

GESTA MONASTICA

NEWS FROM THE ABBEY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX



Assemblyman Dick Dickerson presents Abbot Thomas X. Davis with the Assembly Resolution

State Resolution for the Abbey

It is not every day that cloistered monks find themselves on the floor of the State Assembly in Sacramento but then August 10, 2000 was no ordinary day for our monastery. The California Legislature Assembly passed a resolution on that day recognizing the significance of the monastery's property in the history of California. This was accomplished through the efforts of the Assemblyman of our 2nd District, Dick Dickerson, of Redding, and of a state lobbyist, Bev Hansen. Our Abbot, Father Thomas, was invited to be chaplain for the State Assembly on that special morning, opening the session with prayer. He was accompanied to the State Capitol by Brother Francis and Father Paul Mark who, along with Father Thomas, comprise the monastic community's building committee.

The beautifully hand-lettered state resolution honors both former and current residents on the property we monks now call home, beginning with the very first inhabitants, the Yahi tribe of Native Americans, who dwelt here from 4000 – 2000 B.C. This tribe, from which Ishi, sometimes dubbed as America's Last Wild Indian, was pushed into the surrounding foothills and replaced by the Wintun tribe which continued to occupy this property until white settlement that began with Peter Lassen, a Danish immigrant.

In 1844 Lassen received title to a Mexican land grant with the name Rancho de Los Bosquejos. In 1848 Lassen planted one acre of grapes obtained from the former Franciscan mission of San Gabriel in the Los Angeles Basin. In 1852 Henry Gerke, a German immigrant, bought part of Lassen's property and expanded the vineyard to 75 acres and operated a successful wine business. In 1881 Leland Stanford purchased the property creating the legendary Great Vina Ranch with the world's largest vineyard and winery among other enterprises.

The property then passed through various business interests before being acquired by the Trappist-Cistercian monks of Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky in 1955 at which time our monastery of New Clairvaux was founded. It is worth noting that after the Native Americans, monks have had possession of the property for the longest period of time in history, now nearly forty-six years. We hope this testifies to the vow of stability which we monks take.

Finally, the State Resolution makes note that in September of 1994 the city of San Francisco awarded to the Abbey of New Clairvaux the twelfth century chapter house stones of the Spanish Cistercian monastery of Santa Maria De Ovila. The chapter house will acknowledge the rich legacy and history of Spain and of the Cistercian Order/tradition here in California for many centuries to come.

The monks hosted a reception at the home of Bev Hansen on the evening of the passing of the State Resolution for area people interested in the monastery's unique building project. - Father Paul Mark Schwan

Volume 1, Issue 2 Summer 2001

In this issue of GESTA MONASTICA:

- Progress on the Sacred Stones Project
- Abbey of New Clairvaux honored by California Legislature
- Abbey crops suffer setback
- How you can help restore the Chapter House of Santa Maria de Ovila



This statue of St. Bernard is carved in oak, part of a polyptych commissioned in 1496 for the high altar of the Cistercian abbey of Esrum, Denmark. Courtesy of James France, Cottrills, Blewbury, Oxfordshire, England.

Heavenly Father, St. Bernard of Clairvaux was on fire with zeal for your house, and was a most radiant light in your Church. By his continual prayer for us, may we be filled with this same spirit of zeal and walk always as persons of light. Amen

Contact the Abbey Online!

Our Websites:

www.maxinet.com/trappist/

For Sacred Stones:

www.sacredstones.org

A Word from Abbot Thomas:

Dear friends,

A number of significant events have occurred since our first newsletter of July 2000.

Abbey receives State Resolution from the California Legislative Assembly

The California State Assembly conferred a distinctive honor upon our Abbey by passing a resolution recognizing the many inhabitants of our property, from Native American times to present. As Cistercian monks, we are especially touched by this resolution, as we have long been known to be “lovers of the place.” Part of our monastic vow is stability in the community and locale, and this resolution reinforces the importance of this vow. Our profound gratitude goes to Assemblyman Dick Dickerson and to Beverly Hansen for making this honor possible.

