

PACEM in TERRIS

P E A C E O N E A R T H

A Rich Harvest

As the barren days of winter ended, we took delight in the warmth of the spring sun and the refreshing rain. We reveled in the daintiness of a wildflower peeking out of the grass; we marveled at the strength and longevity of a mighty oak standing in a field of wavy grass. Our senses were captivated by the scent of a new rose in the garden, the smell of fresh cut grass, the air after a thunderstorm.

God opened our eyes and ears and hearts to the wonder of his love all around us.

Then this summer we had some long, hot days. The lush green fields turned brown. The once-supple leaves withered and the fruit on the branches began to die. A rich harvest was being robbed of its fruit.

It's so like God to show us in nature what we sometimes experience in our spiritual life. Many of us may remember thinking before

going into the hermitage, "I feel parched." Our spirit seemed lifeless, robbed of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace.

At times like these, the hermitage becomes a deep well where we can take a long full drink; where the fallows of our soul are softened as we drink of the Spirit. It revives and refreshes us. There is promise of a new harvest.

As the words of a song pray, "Don't let my heart be fallow, don't let my heart be hard, water me with your Spirit, soften the ground of my heart. . . . I want all that you have for me." *

Here at Pacem, we have witnessed the revived spirits and fruitful lives of many hermits who have come to the silence of the hermitage to drink from the well of God's love and mercy. May you have a rich harvest in the Spirit and receive all that the Lord has for you. ♦

* "Soften My Heart," words & lyrics by Andy Park

"Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord."

Hosea 10:12

Blessing of Food for Thanksgiving Day

God most provident, we join all creation in raising to you a hymn of thanksgiving through Jesus Christ, your Son.

For generation upon generation, peoples of this land have sung of your bounty; we, too, offer you praise for the rich harvest we have received at your hands.

Bless us and this food that we share with grateful hearts. Continue to make our land fruitful and let our love for you be seen in our pursuit of peace and justice and in our generous response to those in need.

Praise and glory to you, Lord God, now and forever. Amen.



Just a note...

Since the beginning of Pacem, the purpose of our newsletter has been threefold: 1) To remind you of Pacem and the hermitage that awaits you, 2) To nourish your spirit with an inspiring message, and 3) To give you an opportunity to share in this ministry through your prayers, donations, and volunteer activities.

Printing and postage costs continue to rise (it currently costs approx. \$3,000 for each newsletter mailing), so we need to make sure our mailing list is current. Please let us know if you would like to continue to receive our newsletter and other mailings (see the form below). Also, please consider making a special donation to help us cover our printing and mailing costs. If you have access to paper, envelopes, printing, folding, or stuffing services, that would be most welcome, too.

While our newsletter brings in some financial assistance, our annual November "giving letter" remains our primary means of helping us meet our operating expenses. (Our requested donation covers only half of the \$90 operating cost per retreat day. Therefore, we need to raise funds to make up the difference.)

For eighteen years, many of you have been both hermits and faithful helpers in maintaining this spiritual home. So please help us be good stewards of your gifts by responding below. God bless you!

Shirley Wanchena

Behind the Scenes...



Alain's daughter Veronique Marin hugs our newest baby burro, Shiloh!



Staff members Brenda and Karen put another coat of stain on Our Lady of Pacem community house.

To help us update our files, please call (763-444-6408), e-mail (julie@paceminterris.org), or mail us the following information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (home), _____ (work), _____ (cell)

Yes, I want to continue to receive the newsletter and other mailings from Pacem:

_____ **by regular mail (or)** _____ **by email to:** _____

No, please remove me from your mailing list.

A Theology of Pruning Trees

Performing a simple act can remind us of profound spiritual truths . . .

Horticulturists tell us that the benefits of pruning a tree include health and beauty due to the increase in light penetration and air flow around the tree. And removing dead branches from the lower part of the tree makes more headroom for guests walking along the paths and trails. Promoting the health of the tree and increasing the beauty of the landscape are both good reasons to prune.

Recently I had the opportunity to prune trees at Pacem in Terris. While doing so I was reminded of the “pruning” God has done in my life over the years when I’ve spent time in solitude with the Lord in a hermitage. Confession, thanksgiving, praise, and rest are just some of the tools God has used to “prune” dead branches out of my life.

In John 15:2 we read, “He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.”

