

FR ABBOT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

On Tuesday 16th January, Dom Barnabas Kerr, monk of our Community, passed away. He had been unwell for only a few days previously and the sudden loss took us all by surprise. An obituary of this faithful monk and much-valued brother appears on another page. He is remembered with affection and respect.

Other deaths too have touched us. An old friend of Pluscarden and a longstanding priest of the Westminster archdiocese, Fr Raymund Geraerts, died on 7th November. Mrs Barbara Simpkin of Elgin, an oblate, died shortly after Christmas and was buried beside her late husband at Pluscarden on 5th January. She was a woman of exceptional charity and wisdom, whose passing was a loss to the parish and diocese as well as to ourselves. Then our own Br Gabriel lost his father, Mr Jim Potter, on 9 February. Please pray for Dom Barnabas and for these others that they may rest in peace.

With 4 other brethren having had spells in hospital and various "bugs" making their rounds among us, Spring has become a very attractive proposition! We were mercifully on the edge of the Christmas blizzard that stormed Scotland, but still the power failed and our Christmas Vigil and Midnight Mass were celebrated by candle and gas-light. The church was very cold by the end!

In December Abbot Alfred and I went south for the abbatial blessing of Dom Francis Baird, 5th abbot of Prinknash. This was a happy event, and encouragement for all present.

On the 3rd Sunday of Advent, we joined forces for the usual carol service with the local Church of Scotland congregation. Over Christmas, we had the pleasure of a visit from Br Daniel Wawer Gakuya, a young monk of the Kenyan monastery at

Tigoni. Br Daniel is pursuing veterinary studies at Edinburgh University. Then, during the week of prayer for Christian Unity, we were treated to a stimulating talk on the theme of sacrifice by Dr Ian Bradley. Dr Bradley is a Church of Scotland minister who lectures in theology at the University of Aberdeen and is a theologian in his own right. Darton, Longman and Todd published his *The Power of Sacrifice* in 1995. It is a book to recommend. It is a pleasure to report, too, that the restoration of the buttresses and coping of the north transept aisle is now underway. We look forward too to some enhancements to the interior of our church.

Meanwhile the ordinary life of the monastery goes on, a life of prayer, reading and work – the 3 activities of the Benedictine monk. And the approach to Easter we call Lent gives its own character to each. St Benedict's Lenten recommendations, though, can surely inspire more than monks alone: "During these days," he writes in Ch. 49 of his Rule, "let us add something to the usual measure of our service, such as private prayers and abstinence from food and drink, that each one, of his own free will and with the joy of the Holy Spirit, may offer God something over and above the measure appointed for him. That is to say, let him deny himself some food, drink, sleep, pointless conversation and banter, and look forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing." A grace-filled Easter to all.

Yours in Christ,

D. Hugh, Abbot

EDITOR'S JOTTINGS

The only photograph I have of Greyfriars Convent, Elgin (see article on page 5) is the one we reproduce here of the entrance to the Choir through the Rood screen. The Rood (not shown in the picture) is a replica of the famous crucifix of Assisi - the screen was always known as the "pulpitulum" and was often used for

preaching and Greyfriars was a “preaching church” not a parish church. Its barrel roof gave good acoustics. The choir stalls, wrought iron gates etc were possibly made in Lord Bute’s workshops in Cardiff. In addition to the High Altar, with a fine Westgate window above, there are two altars against the screen: Our Lady and the Saints of the Order of Mercy and St Francis and the Franciscan saints.

I am most grateful to all of you who have sent donations for the Newsletter over the Christmas period and also renewals for the AIM Bulletin. I now have 12 subscribers at £9 per year. This is valuable help for our Third World monasteries.

In the next issue we hope to have pictures of the new Priory Church at Petersham. By way of contrast the cover of this issue shows Greyfriars in Elgin which is 500 years old. We also have pictures of the unique beehives at Christ in the Desert, New Mexico, shaped like Noah's arks and similar to a more rustic types our monks use in Ghana.

