



# INCARNATION MONASTERY

A Quarterly Newsletter

BREAD OF LIFE

Issue 1 February 2010



Welcome to the first edition of Incarnation Monastery's newsletter. Our hope is to carry you on this journey of finding the "Bread of Life" through contemplation as expressed by the various thoughts, reflections, and views in our newsletter.

As Camaldolese oblates and friends, we follow this simple way of

prayer to become more receptive to receive God's love. We are transformed into "being" in the heart of Christ through the love we receive in our own hearts. In Luke 17:21, "the kingdom of God is in the midst of you." Despite our very busy lives, we offer this opportunity to participate in finding the stillness through the gift of contemplative

practice, so we may find the kingdom of God within each and every one of us. May the words from this newsletter serve as an instrument in discovering God's peace and love, hidden, waiting to be found in the cave of your heart.

## LETTER FROM THE PRIOR

Dear Oblates and Friends,

As we enter the holy Season of Lent, we offer this newsletter as a way to share happenings and reflections of our wonderful monastic, oblate, and friend community.

We have rejoiced with Christmas, and the Sunday gospels of the new year have enabled us to journey with Jesus in his earthly ministry. With Lent we prepare to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ; that is, his passion, death, and then all decisive Resurrection. Our newsletter bears the theme "Bread of Life." Christ is for us that living Bread, in his coming and earthly ministry, but especially in his suffering, death and life-giving resurrection. It is his glorified Body that we mysteriously participate in through Eucharistic communion.

And all this has implications for our relations with each other. In the multiplication of loaves passages, the apostles think they have no way to feed everyone; there is only a boy present with five loaves

and two fish, but what is that for so many? But the power of Christ as Living Bread and the power of his nourishing Gospel wonderfully multiply their resources--and also today our sometimes limited resources. We are able to do much more than we

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might imagine. We can *be* bread for others, help and encourage others, and be nourished by them. That is what it means to "become Gospel," to become living bread in the risen Christ.

May this newsletter be of assistance in this vocation of all of us to love and help one another in the one Love of our compassionate God, who comes to us in Christ.

Fr. Andrew Colnaghi



### DAILY SCHEDULE

#### Monday and Friday

Lauds, 7 a.m.

Short Vespers with sitting meditation, 5 p.m.

#### Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

Lauds, 7 a.m.

Vespers and Eucharist, 5 p.m.

#### Saturday and Sunday

Lauds and Eucharist, 8 a.m.

## INCARNATION MONASTERY BEGINNINGS

*An interview with Fr. Robert Hale celebrating the 30th anniversary of Incarnation Monastery.*

**ED: What was your role in the inspiration for the development and eventual outcome for Incarnation Monastery?**

**RH:** We need to believe that authentic inspiration is always primarily from the Holy Spirit. We can hope only to cooperate to some extent as living instruments, and in this case, as in most, many people were involved. For instance Fr. Bruno. At the Consulta at Camaldoli, Tuscany in November of 1978, Fr. Bruno, then Prior of New Camaldoli, mentioned there that a foundation of a monastery in California would be a great help for the fuller presence of our life in America. There was then only New Camaldoli, and our charism wants both hermitages and monasteries for the more complete witness and living of our vocation. The Consulta members asked me then to consider committing to a California foundation. But how to realize it? There were no funds available to purchase property and buildings, no others available for the venture. I felt rather alone in undertaking what seemed like a very challenging endeavor.

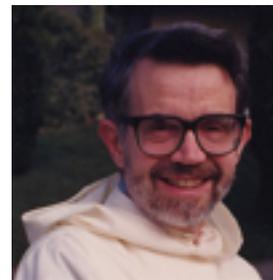
I thought I might teach somewhere to support myself while working at the foundation, so I wrote our good friends, the Episcopal monks of Holy Cross already established in Berkeley, asking if they could find out if there were any teaching jobs available in Berkeley or thereabouts. The prior of the Holy Cross community ("St. Dominic's Priory") wrote back at the beginning of 1979 assuring me that he would explore job possibilities. But he added a surprising invitation: Why didn't I just come and join them, rather than trying to build up a totally distinct Catholic

monastery? Why not work together with them in realizing an ecumenical "joint monastic community"? Camaldolese and Holy Cross monks could share some parts of the monastic life, living others separately ("union in diversity"). This bold offer from Fr. Roy Parker, O.H.C. seemed to me inspired. It certainly alleviated all my concerns about having to find property and housing, furnishings, etc. while living alone. And more importantly, it would give exciting ecumenical witness.