Sacred Stones Receptions

Over the past few months, I have had the pleasure of sharing the saga of the Sacred Stones with several enthusiastic audiences. I am tremendously grateful to the friends of the Abbey who have organized a series of informational receptions in various parts of our state:

Marilyn and Frank Dorsa

Pat and Maggie O’Laughlin (Los Gatos)

Dennis and Patty Burke (Ross)

Jane Flynn (Red Bluff)

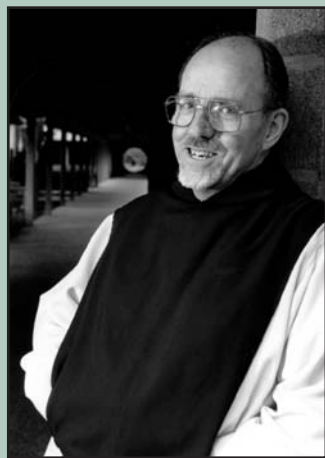
Russell and Curtis Godt (Sacramento)

Receptions are being planned for this fall in Chico, Paradise, San Francisco, the East Bay, Sonoma, and Los Angeles.

Thank you - for your generous donations!

Responses to our first newsletter and end-of-the-year appeal have been very generous. Towards our Nucleus Fund goal of \$1.3 million, we have raised nearly \$200,000. These funds will be used to construct a workshop on the monastery grounds. There, our master stonemason and his associate will begin the restoration work on the ancient Sacred Stones of the 12th Century Spanish Chapter House. Please consider becoming a partner in this opportunity to create a beautiful, contemplative space that is expressive of God’s presence in our lives. Your support will enable us to rebuild the ancient Chapter House and to construct a new Abbey Church and pastoral center in the same Cistercian Gothic architectural style as the Chapter House. Please see the next page for information on how to support the effort.

May the Lord Jesus Christ’s paschal greetings of peace endure in your hearts during these summer months.



Abbot
Thomas X. Davis,
OCSO

Photo: David Perata

Cistercian Tradition on Structures of Faith

One of the great Fathers from the Golden Age of the Cistercian Order was Aelred (1110-67), abbot of the Yorkshire monastery of Rievaulx. He was the son, grandson, and great grandson of priests who spent much of their lives working to repair and restore the old church of Saint Andrew in the Northumbrian town of Hexham. As a boy Aelred certainly worked with his grandfather, father, and brothers as they all sought to rebuild the church that was their livelihood, their responsibility, and their spiritual home.

Repeatedly when writing about figures and events in British history Aelred recounts the work of priests and bishops in building new churches, roofing them with tiles, flooring them with stone, and beautifying them with pictures and engravings “to encourage the devotion of a people still uneducated” (The Saints of Hexham).

Aelred insists that God and his people meet in the very structure of the church. In *The Life of Saint Edward, King and Confessor*, Saint Peter himself comes to dedicate the newly built church of Westminster and says that it will be “the house of God and the gate of heaven.” During this miraculous dedication, Aelred says, a fisherman watches from his boat and perceives that “earthly things seemed to have been mingled with heavenly and human to have been joined to the divine.”

Sometimes Aelred indicates that building a church and making it strong and beautiful will draw people to it, but other times he begins with constructing the community of faith and then laying the stones to enclose and protect that community. In his *Life of Saint Ninian*, about the great fifth-century patron saint of Scotland, who studied and was ordained in Rome, visited Saint Martin in Tours, and converted the southern Picts of Scotland to Christianity, he memorably links the two ideas.



Section of a drawing created for *The Abbey of New Clairvaux* by Anne Marie Campbell, member of the Board of Directors.

As he had determined to imitate the faith of the holy Roman church, so also he would imitate its way of building churches... This active field-worker of the Lord entered his field at once and began to root out what was badly planted, to scatter what was badly gathered, and to tear down what was badly built.

At length, when the minds of the faithful had been cleansed of all error, he began to lay the foundations of a sound faith in them, erecting on it the gold of wisdom, the silver of knowledge, and the stones of good works.

He taught by his word and showed by his example everything the faithful must do and confirmed it by many great miracles.

He chose for his see a place now called Whithorn. This place is situated on the ocean shore... There, by order of the man of God, the masons whom he had brought with him built a church; they say that before this none had been built of stone in Britain.

Aelred’s childhood taught him what as an adult and a Cistercian abbot he taught others: that God, who is spirit, makes himself known to his creatures in part through the works of his creation. So, Aelred says, men and women as part of their response may in turn build churches in which to know and love God.