Your Editor,

Dom Alfred

DOM BARNABAS (DOMINIC) KERR
1919 – 1995

Dominic Kerr was born of Catholic parents in Newcastle-upon-Tyne on 27th December, 1919. The idea of some kind of religious vocation seems to have been present from the beginning. First thoughts were of the Mill Hill Missionaries and of the Salvatorians. It was a Salvatorian priest who spotted the Benedictine in him, and in September 1942, aged 22, he made his way to Prinknash Abbey. With its liturgical emphasis and lack of external apostolate, it was the right Benedictine tradition to choose. “I give Kerr a week, three at the most,” said the Novice Master. When “Kerr” died on 16th January this year, the 3 weeks

had become 53 years. He received the name Barnabas (cf Acts 11:24), made his simple profession on 8th December 1944 and his solemn profession on 24th June 1948. Later that year he was sent north to the newly-refounded Pluscarden Priory, remaining here for the rest of his life.

Dom Barnabas' contribution to the establishment and growth of Pluscarden was no mean one. He was a simple, even childlike man. He did not glitter; he plodded. By nature he was made to be a bank clerk. But on the other side of this there lay unfailing regularity and reliability, conscientious attachment to duty, patience, piety and a sincere desire to do God's will. What assets! As a strong young monk, he sawed logs, built roads and walls, made concrete blocks, was always ready to help when there was hard manual work to be done. In later years, he mowed the lawns, helped to pick fruit, prepared vegetables, washed up, worked in the refectory and was famous among us as a brewer of tea and boiler of eggs. For over 45 years he was the Community's Bursar, scrupulously honest, recording every expense in the ledgers in a large round hand, signing cheques as one of our 3 trustees and earning the respect of two generations of professional accountants. He was a great collector of stamps, coins and postcards. He had an extraordinary memory for numbers and for fun memorised the squares and square roots of every number up to one thousand. Numbers included dates and over the years he became in many ways the Community's memory, never forgetting the anniversaries of events great and small. Music was another gift and another love, and he was Precentor for almost as many years as he was Bursar. Many will remember his strong, mellow voice filling our church with ease. He was fond of classical music, Mozart especially, a devotee of Kathleen Ferrier and Sir Richard Terry and enjoyed the occasional concert or recital held at the Abbey. At the New Year Gaudeamus, a fortnight before his death and more appropriately than any of us then realised, he sang us "Westering Home"! Above all, though, he loved the *Opus Dei*, the Divine Office. He loved Latin and the Gregorian Chant à la *Solesmes*. He had no desire to see them superseded. And it was

surely no coincidence that the Introit of the Mass on the morning he died was *Omnis terra adoret te et psallat tibi; psalm um dicat nomini tuo* : Let all the earth worship you and praise you: let it say a psalm to your Name (Ps 65,4). This summed up his life. For over 20 years it fell to him to wake the brethren in the morning for Vigils. Here too he was completely reliable.

One could go on. One could mention his rapport with children and animals. In his last years, contact with his nephew, serving nearby in the R.A.F., was a great joy to him. It included getting to know his young great niece, in whose progress he took a most avuncular interest.

Dom Barnabas, naturally, had his limitations and foibles and little addictions. But they were never such as hurt others. In some ways, he remained a boy all his life. But his innocence had a beauty to it, and it was not an innocence of which a monk should be ashamed. As I said, he did not glitter. But once one had accepted him as he was, one could see what the Spirit was making of him, beyond psychology. His final illness was mercifully short. He was spared adjustments he would have found hard. He died simply, grateful for the care he was being given. More than one of the brethren commented on the beauty of his face after death. It was a sign, “for, though as mortal man he sinned, he did not deny the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but believed in God and worshipped his Creator.” Matthew 11, 25-30, seemed the appropriate Gospel for his funeral: *Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do...”*

This good monk was a great rememberer. Let us remember him in turn, in our hearts and our prayers. His funeral took place on 19th January in the presence of his brethren, local friends and Jeremy and Sandra Kerr. He is buried in our cemetery. May he rest in peace.

