



Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Spring 2008

Notes from Bob Siegel:

Replies or comments to Bob can be sent to:

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E-mail: bobdee8@chartermi.net

I have several things to share today so I will use the old monastic numbering system.

- I. Abbot Damien is retiring this spring which means there is going to be an election for a new abbot. Abbot Damien will retire about two weeks before the election which is scheduled for **April 29th**. The election will be overseen by the Father Immediate of Gethsemani, Fr. Damian Carr, Abbot of Spencer. We are calling on all LCG'rs to begin keeping the monks and this election process in your daily prayers. We also call for all LCG'rs to make April 29th a day of prayer and fasting for the election. This election is of special interest to us as this is the election of our abbot as well. I will be sending out a notice to all members when we find out who the new abbot is.
- II. We have spoken often about the coenobitic side of our way of life. Fortunately most of our members are able to be in local LCG communities but there are a few out there who live long distances from a 'formed' community or even to another LCG'r. We would like those of you in this circumstance to consider entering into a prayer partnership with another LCG'r. This is sometimes called soul partners. We have already been able to help several people enter into this type of spiritual relationship. If you are interested please contact me and I will be blessed to help you find that right partner. We thank Sue Kephart for this idea.
- III. We have had several people ask, "How can I find out if there is another LCG'r at the Abbey when I am there on retreat. It would be neat if we could get together to get to know each other by sharing our stories. Our recommendation is that when you go to the Abbey for retreat, if you wish, put a note on the bulletin board by the elevator. This could be like a 3 X 5 card. On one side you simply write LCG and on the other side your name and room number. If you see such a note on the board and you would like to meet this person, put a check mark on the LCG side of the card so that the other person knows that someone has left a note. Then on the other side put your name and room number and suggest a meal time to meet in the talking dining room. I would also like to receive some comments back on this idea as well to see how it works.
- IV. I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest LCG Community which is the Kingston LCGA community of Kingston Ontario Canada. The members are Diane Law (Leader), Cheryl Kayahara-Bass, Nancy Berdusco and Kevin Murphy. Please keep this community in your prayers.

- V. We have also established another community in Michigan, more on this in the next newsletter.
- VI. A question has come to my attention that it would be nice if we had a LCG logo. I would be interested in any ideas any of you have for this logo. Please send them on to me and we will let you know what we end up with.
- VII. Oct. 1 to Dec. 31 the following have entered into the mentoring process. Please add them to your prayers.
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| Scott Moss, Auburn IN | Ian Miller, Whitehal, OH, |
| Tim Fullerton, Saline, MI. | David Whitlock, Lebanon KY. Von |
| Bruce, Knoxville, TN, | Susan Messner, Bloomington IN. |
| Stephen Catazarite, Rohester, PA. | Justin Grotheer, Calais, ME |
| George Shunk, Jeromesville, OH | Patrick Guest, Chicago, IL |
| Brian Ipock, Sevierville, TN. | Kevin Barr, Baltimore, MD |
| David Gillesie, Troy, OH. | Joyce Minkler, Nerninx, KY |
| Kevin Murphy, Maple Leaf, Canada | |

As you see from the above list the Holy Spirit is sending us a lot of people who feel called to live the Cistercian life style as members of the LCG. There are two ways to handle this issue: one is to not allow people who are not able to participate in an established LCG community and the other is to be very inclusive and allow all people who have a real call to the Cistercian Way and/or the Abbey of Gethsemani.. Your advisory council has voted on this twice and affirmed both times that we will take the 'inclusive' way, which we believe is what also makes Gethsemani different from some other abbeys.

The point of this discussion is that with so many new people we are in need of Mentors. If you have made your commitment to LCG and feel that you would like to be a mentor to someone, please let me know and we can talk about it. It is not difficult. It is just "where two or more are gathered in my name". So please send me a note if you are interested.

LCG Community News:

Midland, MI (submitted by Bob Siegel)

The Midland community has had a wonder-filled Advent, Christmas and Epiphany. We celebrated Advent and Christmas by following daily readings from "Advent and Christmas with Thomas Merton". This was a great experience for us, because we each knew the others were reading the same words each day during our morning prayer. We also had a good Advent meeting, discussing, from "Introducing Benedict's Rule" by Michael Casey, OCSO, the chapter on Humility. What a topic for Advent. We continue to walk away from these dialogue sessions with greater understanding of the Cistercian way, as it can be lived in our own lives in our own space, with our own people, within the walls of our lives. We had our Epiphany meeting on the Saturday of Epiphany weekend at which we received two new members into our community. They were unable to be at the September meeting so we held their commitment ceremony at our regular meeting. We followed this all up with a night out with our spouses at a local restaurant, and good and blessed time was had by all. It is good to pray, study, center, lectio and break bread together.