- Marsha L. Dutton, Ohio University

Columbia Scholar Visits Vina

Stephen Murray, PhD., Chairman of the Department of Art History and Archaeology, and Executive Director of the Media Center for Art History of Columbia University in the city of New York, visited Vina in April to view the Sacred Stones. He was intrigued to be able to see on some of these ancient stones the scoring marks for guiding the original stone masons in carving the stones and their guild marks. Our long-time friend, Yoshio Kusaba, PhD., of California State University at Chico, brought him to the Abbey.

Sandy Joins the Team!

This past April we were pleased to welcome Sandy Goulart as our Sacred Stones Campaign Coordinator. Sandy has come to us after working for many years in the advertising, marketing and public relations industry in Chico, CA. From newspaper to television, print design to video production, Sandy has been there and seen it all, as the saying goes. She brings to an already expert and competent campaign development team insight and experience into the dynamics and use of marketing. After only three months it is hard to imagine the campaign without her lively, contagious enthusiasm.

A graduate of CSU, Chico, Sandy has a long history of involvement in numerous community organizations. Her wide base of contacts and “inside” connections will prove helpful in the days ahead.

In addition to her marketing responsibilities, Sandy coordinates the receptions, our newsletter, media contacts, and anything Father Thomas, our abbot, needs help with. She is truly a “jack of all trades” on a project as multi-faceted as Sacred Stones is proving to be. Sandy tells us how blessed she is to be a part of the Sacred Stones project. We monks, in turn, assure her that we are blessed with her presence.

- Father Paul Mark Schwan

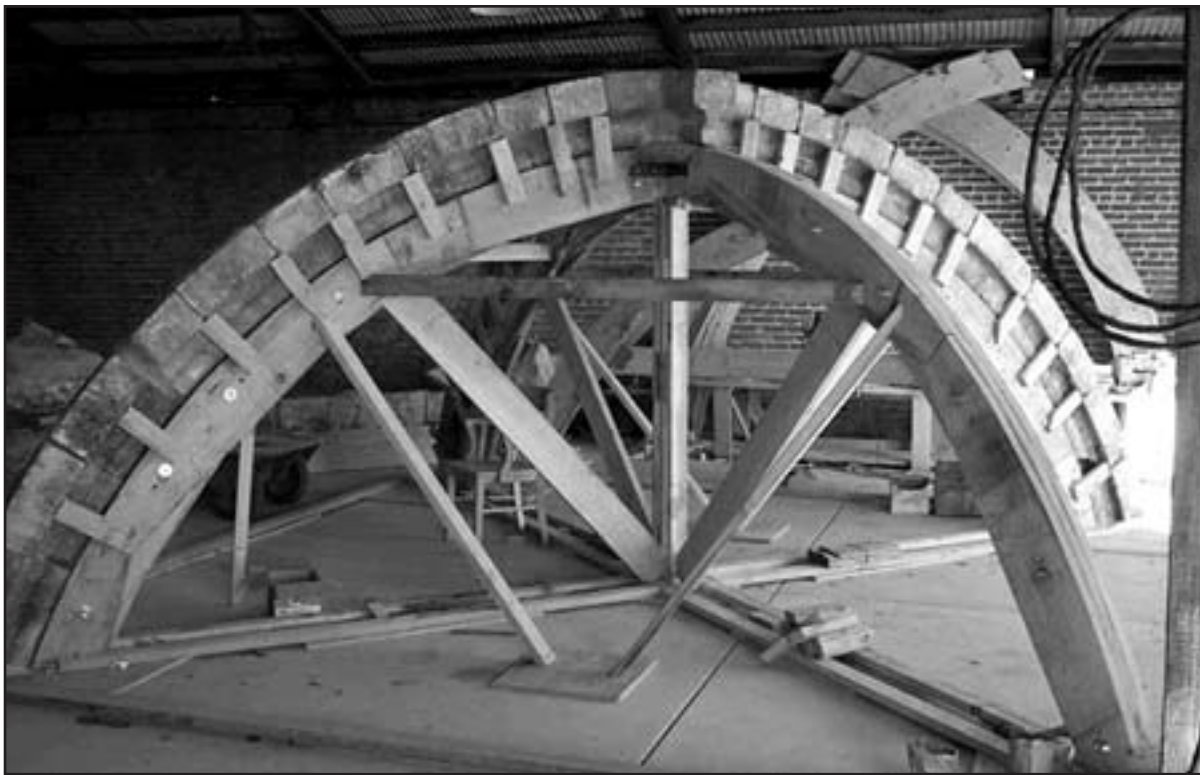
Please feel free to call Sandy at the Abbey, (530) 839-2161, if you would like further information on the Sacred Stones or if you would like to contribute your time, talent or treasure to this incredible project.

