewarded with great privileges their services to the Church. They enjoyed the favour of sovereigns, who, having entire confidence in them, entrusted to them, like Frederick II, important delegations; or, like Alphonsus I of Portugal, placed their persons and kingdoms under the care and protection of Our Lady of Clairvaux; or again, like Frederick II, feeling themselves near the point of death, wished to die clothed in the Cistercian habit.

The preceding was taken from <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03780c.htm>. I thought it was a very informative and interesting discussion of Cistercian history. Please click on the link if you would like to read further.

Contributions to Newsletter

If anyone would like to contribute an article, poem or prayer request to the next LCG newsletter, please send it to Linda Boerstler at Poetry328@aol.com. I will accept submissions at any time.



Cistercian Feast Days in 2009

January 20: Bl. Michael Cyprian Tansi

January 26: Sts. Robert, Alberic & Stephen, Cistercian founders

February 10: St. Scholastica, sister of St. Benedict

February 12: St. Humbeline, sister of St. Bernard

March 21: Passing of Our Father St. Benedict / founding of the monasteries of Citeaux in 1098 and Holy Spirit in 1944

April 22: Bl. Gabriella of Unity

April 26: Bl. Rafael

May 21: Remembrance of the seven martyred Cistercian monks of Atlas (Africa) in 1996

May 31: Pentecost

June 12: St. Alice (Aleydis), nun

June 14: Bl. Gerard, monk and brother of St. Bernard

June 16: St. Lutgard, nun

July 8: Bl. Eugene III, Pope and monk of the Order

July 11: Solemnity of St. Benedict

July 29: Sts. Martha, Mary & Lazarus, hosts of the Lord

August 15: Our Lady of the Assumption, patroness of all Cistercian communities

August 19: Bl. Gueric, abbot

August 20: Our Father St. Bernard

August 30: Sts. Warren & Amadeus, bishops of the Order

November 13: All Saints of the Benediction Family

http://www.trappist.net/newweb/cistercian_feast_days.html

Poems (Submitted by Br. Paul Quenon)

<p>Dragon Trainer for Br. Rene</p> <p>In the night of Epiphany my sleep-porch was disturbed by light approaching and a motor purr swinging around a curve to the propane tank.</p> <p>The high cab nosed past, lit with gems as a dragon prince, tentative and uncertain of his welcome. His endless chrome length was dotted with amber foot lights. He stopped and released a brake fart.</p> <p>I curled in my bag, sleepless, un-stirring as a naked larva in a cocoon that might be swallowed up in one bite.</p> <p>A passenger emerged to lead in the headlights; a rickety little monk on a cane led the drive, as a shepherd meek and humble, in tow with a dragon, tamed and polite before such fearless simplicity.</p>	<p>Tug -bell With even pace through darkness, The Angelus tugs, weighty with mysteries, steady as a barge hauled into harbor.</p> <p>Three strokes at a time - in times of three morning, noon, eve</p> <p>bearing freight inward through time</p> <p>one minute Seed</p> <p>imponderable deposit down in silence,</p> <p>till with quickened speed its ringing resumed</p> <p>the tug relieved of its load, takes leave</p> <p>for another treasure lode.</p>
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Administration:

LCG advisory meeting

The next LCG advisory meeting is scheduled for May 15 – 17, 2009 at the Abbey. If members have concerns or suggestions, please discuss them with your LCG area coordinator before the May meeting so that the item can be discussed, if needed, by the advisory council.

Kentucky: Michael Brown (tiedyedmystic@haoo.com) and Nancy Sparrow (nsparro@e-farmcredit.com)

Chicago, IL: Bob Johnson (rvjatty@ameritech.net)

Columbus, OH: Mary Gilbert (aboundo@earthlink.net) and Marge Kielkopf (ckielkop@columbus.rr.com)

Indianapolis, IN: Carol Andrejasich (carol.andy@prodigy.net) and Barry Cappelman (chapcapp@yahoo.com)

Greater Cincinnati: Eve Van Sickle (eve7208@juno.com) and John Neiheisel (johnjackie24@yahoo.com)

Midland, MI: Larry Milco (lmilco@charter.net)

Northeast: Jane Endriss (JEndr@aol.com)

New England: Michelle Oliviere (PAX58@aol.com)

Tennessee: Gray Matthews (matthews@memphis.edu), Juli Gallup (jquizkidmom@aol.com) and Bill Sanders (sanders2795@bellsouth.net)

LCG Forum listserv: Jane Endriss (moderator) (JEndr@aol.com)

Abbey: Fr. Michael Casagram and Br. Paul Quenon

LCG CONTRIBUTIONS—Annual Contribution

Dear Friends,

Annually we request that you contribute to support activities of our Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani. We run quite a lean operation: last year expenses were primarily for: maintaining and expanding our web site (a primary source of outreach and communication within our community;) defray expenses for representatives to attend the International Lay Cistercian Encounter in Spain; to help pay for expenses of our annual retreat; for costs of telephone and postage for communication; and to plant (annually) a tree at Gethsemani in memory of monks who have died during the year. During the coming year we anticipate added expenses for increased efforts to enhance formation among the laity and further to cooperate and nourish communication and development among lay Cistercians in the US and around the world.

Please give generously: your contributions are essential to support and expand lay participation in the Cistercian charism.

Send your check payable to Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani to:

Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Abbey
Robert V. Johnson, Treasurer
5648 South Dorchester Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637-1751