Kentucky Lay Cistercians (submitted by Michael Brown)

The Kentucky lay Cistercians continue to meet monthly at the Abbey of Gethsemani and to welcome new inquirers. In recent months we have read and discussed "A Statement of Identity by English Speaking Lay Cistercians" that has been prepared for the International Encounter to be held in Spain in June. In January we gathered for the annual Epiphany Sunday get together. After mass we everyone met in the Family Guesthouse across the highway from the monastery for a wonderful meal and a beautiful solo cello concert by a friend of Brother Paul's who was formerly a member of the Cincinnati Symphony. The day ended with some recent poems written by Br. Paul. In February we got back on track with Brian Taylor's book on the Rule of St Benedict entitled "Spirituality for Everyday Living." Because of the diversity of our group, and in an attempt to meet the needs of everyone, we also had a group discussion about future areas of study and discussion.

Chicago area (submitted by Bob Johnson)

At our recent meeting we shared reflections of our spiritual nourishment since the last meeting; a method to "check in," to test our temperature (scale: "heaven" to "arid") offering support and consolation to group members on our spiritual journey. To continue our search for ways of prayer and devotion Frank Kranik introduced us to the First Saturday Devotion (Marian) which entails a commitment, on the first Saturday of each of five consecutive months, to combine reconciliation, Holy Communion, recitation of five decades of the Rosary, while keeping company with and praying for Mary. We find the discipline of repetition and directed prayer often helpful to center us amid daily secular pulls and tugs.

We continue to meet first for Mass at the beautiful St. Peter's church in the loop, afterward meeting in the solitude of a quiet space within the large building.

Greater Cincinnati LCG Community (submitted by Mike Johnson)

We began our 2008 schedule of monthly meetings and events on Saturday, January 12, with a community formation day. We picked up our group study of the *Exordium* with a discussion of Unit 6, "The Paternity of St. Benedict." Following Morning Prayer we welcomed our newest candidate, David Gillespie of Troy, Ohio, with a special prayer and blessing, as he began his two year period of discernment with our community. Our community has formed a leadership team who will be performing administrative and formation tasks for our community. Mike Johnson will be working with the new team during the next several months, as they assume shared coordinator duties. Our community will gather for a Lenten Day of Prayer on Saturday, February 9, at the Monastery of St. Clare. We especially remember during the day of prayer the community of the Abbey of Gethsemani and our fellow LCG sisters and brothers.

Northeast community: (Submitted by Jane Endriss)

- The Northeast community held its first teleconference on January 21st. The teleconference went well, and allowed members who live at a distance to have a shared discussion. We are planning another teleconference for February 18th.
- One of our members, Michelle, has been invited to take part in a meeting with the Lay Cistercians of Mount St. Mary's in Massachusetts to find out more about their formation process. Michelle has also begun to mentor our new candidate, Justin Grotheer, who lives in Maine.

Indiana (submitted by Carol Andrejasich)

The Indiana group is growing and has several new members in formation. Because we are so scattered, we have informally divided into a northern Indiana group and a central Indiana group. Each group is meeting monthly. Twice a year we have a combined retreat day. We are planning

one for April. We had tried to have an online discussion group with our members, but it didn't work out.

Western LCG – (submitted by Becky DeGeorge - California)

In early December, Bob Siegel contacted members of the LCG in the Southwest and West of the U.S., about forming a monthly telegroup to serve these far-flung members. Becky DeGeorge, the coordinator for the first call says, "I've led and participated in telegroups before. Once people get over their initial uncertainty, I believe they'll discover that this can be a warm, personal and supportive network as we live the Cistercian charism.

I'll be contacting all Western LCG folks this week with the number and PIN. Hope to hear you on the call!"