DHG

GREYFRIARS, ELGIN

In the Middle Ages Elgin could boast of “the most beautiful of the Scottish Cathedrals” and of a Royal Castle, making it a City and a Royal Burgh, the one at the east end of the High Street, the other at the west end. Today the one is a picturesque ruin while only a few stones remain of the other on Castle Hill. The population in those days was about 5,000 and for so small a town, there were other notable buildings: houses for the Bishop (actually for the Precentor) the Dean and the Canons, today called “the North College”; the Domus Dei, a home for the elderly poor; the Leper Hospital; the parish Kirk of St Giles in the centre of the town; while near the castle was the Dominican or Blackfriar’s Priory, of which nothing remains, and at the other east end of town the Greyfriars or Franciscan Friary. Today this is the only one of these buildings intact and still serving its original purpose.

The Conventual Friars There is distinct evidence that, in the 13th century, friars settled for a short time in a *hospitium* or rest house near to the Cathedral. Archibald, the reigning Bishop of Moray, was willing, if not also anxious, to provide for the permanent settlement of the Franciscans in his diocese, and he selected as a suitable endowment for the friary, the peace offering that he had demanded from William, Earl of Ross, in expiation for the wanton pillage of the churches of Petyn and Brachull. The Earl’s Charter accordingly conveyed (*Reg Epis Moray* n 220, p 281) “in pure and perpetual alms two davocks of land in Ross, called Kattspoll, and one quarter of land called Petkenny by their rightful marches with all their pertinents, for the provision and sustenance of the Friars Minor, who for the time being or in the future, may be in occupation of their house in Elgin beside the Cathedral, in such manner as the reigning Bishop shall appoint; and he shall delegate some discreet man, who as faithful distributor, shall uplift the entire rents of the said lands at the terms of each year, and profitably apply the same for the benefits and necessary uses of the said friars, as shall seem most expedient. But if the said friars be not there, or are unwilling to remain, the rents

of the said lands by the advice of the said bishop and his successors and the Chaplain of Moray, shall be applied in maintaining two chaplains in the Cathedral Church of Elgin ... the right of appointing and revoking the said chaplains being vested in the same Bishop and his successors.”

The Dominicans had, however, already established a Priory in Elgin (1230-34) and the Conventual Franciscans therefore followed their invariable rule at the period in avoiding the burghs colonised by their rivals. The alternative clause of Earl William's charter was then put into operation, and two centuries later the successors of the two chaplains gave their consent to a Feu Charter of the identical lands of Cadboll, granted by Bishop Tulloch on 29 Nov 1478 to John MacCulloch at an annual duty of 14 silver marks. , in the following year the first and only Franciscan Friary in Elgin was founded as an offshoot from the Observant settlement in Aberdeen. (The historians of Elgin who have erroneously accepted the first of the alternative clauses of Earl William's charter as positive evidence that a Franciscan Friary was created in Elgin in the 13th century, are quite wrong)

The Observant Friars During the later Middle Ages there were several reform movements among the Franciscans; the first of these was that of the *Observants* who were given the use of the Portiuncula in 1415. The movement grew, helped by the holiness and preaching of St Bernardine of Sienna and was finally approved as a distinct family by Pope Leo X in 1517.

