



# Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani

## Summer 2008

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### LCG Community News:

#### **Midland, MI (submitted by Bob Siegel)**

The LCG community of Midland is doing just fine. We continue our study of the Rule of Benedict that was written by Michael Casey OCSO and David Tommins OCSO. We reflect on the material as it applies to us as lay people trying to live the rule in our lives within our walls. This is one of those documents that you read and then wonder what are you going to talk about for four hours, and when you get there you run out of time.

The other event in the Midland LCG community's life is that we have adopted a young man from Malawi Africa and we are sponsoring him through the seminary to become a priest. As you may know Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world and this young man would have no opportunity to pursue his vocation without help. It is our blessing to be part of his experience.

#### **Indianapolis group (submitted by Carol Andrejasich)**

The Indianapolis group continues to meet monthly to discuss Monastic Practices.

On April 19, the Indiana group had a one-day retreat facilitated by Martha Ardis. She gave presentations on prayer and the difficulties that we all encounter on our faith journey. The theme throughout the day was "It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you first". Martha has done considerable research and study on prayer and incorporated many of her notes and insights garnered over the years. She also shared many of her experiences. The all-day retreat consisted of several presentations, group sharing and quiet time for prayer and reflection.

#### **Chicago area (submitted by Bob Johnson)**

Our recent meeting featured consideration of the first several chapters of *The Cistercians* by Louis Lekai.

Mary Haley led our discussion as we seek to become better informed of our Cistercian history and to understand the eleventh century monastic "renewal:" all to enable us better to wear the mantle of Cistercian charism. Next we will enter *Waters of Siloe* by Thomas Merton. We find return to some of the basic, formative documents enriches our lives and our spiritual quest. Later we reviewed accomplishments of the recent Huerta Encounter, again seeking elements of continuity and change in the Order.

Continuity with the wider community was facilitated by attendance at noon Mass at St. Peters in the loop and closing with worship of the little hours (None) using the Huerta Encounter liturgy.

#### **Columbus, OH – (Submitted by Mary Guilbert)**

Our Lay Cistercian family is growing! We now count from 18 to 24 each month. We are intently studying the Holy Rule each month, as well as time to be silent, share concerns and blessings and of course share food together. We are blessed to have members traveling from Jackson, Mt. Vernon and as far away as Cleveland each month.

We are sponsoring this year's retreat from September 26<sup>th</sup>. through September 28<sup>th</sup>. The focus for the retreat will be Lectio Divina. We are working hard to make you time at retreat a silent contemplative experience.

If you are ever in town, we'd love to welcome you!

**Northeast community: (Submitted by Jane Endriss)**

- The northeast community continues to grow with new members. There are enough members now in Pittsburgh that they are beginning to form a local community there. We also have several folks in the New Hampshire area, as well as the Baltimore area.
- As for the rest of us who are at a great distance from one another geographically, we have successfully implemented monthly teleconferences which seem to be working quite well.

**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](mailto:JEndr@aol.com)

**Rule of St. Benedict listserv:** If anyone would like join to the Rule of St. Benedict listserv, please send an email to Steve Taylor at [steve40004@bardstowncable.net](mailto:steve40004@bardstowncable.net)

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From our members:



**St Francis deSales** (submitted by Josie Jermolowicz)

The everlasting God has, in His wisdom, foreseen from eternity the cross that He now presents to you as a gift from His inmost Heart. This cross He now sends you, He has considered with His all-knowing eyes, understood with His Divine mind, tested with His wise justice, warmed with loving arms and weighed with His own hands to see that it be not one inch too large and not one ounce too heavy for you. He has blessed it with His holy Name, anointed it with His grace, perfumed it with His consolation, taken one last glance at you and your courage, and then sent it to you from heaven, a special greeting from God to you, an alms of the all merciful love of God. (St Francis deSales)

## Light in the Abbey (submitted by Natalya Shulgina)

Light in the Abbey  
Streaming in  
Touching my skin with gold  
Hallowing my hollow body

Not forceful nor violent but going ever-deep,  
all-permeating, all-purifying, ever-present

Nothing is hidden  
from its healing, restoring, life-giving  
warmth

—Not even I...

So, let me be in You



Cistercian Corner: (submitted by Steve Taylor)



On vacation.... Steve's column will be back next time!

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## Prayer intentions:

I have an uncle who was a Trappist, having served as Abbot at Genesee for a while and since the mid 70's he has been in Brazil. My family just found out last weekend that he died Pentecost weekend.  
Rev. David C. Frederici



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Lay Cistercians of Gethsemani Retreat - September 2008 retreat. The dates are Sept. 26, 27, 28. For those retreatants who need transportation from the airport to the Abbey,, please contact Mary Guilbert at [aboundo@earthlink.net](mailto:aboundo@earthlink.net)

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## CISTERCIAN HISTORY



Novitiate Sundays (submitted by Ray Geers)

Every Sunday morning Brother Rene would tap on the door and wake one of the novices up, sometime after the 3 AM prayer vigil, to bake a week's worth of unleavened bread for the daily Holy Eucharist. He had developed his own recipe over the years which met with approval of the bishop in that locality. In keeping with the solemnity of the hour, there was almost no talk while we rolled, patted, shaped and cooked the sacred bread. The windows of the bakery framed the ultramarine Kentucky sky in a beautiful starkness. We silently breathed in the smell of the toasted wheat bread as the oven warmed the air between us. Each of the seven large hosts was etched with a pattern of criss-crosses to facilitate the priest in breaking it up into a community of little chewy pieces. We made a couple of hosts for the guest house priest and a couple of small flat lumps for ourselves to munch on as well. The new batch would cool on the rack as we cleaned up and returned to our cells for more prayer and meditation. Often I would simply crash into bed and sleep, the smell of bread dough still on my hands.