Mark your Calendar!

On **Saturday, September 15th** we will host our own Sacred Stones reception at the abbey from 2pm to 5pm. At this festive event, we will bless the stones and stone masons as they begin the task of reconstruction of the Chapter House of Santa Maria de Ovila. Also, it will be a chance for you to see the stones first-hand (without getting dusty!). Watch for more details in the mail - or better yet, send us your email address and we'll notify you digitally (and save the postage).



“Actually, what matters about the monastery is precisely that it is radically different from the world. The apparent ‘pointlessness’ of the monastery in the eyes of the world is exactly what gives it a real reason for existing. In a world of noise, confusion and conflict it is necessary that there be a place of silence, inner discipline and peace . . .” -Thomas Merton



One of the chapter house arches, painstakingly reassembled by stonemasons Oskar Kempf and Ross Luthard

Sacred Stones Progress!

The task of fitting together a jig saw puzzle of some 350 stones is rather daunting to say the least, but our stone masons, Oskar Kempf and Ross Luthard, have done the seemingly impossible. We are excited to report that all the chapter house stones are now mapped out on computer, have been physically laid out on the ground, and fitted together. This includes all existing arches and the three portals. Thanks to the fine work of these excellent and hardworking, and I should add most expert masons we now know the exact dimensions of the chapter house, as well as what stones need to be repaired, replaced, or carved anew. So complete and professional has the work been that Oskar and Ross even discovered the flaws and mistakes made by the builders 800 years ago.

The next step in the stone work is to erect a temporary workshop on the grounds wherein the carving of missing stones and the refurbishing of damaged stones can take place. We need your help to make this workshop and the necessary industrial-type saw (\$50,000) that will make the stone work possible a reality. Thereby the stones will be ready for placement when construction gets underway. – Father Paul Mark Schwan

Illuminating Invitations



Cornwell Scribe Works in Chico crafted the illuminations and calligraphy on our invitations for the house receptions. The artwork for the illuminations and calligraphy were in the style of the Moralia in Job, a Cistercian manuscript rendered at the abbey of Citeaux in 1111 A.D. Hilarie and James Cornwell are professional scribes in medieval and renaissance styles.

Legati Ovila

Legati is simply a Latin word for ambassadors. Members of this designation are not involved in the day-to-day business of our capital campaign. Rather, they are individuals willing to assist us where they have influence and entrée in their respective communities. Our present Honorable Legati are:

Dennis and Patty Burke - Active community volunteers. Dennis is a Management Consultant, Ross, California.

Mrs. Frank Damrell - Friend of the Abbey, Sacramento, California.

Marilyn and Frank Dorsa - Owners of the Delta Queen Car Wash Company. They reside in Los Gatos, California.

Jane Flynn - Owner and President of Pacific Farms, Gerber, California.

Russell Godt - Vice President-Investments, U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray, Sacramento, California.

Bev Hansen - Partner in Lang, Hansen, O'Malley & Miller, Sacramento, California.

John Koeberer - Founder and Chairman of Tehama Bank, Co-Founder of California Park Companies, Red Bluff, California.

Joanne & Martin (Pete) Murphy - Active community volunteers. Pete is a senior partner in the law firm of Tobin & Tobin, San Francisco, California.

Patrick and Maggie O'Laughlin - Pat is a trial lawyer, civic leader, and community volunteer. Maggie is a counselor with the Santa Clara Unified School District. They reside in Los Gatos, California.

Anthony Veerkamp - Senior Program Officer for National Trust for Historic Preservation, San Francisco, California.

Board of Advisors

We are honored and grateful that the following members of the Board of Advisors are willing to share their time and expertise on behalf of our Sacred Stones endeavor.

Dr. Margaret Burke is the Art Historian of the Chapter House. She has completed many extensive studies on the stones, and is an indispensable expert on Cistercian architecture. She lives in Belmont, California.

Ann Marie Campbell is a nationally recognized fine artist, who specializes in murals. She resides in Folsom, California.

Dr. Jose Miguel Merino de Caceres is an architect for the Government of Spain, currently at the University of Madrid. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Abbey of Santa Maria de Ovila, and has restored several important historical buildings in Spain, most notably the Cistercian Abbey of Sacramenia.