In 1480 Edward IV of England invited the Observants to a place near his palace at Greenwich. Two years later they came from the Low Countries and the house was placed under the jurisdiction of the Observant Province of Cologne. The Observants appear to have reached Scotland at an earlier date. The Friary in Edinburgh was founded in 1446; St Andrews 1458; Perth 1460; Aberdeen 1470; Glasgow 1472; Ayr 1474; and Elgin in the same year; Stirling 1494; Jedburgh 1515. Conventual Friaries were Roxburgh, Haddington, Dumfries, Dundee, Lanark, Inverkeithing, Kircudbright.. That there were eight houses in Scotland before the first English foundation, may be partly due to the fact that at this

time the Provincial of the Province of Cologne was a Scot, Fr John Hay. He wrote in his Chronicle of the Observant Province of Scotland “the seventh friary erected in the town of Elgin. In the year 1478, John, Laird of Innes, of the highest rank among the nobility of the northern part of the kingdom, moved to penitence and fervour by the preaching of the friars resident in Aberdeen, erected a fine Friary in the town of Elgin, wherein there were 25 priests (perhaps founded for this number) most diligent in preaching the Word of God and in hearing the confessions of the many clergy and people there.” Incidentally in addition to Fr John Hay OFM there were other notable members of this family; another John Hay SJ who was the first Jesuit to come to Scotland and there was a Benedictine, Benedict Hay.

In this founder and his unheraldic designation we may doubtless surmise James (or John?) of the Beard, Sixteenth Laird of Innes, who was then a wealthy landowner and, as cousin to the Earl of Huntly, may be considered “of highest rank among the nobility of the northern parts of the kingdom”. The architectural features of the Friary can be appreciated from Provost Coogan’s description of the ruins of the church before their restoration by the Marquess of Bute. “The beauty of the proportion is everywhere present, the curious lines are unusually graceful for a Scottish church of so late a date; but everything is as plain as could be and there is not an inch of ornamental carving” (*Transactions of the Aberdeen Eccles Society* 1891, p 52). The church is a long narrow building of simple rubble work – distinct from the polished ashlar of the Aberdeen Friary church – and measured 117 feet in length and 29 feet 2 inches in breadth. The windows were in part the handiwork of Friar John Strang the glassmaker of Aberdeen. His obit reads in the Aberdeen calendar on 1 March 1517. “A priest and most faithful worker in glass in many houses of the Province, especially Perth, Ayr, Elgin and Aberdeen.” The distinctive feature was the large east window of five lights and basket tracery, while in the south wall a large gothic window that shed a side light over the high altar. There were two other altars in the church, to which the public had access by a door at the west end of the north wall

and a second door in the south wall led out to the conventual buildings and the cloister in the south side.

There are records of gifts of wheat and barley from the Crown and other benefactors. The Earl of Moray was especially generous – otherwise its history from the date of its foundation until the Reformation is wholly unknown, and the scenes amidst which the friars terminated their activity in the episcopal city cannot now be reconstructed. The Reformation was mild in Elgin and the absence of vindictive appropriation may be surmised from the fact that the Treasurer paid the two conforming Observants £11.12.0 as the price for their “knock and bell”. The lands like those of the Black Friary (from Precept 17 June 1574) reverted to the family of Innes under payment of feu duty of 40/- in terms of a Crown charter dated 20 April 1573. The building passed into the possession of the town and in 1563 they were converted into a local court of justice, John Baxter receiving 20/- “for bigging ye seittis to ye Lords in ye Greyfreris.”

They were so used until the middle of the 17th century, after which they passed through various hands until 1891 when the ruins came once more into the possession of the Catholic Church through their purchase by the Sisters of the Convent of Sainte Marie through the generosity of the Marquess of Bute who restored them as near the original as possible. His architect was John Kinross. The opening took place on St Francis day in 1898 and was attended not only by the Marquess of Bute but also by the Duke of Norfolk.

The ancient stone tabernacle or sacrament house detached from the altar was still preserved in the chapel (as it is at Pluscarden), and a long letter from the Bishop of Aberdeen (then in Rome), asking Bute’s prayers, shows that the latter was engaged in the difficult task of trying to induce the Sacred Congregation of Rites to derogate from modern rules and practise and allow this interesting relic of the past to be again used for the purpose for which it had been originally intended. (He was unsuccessful. A decree of 1865 prohibited the placing of the tabernacle elsewhere than in the middle of the altar. However since Vatican II Bute’s

wish has been established) The Marquess died in 1900 and his son, Lord Colum Crichton Stuart, the Laird of Pluscarden, completed the work of restoration.