The superiors in Camaldoli and New Camaldoli agreed to explore the possibility (not without a tad of angst!), and so on September 24, 1979 I, together with an Italian monk, Fr. Innocenzo Gargano, flew off for California. Innocenzo was sent with me to check out the Episcopalian monks and report back to Italy. In fact, he was impressed and charmed by them, and returned to our mother house to report positively to the superiors. I took up long-term residence with the Episcopal monks on November 28, 1979--and that is the date we celebrate the beginning of our Camaldolese monastic presence in Berkeley. So last November marked our 30th year!

I found teaching positions (on spirituality) at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley and also at Holy Family College, which brought in sufficient income so that the Camaldolese "side" (*moi*) could "carry its weight" economically. We were housed on the top floor of the Episcopal Seminary.

As we settled in to our ecumenical, monastic life, all kinds of meetings followed with the Superior of the Holy Cross Order, with our General and Assistant, D. Benedetto



and D. Emanuele, with the Episcopal and Catholic Bishops, and with the community of New Camaldoli to be sure all was on track.

A very important date for the Camaldolese presence in Berkeley is August 14, 1981, when Father Andrew Colnaghi courageously arrived from Italy, rendering our Camaldolese presence *community*. Only two of us, true, but as Jesus promised, "where two or three are gathered together, there am I in their midst."

Alas there wasn't a free room at first for Andrew in the Episcopal seminary where our joint community was housed, so he had to live in an upstairs room of an old house of an Episcopal friend on the south side of the university campus. Thus he had to walk each day (sometimes also in the pouring rain!) across campus for the prayer and community life of our little "Incarnation Priory" (the Episcopalians had agreed to the name change). And Andrew had to put up with all kinds of manual work at first, to bring in necessary income. But then the breakthrough as the Italian Catholic Federation (a lay group of then some 20,000 members, especially in California) asked him to be their Chaplain. That ministry proved providential, because of his warmhearted pastoral gifts.

*(continued)*

For more space our joint community moved in 1984 to the funky old apartment house on the corner of Oxford and Cedar, sold to us for a pittance by the Episcopal parish next door--the Episcopal rector was an Oblate of Holy Cross and enthusiastic about our ecumenical identity.

Later in 1987 I was asked to move to the Hermitage and help out as prior. Andrew then became prior of Incarnation. With monks from the Hermitage studying at Incarnation, we

needed more room for ourselves, and we were able to purchase the lovely building up on the hill on La Loma, our present home, which another Catholic religious order sold us at a very reasonable price. We thus bid adieu to the Holy Cross brethren, but our warm friendship with them very much continues.

So who participated in the founding of Incarnation? Certainly Fr. Bruno, with his original request, certainly the Camaldolese Consulta,

moving ahead on it, certainly Holy Cross and Fr. Roy Parker, in welcoming us generously, certainly Andrew, in courageously rendering the Camaldolese presence fledgling community and then a long-term reality, and certainly many others, including humbly, myself. The early years were an exciting and joy-filled (and sometimes difficult) adventure.

But mainly the inspiration for it came from that Holy Spirit--one never knows what S/He will be up to next! ♦

**ED: How did the name “Incarnation Monastery” come to fruition?**

**RH:** The Episcopal brethren of Holy Cross were in Berkeley years before us, and they called their community “St. Dominic’s Priory” (tracing some of

their own spirituality to St. Dominic). We expressed a certain discomfort over the name, since we are Benedictine Camaldolese, not Dominicans. They kindly acceded, and we agreed on “Incarnation,” the New Testament mystery that marks the decisive beginning of our life in Christ, Who is

Word made flesh. All our lives want to be incarnated in our real, daily existence in Berkeley, as we--monks, oblates, and friends--seek to be incorporated ever more profoundly in the incarnate and risen Lord. ♦

**ED: What do you feel is the mission of Incarnation Monastery today?**

**RH:** At the deepest level, our “mission” is what it has always been from the beginning of our Order, indeed from the beginning of the Christian community: simply to endeavor to live day by day our Lord’s two commandments which sum up everything: to love God with our whole

heart and mind and soul and strength, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We monks of Incarnation seek to live this through our regular monastic days; our Oblates and friends, very much part of the fuller Incarnation family, live this according to their own life vocations. But we all, I believe, are excited to live out this heart of the Gospel together, and in the very alive Berkeley and Bay Area, engaged with the hopes and needs of its 21st century

people, each of us living and ministering by our God-given gifts. Our bond of deep friendship and solidarity with New Camaldoli deepens and enriches our possibilities.