Patrick Cole, AIA is one of the architects on the project, working through his firm Arcademe in Chico, California.

Abbot Thomas X. Davis, OCSO is Abbot at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina, California. He has been interested in the stones since 1955.

Sandra Goulart is the Sacred Stones Campaign Coordinator. She has an extensive background in print and broadcast media, marketing, advertising and public relations. She resides in Chico, California.

Oskar Kempf is the master stone mason for the project. He grew up in Germany working under his father, also a stone mason. He has been involved in numerous commercial and residential projects throughout Europe and in the U.S., all projects of high quality and artistry. Oskar owns his own firm, Kempf Stoneworks.

Dr. Terryl N. Kinder is editor of the periodical Citeaux, Commentarii Cisterciennes. She orchestrated the national display honoring St. Bernard and the Cistercian Order in 1990 for the French Government. A consultant for the restoration of several 12th century French Cistercian Abbeys, she resides at Pontigny, France.

Stephen Lovette is Senior Vice President for Development at St. Ignatius College Preparatory in San Francisco, California.

Annette Lomont & Charles Raaberg are fundraising consultants for the Abbey's development campaign. Their firm, Raaberg & Lomont, is based in San Francisco, California.

Carl F. Meyer, AIA is also one of the architects on the project. He works for Altoon & Porter in Los Angeles, California.

Darla and David Moe are co-owners of Moe's Direct Marketing, based in Sacramento, California.

Harry S. Parker, III is the Director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, California, and currently resides there.

Philip Sunseri owns Sunseri Associates, Inc., a construction management company in Sacramento, California.

Alfred S. Wilsey is Chairman of the Wilsey Foundation, located in San Francisco, California.

Cistercian Scholars

Our Sacred Stones Project has drawn international attention from scholars in the fields of architecture and history. We are proud of the many fine Cistercian scholars assisting us on our project through their professional advice and warm encouragement.

Dr. David Bell - Memorial University, St. John's, Newfoundland

Dr. Marsha Dutton - University of Ohio, Athens, Ohio

Dr. E. Rozanne Elder - Cistercian Institute and Publications, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan

Dr. James France - Oxfordshire, England

Dr. Virginia Jansen - University of California, Santa Cruz, California

Dr. Terryl Kinder - Citeaux, Commentarii Cisterciennes, Pontigny, France.

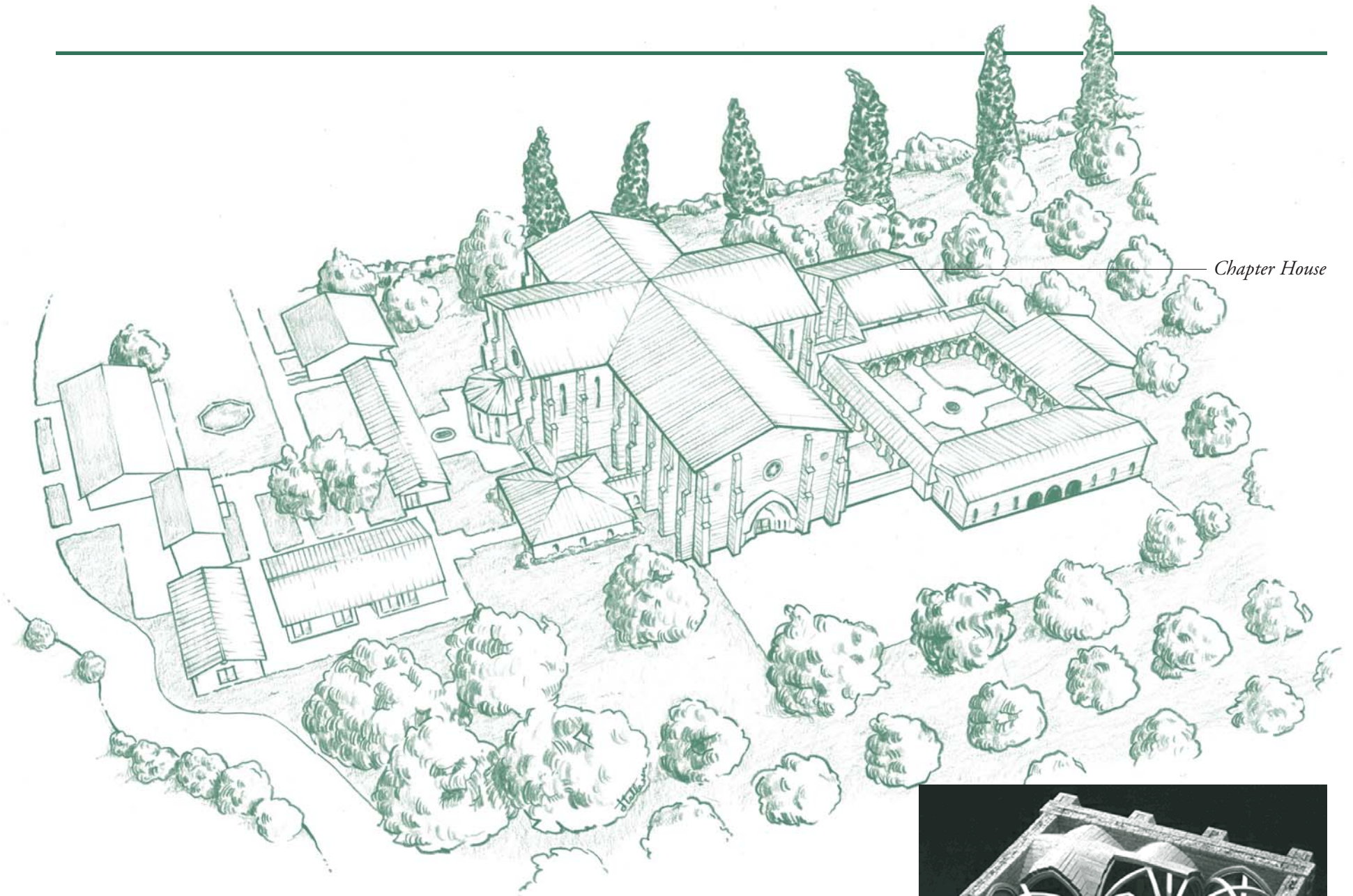
Dr. Meredith Parson Lillich - Syracuse University, New York