Writing to the Provost of Elgin Bute said with his usual felicity of expression “my purchase was one on which I must congratulate myself, not only because in interest it exceed my expectation, but because it has enabled me to be of sine service to Elgin by preserving a historical monument of considerable value to the town and district.”

DAS

MEDIAEVAL PLUSCARDEN

The West Range Excavation

The decision to site our new guest house on the site of what we presumed to be the western range of the medieval priory buildings gave an excellent opportunity for a full scale investigation of the area before the builders moved in. The excavations were carried out in the summer of 1990 by a team of six archaeologists working under the direction of Dr Finbar McCormick for the HBMC in Edinburgh and a full report has now appeared in print (*Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 124 (1994) 291-342)

At the time of the excavation the most interesting finds appeared to be three skeletons found in shallow graves just beyond the building site. These proved to be medieval, with a radiocarbon analysis at Glasgow University suggesting a date of AD 1405-1460. This date, several centuries earlier than what was anticipated, and securely within the monastic period, presents us with something of a puzzle as the three skeletons were all of young women (aged 35-45; 17-18; 25-35). Early suggestions of foul play and a violent end, eagerly taken up by the local press at the time, were not substantiated by the final report but we are still no wiser as to why these burials should have been made here in what may have been a forecourt to the monastic buildings when the original entrance was near the north west corner of the precinct wall

(visitors now approach from the south east on a road laid out in the 19th century by the Earl of Fife). The human remains were returned to us in 1991 for reburial in our cemetery.

Another feature, which at first was thought to be a modern dog burial pit, turned out to be of major significance. It proved to be a 15th or 16th century stone-lined pit, probably originally roofed, which ended its working life as a general dump and latrine. The 1.5m of deposits were well stratified and much extraneous matter had found its way into the fill, some by design, others presumably scooped up with the earth thrown in periodically to dampen the stench. 24 fragments of woollen textiles, similar to our modern habit material, seem to have been used as anal wipes, judging by the abundance of whipworm eggs found in the related soil context although these could conceivably have come from the entrails of the dog found nearby. Many of the fragments showed signs of hemming, wear and sometimes re-use. Others were best interpreted as tailor's waste. Detailed study of the weave, threadcount and quality of finish all point to a 15th century Scottish provenance.

Besides parasite eggs, sieved samples from these deposits produced a number of fish (cod, hake and gurnard), bird (domestic fowl, goose and jackdaw) and animal (cattle, sheep/goat, pig, cat and dog) bones, many of which were chopped into the small fragments indicative of food refuse. The dog and cat were both still partially articulated but curiously several bones, including the dog's legs and tail, were missing and others bore butchery marks. The director thinks that these too may have found their way into the kitchen in time of scarcity.

All the animal bones came from one particular layer of the pit. Microsoil analysis of a small sample from the surrounding soil provided a total of 435 pollen and spores. They were predominantly cereal types (barley and oats) and wild grasses, including three maritime species considered unlikely to have been growing in the immediate vicinity of the priory. Trees, shrubs, heathland plants, weeds, ferns and aquatics are all represented. Many of these have pollen types which are likely to derive from

human faeces, ingested with foods such as broth or, perhaps, from the entrails of the dead dog. Others are more likely to have been carried by water seepage or to have been blown in from surrounding vegetation.

One of the most familiar aspects of modern Pluscarden is the number of pheasants round our grounds (our neighbour in the valley is breeding them up for shoots), so I was particularly pleased to see that feathers from this pit – chopped, and so perhaps originally the contents of a cushion or padding from clothing – provide the earliest dated remains of pheasants in Scotland. They are about 130 years older than the first documentary record (from 1578) in which Bishop Lesley commented that pheasants were present, though scarce, in Scotland.