After Sunday mass I often stayed in the church to meditate and pray. Monks are generous with both incense and music on Sundays and I lapped it up like a hungry man laps up good gravy. The last notes of the rich music sprayed out from the organ in a rainbow of sound which echoed in the very furniture of the abbey church. The deeper quiet afterwards would be punctuated by receding footsteps, a cough, or the scrapping of a metallic chair on the gravely terrazzo floor. But the wave of silence would find its way back to the room, like light breaking through thin and fast-moving clouds. This was as close as I ever got to why I came to Gethsemani. It never got any better. God was in the air and in my belly. His Holy Eucharist rumbled in my bowels and his spirit whistled in and out of my nasal passages. His look was golden light between shadows. He smelled of frankincense. Calm was his abiding there with the few of us who stayed behind to pray after mass. More coughing from one of the elder monks or from a visitor to the abbey could not chase him away, at least not for the moment there, not on a good day. There would be other days less peaceful and more distracted.

After Sunday mass and the noonday meal the whole of Gethsemani became a ghost town. We used to wonder about it out loud in the novitiate: where do seventy to eighty monks disappear to every Sunday afternoon? It was so still you could almost hear the grass breathing. No work was required on Sunday and no visible sign of work there was except the divine office. So Sunday was the day we all had to live like the solitary people most of us came here to be. There was a good chunk of time in the meat of the day to do whatever we liked.

If I wanted to be funny I'd say somewhere there was a big poker game going on and the new guys just hadn't been invited yet, but I knew it wasn't that. We were invited to the game, the old and the new. The game was between three players- God, the self and the world between these two. The object was to spend your allotted time, whatever day it was, well. Winners received a blessing and in turn became a blessing to others. They made it to "home". Losers stayed stuck at "start", never quite making it past the narrow, little, miserable self.

## 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](mailto:JEndr@aol.com)



## Prayers for the Monks of the Abbey of Gethsemani:

The names of the monks for whom we will be praying in August are:

Fr. James Conner; Br. Julian Wallace; Br. Rene Richie; Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell and Br. Patrick Hart.



## Cistercian Feast Days in August

### **Tuesday, August 19, 2008**

Saint Gueric, Abbot of Our Order

Born at Tournai, Belgium, he was probably educated at the cathedral school and may have taught there. For a time he lived as a solitary in a small house near the church. Attracted by the reputation of St Bernard, he went to Clairvaux probably in 1125, and at Bernard's urging, became a monk there.

Gueric was elected second abbot of Igny, Clairvaux's fourth daughterhouse, in 1138. The house flourished under his guidance, but it is for the spiritual teaching preserved in his fifty-four liturgical sermons that he is especially remembered. "Drawing on his own deep experience of God and the things of God, he leads into the depths of the mystery being celebrated, and not infrequently makes practical applications that are quite unexpected. His sermons can go far toward helping the reflective reader acquire the receptive, contemplative approach to the liturgy that allows him to be truly formed by it."

### **Wednesday, August 20, 2008**

St. Bernard, Abbot and Doctor of Our Order

Monk, abbot, mystic, reformer, prophet, apostle, miracle-worker, peacemaker and war-maker, counselor of popes and kings, champion of the poor, Bernard was probably the most influential man of his times. Through his writings, which run to some 3,500 pages, and include sermons, treatises and letters, he has continued to exert influence up to and including our own time. His writings reflect his experiences as he interacted with people and events. Above all, they reveal him as a man athirst for God, eager to teach others the way to God and impart to them a desire for holiness.

### **Saturday August 30, 2008**

Sts. Warren and Amadeus, Bishops of Our Order

#### **St Warren (Guerin)**

A monk of Molesme, he joined the founders of Our Lady of the Alps in Switzerland. In 1113 he was elected its second abbot. He gathered the monks, who were living in groups of three or four, into a cenobitic community following the Rule of St Benedict. In 1138 they were incorporated into the Cistercian Order. Two years later Warren was chosen to be bishop of Sion in Switzerland. Each year he returned to Our Lady of the Alps for two or three weeks, and it was on one such visit that he died. St Bernard's Letter 254 is addressed to Warren and Letter 151 to his community.