The Greek word for “prunes” also means “cleans.” Looking through a forest of freshly pruned trees allows you to see the forest more clearly and enjoy the beauty of each tree more fully. When the Lord prunes us, it enables his light to shine more brightly through us.

God’s creation is full of metaphors to teach us about the spiritual life. Even the act of volunteering can become a tool God can use to bless us. We may give of our time, but we receive so much more from him and his tender loving care. ♦

--Tom Klein

Meet Saint Dominic

St. Dominic was born in Spain in 1170 and became an ordained canon of the cathedral of Osma. In 1203 he accompanied his bishop on a diplomatic mission that took them through southern France. There he encountered believers led astray by Catharism, basically a revival of the ancient gnostic heresy. Dominic sought out the papal legates who had been appointed to combat the heresy and found that their expensive lifestyle and uninspired preaching failed to offer a challenging alternative to the zeal of the heretics. Because of this experience, Dominic founded the Order of

Preachers (or Dominicans, as they came to be known), based on the pattern of the original apostles. Dominicans traveled on foot and without money, preaching the gospel wherever there was an audience. Dominic emphasized the study of theology and doctrine so that his friars might become effective preachers. Thus, many great theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, have become Dominicans.

St. Dominic died among his brethren in 1221 and was canonized in 1234 by Pope Gregory IX.

The Church has set aside August 8th to celebrate the holy life of St. Dominic. ♦

from our hermits' hearts

♥ “I came very tired with heavy baggage. Within these few hours of prayer and reflection I feel the warmth of the loving Jesus around me and comforting me at this time.”

♥ “Thank you for your tender and warm embrace of welcome, God made flesh, welcoming me home to the heart of God within. . . . I so needed this time to stare into the woods, to look into my heart, to observe God’s creative power in nature and in my longings.”

♥ “I come to this place a tired, weary traveler, and I always leave refreshed, renewed, and nurtured in God’s loving compassion.”

♥ “God spoke in the silence of the woods, the beauty of the prairie, the hospitality of the staff, and the Love that dwells here.”

♥ “Once again, the peaceful presence of God that abides here at Pacem has come to rest on me. He has spoken to those things in my life that needed his light and love.”



Pacem Profile

Tom Klein is an enthusiastic hermit who recently volunteered to help us cut wood for several days this summer (hence his reflection on "The Theology of Pruning Trees" (page 3). Tom is a high school teacher and former hockey coach at Hopkins High School. He has been coming to Pacem for many years, and has frequently volunteered to help with maintenance projects. Tom has a unique distinction: By the end of this fall, he will have been on retreat in every hermitage at least once! ♦



Tom Klein stands atop a pile of logs that will help warm us this winter.

Thoughts on Silence

"As your prayer and meditation become deeper, they will defend you from the perpetual assaults of the outer world. You will hear the busy hum of that world as a distant exterior melody, and know yourself to be in some way withdrawn from it. You have set a ring of silence between you and it; and behold! within the silence you are free."

--Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism*

Dear friends,

Parenting is close to my heart. Being a mother is the second richest gift of my life (the first is knowing my Lord Jesus!).

Being the "spiritual mother" of Pacem brings me back to memories of long ago, when at the end of a busy day I would call my children in from play. Then the routine began: emptying out sandy shoes, discarding soiled clothing, giving baths--all while hearing the happy and sad stories of the day. Many of the stories needed to be celebrated, some were teachable moments, others called for sympathy, and often a bit of repentance was in order with a hug of forgiveness. Then reading a favorite book, saying prayers together, and tucking everyone into bed with one more lingering hug.

Does that sound familiar? Can't you just feel God calling you to come home and enter the holy rest he's prepared for you? It is truly God's amazing grace. At Pacem, we have a glimpse of God's parental love as we see what happens when his children answer his call, "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest." Glory to God!

Shirley Wanchena

"Before you can find peace outside yourself, you must have silence and quiet in your heart and in your mind."

--Catherine Doherty, *Welcome Pilgrim*

"True silence is sometimes the absence of speech--but it is always the act of listening."

--Catherine Doherty, *Poustinia*

**View our video link at
www.paceminterris.org**

If you haven't seen the video about Pacem in Terris, it's now available for viewing on our Web site, along with past newsletters and other information about Pacem. Check it out!