33 fragments of window glass were recovered from the same pit. One, a dull pale blue, was judged to be of the 14th century, the others were all of a plain glass with a pale green tinge from iron impurities. Several had traces of lead staining along the edges, presumably from the window comes. A 15th or 16th century date was suggested for them.

Another fragment found some years ago by Dom Edmund in the same general area, had a brown enamel painted decoration showing part of a stylistic trefoil and curved stems. It has been identified as late 13th century *grisaille*, a style much in vogue with the white monks as the early Cistercian statutes forbade the use of figurative stained glass. The best British example is probably the Five Sisters window in York Minster which was more or less contemporary with the original huge windows of the Pluscarden Priory choir. They were probably filled with some such *grisaille* work.

The more domestic assemblage comprised two pieces of fine, heavily bubbled, glass beaker imported from Europe and a small quantity of pottery, mostly jugs. Apart from one sherd, possibly East Anglian, all appears to have been produced locally between the 13th and 15th centuries. Dr McCormick also submitted our own collection of some 650 sherds for study. These had turned up around the precincts at various times since 1948

and, although unstratified, put the excavated material in a broader ceramic context. Again jugs predominate but the assemblage includes at least three urinals, a dripping pan and two, very distinctive, anthropomorphic face-mask jugs; on stylistic grounds one is dated to the 13th century, the other to the 15th/16th.

Dr Richard Fawcett, one of the HBMC Chief Inspectors and an authority on Scottish gothic architecture, contributed a very valuable study on the architecture of our buildings. I had a pleasant morning showing him around on one of his visits. He was very impressed by the quality of the architectural details at Pluscarden and was able to throw much new light on the building sequence and the dates of the various phases of the church. The main fabric, beginning with the sacristy (the present Lady Chapel) and south transept c1230, took some 30 or 40 years to complete, the final section being the choir (c1270) which he describes in the report as a structure of the highest calibre.

The characteristic saddle-back roof of the central tower, very similar to that of Sweetheart Abbey in the borders, is a late gothic addition. The first tower was squat with a low spire, the squinches of which are still to be seen inside the bell chamber. This section of the report is illustrated by sectional drawings based on the meticulously detailed plates prepared by Alexander Mackintosh c1890.

As a postscript I should add that the finds from the excavation were of sufficient importance to attract rival bids from the local and national museums. They are shortly to be displayed as a special exhibit at the Kingsmill Museum in Elgin, an eighteenth century building built on the site of one of our own 13th century mills on the River Lossie.

DAF

BOOK REVIEWS

The Recollected Heart: A Monastic Retreat with Philip Zaleski (1995) HarperSanFrancisco, 180pp, ISBN 0-06-069781-4

This is a practical guide to a DIY three day retreat. One is given a daily office of Lauds, Vespers and Compline, a theme and a different *Prayer Practise* for each day and help to spend one's time in a profitable way. The book is, however, much more than this. On finishing it one realises that one has read a masterly introduction to monastic spirituality. The Benedictine Vows, the theory and practice of the Office, the Jesus Prayer and contemplation, lectio divina and manual labour (sorry, labor) all find a place in this gently humorous and cultured prose. The style is anecdotal and an amazingly broad cast of characters make their appearance including Jiminy Cricket, Thérèse of Lisieux, the Coelacanth and our own Fr Anselm.

Philip Zaleski is an oblate of St Mary's, Petersham and Benedictine oblates should find his book fascinating reading. It would also be of interest to anyone who feels the need to step aside from the hectic pace of everyday life and find a place of silence and peace where they can regain perspective and rediscover prayer. The first two chapters in particular would help them understand their desire and the guidelines for the three day retreat would give them invaluable practical help in carrying it out. In the sayings of the fourth century desert Father Abba Arsenius we find this advice, "run away, be still, maintain recollection." – If you want to know what it means, read this book.