Date: Saturday, Feb. 23

Time: 12:00 (noon) to 1:00 p.m., PST

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:



Cistercian Corner: (submitted by Steve Taylor)

Exordium Parvum

We're going to start with a rough breakdown of the table of contents into four subject headings. I urge you to visit www.ocso.org, and visit the Document/Text section of the site. There you will find a link to the *Exordium Parvum*, as well as many other important works under, Basic Texts.

Please take note of how many letters there are in this document. Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell is of the opinion that the EP began as a "file of documents with [a] literary prologue and commentary."

Chapters one through five concern the movement of the monks from Molesme to Cîteaux. There is one letter in this section.

Chapters five through nine address Robert's return to Molesme, and the succession of Alberic, has three letters.

The Roman privilege takes up chapters ten through fourteen, and all four of this sections chapters are letters.

The four remaining chapters are consolidation and growth.

Eight of the eighteen chapters are letters, two of which are from the Pope.

So why the eight letters? The letters serve an important purpose. They provide the canonical base of the New Monastery. These letters are their legal stronghold, authored by Archbishops and Popes. No one can come along and force the founders of Cîteaux to disband, or adopt some new way of life contrary to their vocation. As Fr. Michael Casagram says, "it was violent in the 11th Century." These letters provided a type of security. Letters from Archbishops, Apostolic Legates, and Popes, go a long way to proving a right to exist, in the rough and tumble world that was the 11th Century. Seen in that light these letters are considerably more interesting.

When you read the *Exordium Parvum* either online, or a copy printed from the www.ocso.org website, hopefully you now have a sense of the why about the letters.

God Alone (submitted by Jose Jemolowicz of Michigan)

people
invisible to my own eye
yet, souls that have voices I hear clearly

no matter the day or night
these souls find themselves in
they are community
belonging to the body

voices of despair, confusion, triumph
voices of witness, repentance, salvation
voices of thanksgiving, praise and glory

voices that become one voice
one voice that proclaims
God Alone.

Discipleship: (submitted by Sue Meissner of Indiana)

"Thinking about the sacrifices that one needs to make in the formation of discipleship, I came across this quotation that struck a cord with. Perhaps others can benefit from it." Sue Meissner

"How can you and I really expect the glide naively through life as if to say, 'Lord, give me experience, but not grief, not sorrow, not pain, not opposition, not betrayal, and certainly not to be forsaken. Keep from me Lord, all those experiences which made Thee what Thou art! Then let me come and dwell with Thee and fully share Thy joy!'" --Neal A. Maxwell

Prayer intentions:

A prayer request for Deacon Bill Heard, diagnosed with throat cancer. His voice box must be removed. (submitted by Dan Erwin of New Jersey)

Please pray for the mother of Carol Andrejasich whose mother suffered a heart attack and a stroke that left her with significant damage. (submitted Carol Andrejasich) of Indiana)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Retreat - Plans are underway for the September 2008 retreat. The dates are Sept. 26, 27,28. More details soon.

LCG Annual Summer Picnic at the Abbey of Gethsemani – Usually held in July. More details soon.

CISTERCIAN HISTORY

For the next several newsletters, we are going to include excerpts from “Gethsemani Speaks” written by Father Edward Knecht, the abbey’s archivist in the 1950’s through the 1970’s. The excerpts included here are used by permission of the Abbey of Gethsemani:

The Reverend Father Paulinus, sent in advance to America by the Right Reverend Father Dom Maximus, abbot of Melleray, bought of the Institution of Loretto the farm of Gethsemani, where the sisters had a boarding school. After all the necessary preliminary arrangements had been made, the colony destined to form this establishment, and consisting of forty-four religious, to wit: seventeen choir religious (of whom where fourteen professed and three novices) and twenty-seven lay brethren (of whom were twenty professed, one novice, one oblate, two postulants and three familiar brothers), under the conduct of Very

Reverend Father Eutropius, as prior, left Melleray on the 24th of October, 1848, and embarked at Havre on the 2nd of November.

They arrived in New Orleans on the 7th of December, where they immediately took the steamboat for Louisville. They arrived in ten days at Portland and thence, after one day's delay, reached Louisville, where they were kindly received by the Right Reverend Bishops Flaget and Spalding. Three days later they were at Gethsemani, and almost immediately resumed their former austere and laborious manner of living.