And there is always at work, above and behind and before and within us, that mysterious and creative Holy Spirit, continuing to inspire in new ways. ♦

## ART AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

*Fr. Arthur Poulin shares about his relationship to art and the monastic life.*



**ST BENEDICT URGED US TO ‘WORK AND PRAY’ AS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR LIFE. PAINTING IS MADE TO ORDER FOR SUCH AN INVITATION AND TASK. WORKING WITH ONE’S HANDS IS ALSO AT THE HEART OF MONASTIC LIFE.**

Life here at Incarnation is pretty much an ongoing challenge and adventure to keep a balance between many things: prayer, work, community, hospitality, solitude, leisure, and of course, painting.

It is a blessing to do all of this within the beautiful setting and community of Incarnation Monastery with all of our friends, oblates, and retreat guests. An amazing variety of people pray with us daily, or come for Sunday Eucharist, or spend time here as a retreat guest. This vibrant community of people that we are connected to who are in search of contemplative life and prayer in their lives and in our world is, I think, the great richness of our urban Camaldolese life and tradition here in our monastery in the Berkeley Hills.

Besides being guestmaster and sharing all the other daily household chores and responsibilities with Andrew and Thomas, I am the resident painter. In many ways I feel privileged to have this vocation as an artist which works so well within the context of monastic life. St. Benedict urged us to “work and pray” as the foundation of our life. Painting is made to order for such an invitation and task. Working with one’s hands is also at the heart of monastic life.

My studio is a small space in the garage that looks out over the Bay towards Marin where one can also

glimpse the Golden Gate Bridge in this expansive panorama. Within this sacred space are two windows that catch the wonderful light of both the morning and the afternoon which are, of course, essential for painting.

This small studio has become a little hermitage that I can retreat to and paint undisturbed (most of the time!) for up to five hours a day. Painting is a way for me to preach the good news of the gospel in a non-verbal way. Through my painting I can witness to the primacy of God’s love and presence in our lives and world today.

My work continues to be published for the covers of books, magazines, CDs, a line of greeting cards, and framed prints. At present, I am working towards a third exhibition of paintings in the fall of 2011 at the I. Wolk Gallery in Napa Valley. I continue to be grateful to Andrew and the community for their fraternal support in providing the time and space for me to pursue this ministry of painting. ♦

## MONACHUS ET MUSICUS

*Fr. Thomas Matus reflects on his relationship to music and the spiritual life.*

Please excuse the Latin! It means “Monk and Musician” and is from a late eleventh-century document that refers to Guido of Arezzo.

Guido was the only Camaldolese monk whose name I heard mentioned during my undergraduate years at Occidental College, Los Angeles, and I heard it because I majored in music. Guido invented the musical staff, that is, the four lines (later five) on which the notes are written. With these lines, you know what note you start with and how far up or down you go to sing or play the successive notes.

Before him, accent marks over the words gave you some idea of where you were going, but you needed a choir master to give you the exact notes, at least as he had learned them or perhaps composed them.



Of course, you don't need to write music in order to make music. Classical Indian music is “improvised,” in the sense that your musical training gives you scales (*ragas*) and rhythms (*talas*), with cycles of melodic intervals and rhythmic patterns, but the absolute note you start with and the order of the cycles are determined not in writing but by the season of the year, the time of day, the mood of the musician and her/his hearers, etc.

Western classical music is all written, although some composers have also been skilled improvisers as well, that is, they were able to draw on their own their own themes and those of other composers, and adapt them for an occasion or a specific performance. Behind their improvisation was years-long study of the repertoire for their chosen instrument.

I did learn to write music during my high school and college years. I had excellent teachers. But Dad was my first teacher--he taught me songs when I was two years old. Neither of my parents was then a church-goer, and so music was my first religion. It still is.

As a child I discovered that we live in a friendly universe, and that the earth and the universe communicate with us through many voices, especially through all the various sounds of nature. George Gershwin said that he heard

“music in the very heart of noise.” Music is everywhere, if you are listening! Our fellow humans speak to us with words, but when these words are sung, greater meaning is added to them.