DAH

Cartusiana & More. John Clark gives us a scholarly three volume introduction to *The Cloud of Unknowing* with extensive notes on the text of the *Cloud* and *The Book of Privy Counselling*. He supports the view that the author was a Carthusian of Beauvale and examines the theology of the *Cloud*, its relationship to the Pseudo-Dionysian tradition, Walter Hilton and others and briefly compares

its doctrine to that of John of the Cross. Although called an “Introduction” this work, with its extensive bibliography, will be of interest only to the more advanced student of the English mystics.

AC moves into more general territory with *The Venetian Upper Clergy in the Sixteenth and early Seventeenth Centuries* (2 vol) by Oliver Logan. Jaroslav Pelikan wrote of the “doctrinal pluralism” of the later Middle Ages and the author’s study of the clergy and their writings discloses a pluralism of clerical culture and discourse in his period. The work is divided into sections on Monks, Bishops and the Preaching Orders. The first concentrates on the Camaldolese and contains an examination of the attitude to studies and Church Reform of the rigorist hermit Paolo Giustiniani whose thoughts on the eremitical life have reached a wider public in Jean Leclercq’s *Alone with God* (1961)

Giovanni Leoncini’s study of *La Certosa dello Spirito Sancto, presso Lucca*, connected with a massacre of monks and civilians by the Nazis, continues the series on individual Charterhouses. The three volumes of *The Mystical Tradition and the Carthusians* contain papers from the 1995 AC International Congress. Amongst papers giving a Slovenian post-Modernist reading of the *Cloud* and examining the childhood of St Bruno we find a reprint of “The Unitive Life in the World” by Dom Edmund Gurdon, which first appeared in the Prinknash magazine, *Pax*. David Jones O. Praem. the Welsh novice-monk poet, writes on “the tension in the psyche of man between active and contemplative life” and argues that his own type of religious life, that of a Canon Regular, is of the very essence of the Church whereas the monastic life is only a particular charism within her. The idea that the life of, for example, Thérèse of Lisieux expresses a peripheral charism in the Church because she did not exercise an active apostolate is absurd. The author’s problem is that he works within a rigid scholastic framework of “types of religious life” which is alien to the patristic mentality. The true answer to the tension and his interest in

superiority is found in his penultimate sentence, “the Master is not to be found outside his own will.”

Aspects of Carthusian Liturgical Practice in Later Mediaeval England by Joseph Gribbin is a well researched study based upon the examination of all relevant manuscripts. One learns how late medieval lay piety influenced the Liturgy and Churches of the English Carthusians and how and why their liturgy deviated from that of the Order as a whole. This book will be of interest to anyone who wishes to understand the liturgy that formed our English Carthusian Martyrs and may be ordered from the publisher, Dr James Hogg, Institut fur Anglistik and Amerikanistik, Universitat Salzburg, A - 5020 SALZBURG, Austria.

DAH

BEES IN NEW MEXICO

A letter from Christ in the Desert, Abiquiu, New Mexico, USA, one of the monasteries that make up the English Province of the Subiaco Congregation.

Dear Abbot Alfred,

I hope you will enjoy the photos of our latest postulants. A large number, 40,000 no less! They are of course bees. Buckfast bees.

We have two hives, beautifully decorated by our Brother Marcelo. Like the bees he has travelled some distance to come here for he is from Argentina. He has painted one in a Mexican Baroque style, the other in a more New Mexican folk style.

Each hive is about 4' long and 11/2' wide. Their shape is unusual. It is a design developed by the benefactor who has given us the bees. He raises Buckfast bees about 2 hours away from here in the mountains of Jemez. He chooses Buckfast bees because “they are hardy and can endure cold winters, but at the same time

gentle and faithful.” Let’s hope the same can be said of us as monks!

We are doing fine. God is sending us excellent vocations from all over the world and we are very much needing the cells and other additions to complete the monastery.

Just now the trees are beginning their change of colour but the days are warm and pleasant, making it possible to complete many of the needed maintenance projects.

Keep us in your prayers please and be assured of ours.

With fraternal greetings in St Benedict,

Br Christian – for all of us