After a few months, the Very Reverend Father Eutropius left Gethsemani and undertook a voyage to Europe, which the interest of the new foundation rendered absolutely necessary. During his absence, the Reverend Father Paulinus governed the community as subprior. Of him we find the following Act: "I have on this day bargained and sold to the Reverend Father Paulinus a certain tract of land of 162 acres, lying on the East Fork of Pottinger's Creek, known as the David Graft's Farm for, and in consideration of one thousand and two hundred dollars, reserving for myself the crops of this year only. Mary 2nd, 1850 Signed: James Clarke"

During his stay in Rome, the Very Reverend Father Eutropius obtained from his Holiness Pius IX the raising of Gethsemani from the rank of priory to that of Abbey.



Contributions to Newsletter

If anyone would like to contribute an article, poem or prayer request to the next LCG newsletter, please sent it to Jane Endriss at JEndr@aol.com



Prayer Partners:

Recently, the LCG Advisory Committee was discussing how we would better help those members of our LCG communities who are homebound or unable to attend local meetings. We have found that various members are unable to attend scheduled meetings because of ongoing illness, caring for sick family members, chemotherapy, or other unforeseen circumstances. These folks are a vital part of our LCG community, and as such we value them.

In an effort to keep these folks connected to the community, we are thinking of a "Prayer Partner" relationship – whereby an LCG member would be assigned a "Prayer Partner" member who they could then call on regular intervals for prayer, support, and dialog.

We are looking for someone who might be willing to coordinate this effort. If anyone feels called to coordinate the "Prayer Partner" membership, please contact Jane Endriss (jendr@aol.com) or Bob Siegel (bobdee8@chartermi.net).



Prayers for the Monks of the Abbey of Gethsemani:

As Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani, we appreciate the Cistercian monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani and their lives of prayer and witness to God's love. Shortly, we will be beginning to send out the names of 4 monks at the abbey per month, and ask LCG members to keep these monks -- and their intentions-- in your prayers for that given month. When possible, we will also send out a small picture of each monk. We will also let those monks know that the entire LCG will be praying for them. It is our prayer that God will continually guide and bless monks at the Abbey of Gethsemani.

Rule of Benedict - Chapter 49: On the Observance of Lent

The life of a monk ought always to be a Lenten observance. However, since such virtue is that of few, we advise that during these days of Lent he guard his life with all purity and at the same time wash away during these holy days all the shortcomings of other times. This will then be worthily done, if we restrain ourselves from all vices. Let us devote ourselves to tearful prayers, to reading and compunction of heart, and to abstinence.

During these days, therefore, let us add something to the usual amount of our service, special prayers, abstinence from food and drink, that each one offer to God "with the joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Thes 1:6), of his own accord, something above his prescribed measure; namely, let him withdraw from his body somewhat of food, drink, sleep, speech, merriment, and with the gladness of spiritual desire await holy Easter.

Let each one, however, make known to his Abbot what he offereth and let it be done with his approval and blessing; because what is done without permission of the spiritual father will be imputed to presumption and vain glory, and not to merit. Therefore, let all be done with the approval of the Abbot.

Donations:

Donations for the LCG are now being accepted. These funds are used for our mailings, development of booklets, printing, web site, work with the International Lay Cistercian meetings, and other project that are vital for our group.

Please send your donations to Mike Johnson at:

LCG
PO Box 503
Oxford, OH 45056

Checks should be made out to LCG.

Administration:

LCG advisory meeting

The next LCG advisory meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2008. If members have concerns or suggestions, please discuss them with your LCG area coordinator before time, so that the item can be discussed, if needed, by the advisory council.

Kentucky: Kathleen Ellison (fabledpromise@aol.com) and Bryan Sherwood (bhsher@qx.net)

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

Columbus, OH: Mary Gilbert (aboundo@earthlink.net) and Don Buckingham (dbucking@columbus.rr.com)

Indianapolis, IN: Carol Andrejasich (carol.andy@prodigy.net) and Charla Banner (charla81048@aol.com)

Greater Cincinnati: Mike Johnson (LCG503@aol.com)

Midland, MI: Bob Siegel (bobdee8@chartermi.net) and George Schaller (jgschall@mindnet.org)

Pennsylvania: Jane Endriss (JEndr@aol.com)

Tennessee: Gray Matthews (matthews@memphis.edu)

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

Abbey: Fr. Michael Casagram and Br. Paul Quenon