Listening to the radio and to records as a child, I learned that most songs were about love, but some were also about nature. My favorites were “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning” (Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein, 1943), “Speak Low When You Speak Love” (Kurt Weill and Ogden Nash, 1943), and “Nature Boy” (Eden Ahbez and Nat King Cole, 1947). I had never heard about Jesus, except from the Christmas story in Luke, but we had a cook at home (a Jehovah's Witness) who loved music. When I heard the funeral chorus from Gershwin's opera “Porgy N' Bess (George and Ira Gershwin, 1938), with the words, “Jesus is walkin' on the waters. Rise up an' follow him,” she told me the story from Mark's gospel, and said that, if storms come up in life, I should have faith in him, and the waters will become calm.

So my first gospel lesson was from a song composed by two Jewish brothers and explained by a Jehovah's Witness. She also played the first piece of classical music that I ever heard: Liebestraum n. 3 by Liszt.

I still believe that great music, of whatever kind, is a voice of God. My lectio divina does include the Bible, but I still listen to that voice in music. I do not listen to songs with religious words or even any words at all, but instrumental music and even unsingable music, which challenges my ears to listen beyond what is immediately comprehensible, so as to discover the incomprehensible God, who is the source and home of every sound and every melody or rhythm.

I also write music. Aside from melodies in our various Camaldolese psalters, I compose music for piano or what are called “chamber ensembles”: small groups of instruments, sometimes with singing or speaking voices. Jackie Chew has performed one of these pieces. Will the others remain only on paper? Perhaps, but I am content to know that any music, written or recorded, was first inscribed in the composer's heart. ♦

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

We are pleased to have Br. Ivan Nicoletto here at Incarnation. As you know, Ivan is a Camaldolese monk living at the Hermitage in Camaldoli, and has been involved for several years and is still serving the Camaldolese Congregation as first assistant in the General Council. He will stay with us for three months, sharing our monastic life, continuing his research in the contemporary spirituality, and

getting in touch with our North American culture. We appreciate his presence among us, and we wish him the very best.

Ivan will offer a Quiet Day at Incarnation on February 20.



## UPCOMING CELEBRATIONS

### **Ash Wednesday, February 17**

Lauds, 7 a.m.

Blessing of ashes and Eucharist, 5 p.m.

### **Tuesdays in Lent, February 23, March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30**

Lectio divina in preparation for Easter, 7 p.m.

(Themes to be announced)

### **Palm Sunday, March 28**

Blessing of psalms, procession, and Mass, 8 a.m.

### **Thursday of Holy Week, April 1**

Mass of the Lord's Supper and Washing of feet, 7 p.m.

Followed by silent adoration

### **Good Friday, April 2**

Lauds, 7 a.m.

Proclamation of the Passion, Universal Prayer, and

Adoration of the Cross, 7 p.m.

### **Holy Saturday, April 3**

Lauds, 8 a.m., with Anointing

### **The Easter Vigil**

Blessing of the fire, procession, proclamation of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Liturgy of Readings, and Eucharist, 8 p.m.

### **Easter Sunday, April 4**

Mass of the Day of Resurrection, 11 a.m.

Vespers of Easter, 5 p.m.

Pentecost Sunday, May 23

Lauds with Mass, 8 a.m.

Vespers, 5 p.m.

## SPEAK TO MY HEART

I have waited on the Lord,  
 In the stillness of my mind.  
 In the music of a hymn,  
 In a conversation with a friend.  
 It is in the loveliness of a flower,  
 And the color of the light of day  
 Lost in a prayer from the prayer book,  
 I have waited on the Lord.

My friend, it is the pleasure of life,  
 The knowledge in simplicity of knowing  
 One another, and even the times that come looming  
 To the psyche of trials and fears in a tunnel  
 Where confinement of spirit and mind  
 Make the soul weep and wonder  
 That there is comfort in knowing you  
 Lord. Speak to my heart.

Peter Menkin, Oblate OSB Cam.

### QUIET DAYS

*All Quiet Days listed below will take place at Incarnation Monastery.*

**Saturday, February 20**

“Your eyes beheld my unformed substance”  
 with Ivan Nicoletto, OSB Cam.  
 9 a.m. to 12 noon

**Saturday, April 24**

“Recessions and other life challenges: Some spiritual resources”  
 with Robert Hale, OSB Cam.  
 9 a.m. to 12 noon

**Saturday, May 15**

“Meditation, surrender, gratefulness”  
 with Thomas Matus, OSB Cam.  
 9 a.m. to 12 noon