#### **St Amadeus**

Born in Chatte, Dauphine, of the royal house of Franconia, when he was ten years old, his father, Lord Amadeus d'Hauterives (January 14), entered Bonnevaux, taking his young son with him. Not long afterwards, dissatisfied with the education the young Amadeus was receiving, he left with him for Cluny and later sent him to his kinsman, Conrad of Hohenstaufen, the future Emperor Conrad III. In 1125, the younger Amadeus became a monk of Clairvaux where he remained for fourteen years. St Bernard then appointed him abbot of Hautecombe. This was a Benedictine house which had become affiliated with the Cistercians three years earlier. St Bernard had changed the site and it was Amadeus' task to supervise the construction of the new monastery, deal with hostile neighbors and establish the community in Cistercian living. This he did so ably that five years later the diocese of Lausanne, Switzerland chose him as bishop. In that office he again showed himself a true pastor and an able administrator.

## A Note from Fr. Michael:

We just had our summer picnic and Paul shared a poem on the bells for each of the day's offices. We discussed a bit the effects of the daily Office on the lives of LCG members, whether it creates a rhythm in their lives. I think it an important question for all LCG members -- How does their daily prayer life create a rhythm in their lives? Does it, in fact, keep them from being caught up in the rat race? Since the Office is so central to the monk's life, I wonder if LCG members don't need some kind of rhythmic break in their day, something that periodically calls them back to center so as to free themselves from the alienating pressures of our society. Perhaps Br. Paul would share his poem and members can respond to the question about what it is in their lives that brings them regularly back to center so are to remain free of unhealthy societal pressure. Peace and blessings, Michael (*Note: Responses can be made to the LCG FORUM discussion list.*)

### Voices From The Bells – (Submitted by B r. Paul Quenon )

<p>Lauds</p> <p>The dun air hangs with fine spray that dries on my brow. St.Michael bell, stirred from distant memory of battle, lifts, strikes and sustains a tone of sincerity that's laid upon this double-minded monk</p> <p>who in the dark steps alone into the awful room, for the unbearable intimacy of conversation with God.</p> <p>Choir fills, brightens and psalmody flows. I push off onto its current tossing up     ...<i>distress...</i>     ...<i>shortness of life...</i>     ...<i>shine on our children...</i></p> <p>Its expanse finally crossed, I look back ~ None of that was about me alone.</p> <p>*****</p>	<p>Tierce bell, its mother-touch strokes a tone that softly soaks in grass and firs.</p> <p>So urged, I enter on the foot-worried floor crossed by minds bent on toils already crowding the day, many pebbles make the floor, the floor by pebbles made</p> <p>    ...<i>I abide a stranger...</i>     ...<i>my eyes to the mountains...</i>     ...<i>standing within your gates...</i></p> <p>Gone there, gone there's how I'm here.</p> <p>*****</p>
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<p>Under noon's high booming sun the small, neutral Sext bell scuttles me to shadeless space, its spare rank of survivor guard</p> <p>    ...<i>pressed me hard...</i>     ...<i>who could survive...</i>     ...<i>my heart's not proud...</i></p> <p>Shall all be well? Were all things well? Is anything well? ...very well     ...well...</p> <p>*****</p>	<p>None's bell heeded some heard by none squeezed small by rush and talk</p> <p>    ...<i>in vain do its builders labor...</i>     ...<i>I'll give no sleep to my eyes...</i>     ...<i>it seemed like a dream...</i></p> <p>In high smooth curves long winged birds turn without a flap     on distant watch.</p> <p>*****</p>
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<p>Vesper's bell dimly probes a thin finger down between sink and showers.</p> <p>Faint tolling tugs one up from towels and socks through cloister funnel to door swung large on sunlit walls and clarity resounding.  <i>...heavens proclaim...</i>  <i>...utmost bounds...</i>  <i>...walk all round it...</i></p> <p>Groundhog, raised on his haunches, gazes around.</p> <p>*****</p>	<p>Compline's ring:</p> <p>clarification, clarification, eases me into a shaded grove of monks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>...in the shadow of your wings...</i>  <i>...the plague that prowls in the darkness...</i>  <i>...with length of life I will content him...</i></p> <p>Angelus tolls for you banished child returned to clemency.</p> <p>*****</p>
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<p>Big St. Mary bell's rings all wrested from its belly rocks to a halt, done</p> <p>all be rested frets begone done monk                    be done.</p> <p>*****</p>	<p>3:00 a.m.</p> <p>The ever wakeful Vigil bell spreads the silent air with unsleep, that carries round to walls and barns which smoothe it to a stream that sets coyote howling and monks to prayer.</p> <p>Father Sacristan bursts into the darkened church, bustles loudly, clearing his throat, enough to evict demons from shadows and corners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>...tear out their fangs...</i>  <i>...they gabble open mouthed...</i>  <i>...daughters graceful as columns...</i></p> <p>~ wide awake on</p>
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## Administration:

LCG advisory meeting

The next LCG advisory meeting is scheduled for September 27, 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](mailto:fabledpromise@aol.com) ) and Nancy Sparrow ( [nsparro@e-farmcredit.com](mailto:nsparro@e-farmcredit.com) )

**Chicago, IL:** Bob Johnson ( [rvjatty@ameritech.net](mailto:rvjatty@ameritech.net) )

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

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**Abbey:** Fr. Michael Casagram and Br. Paul Quenon