Dr. Brian Patrick McGuire - Roskilde University, Denmark

Dr. John R. Sommerfeldt - University of Dallas, Texas

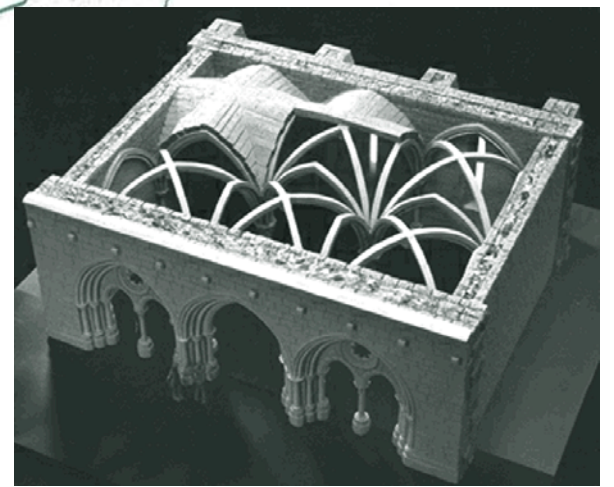
Dr. Emero Stiegman - Halifax, Canada

THE ABBEY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX



Chapter House

Artists rendering of the complete building plan for The Abbey of New Clairvaux. The photo at right shows a model of the Chapter House of Santa Maria de Ovila. Originally built with a second floor for dormitory space, the arches will only be visible from within the Chapter House. The location of the Chapter House in the overall plan is shown in the upper right of the rendering.



Planning for the Next 1000 Years

Few construction projects undertaken today will stand at the turn of the next millennium. The Abbey of New Clairvaux is undertaking just such a project.

After many years of consideration, the San Francisco Museums of Fine Arts awarded the Abbey of New Clairvaux the 800-year old stones from the ancient Spanish monastery of Sancta Maria de Ovila. These "Sacred Stones" will be used to recreate a Chapter House for use by our monks and the public at specified times.

Our Sacred Stones project differs from so many other construction projects that focus on utility, expediency, and cutting costs. In the spirit of our Cistercian Order, we are building for the next 1000 years, with excellent craftsmanship, a sense of beauty and harmony flowing out of the use of proportion, perfect ratios, space, height, form and the use of natural light. The result will be a beautiful example of

religious art and architecture, the oldest freestanding building West of New York, and one of only three examples of Cistercian Gothic architecture in the U.S.

The Abbey has established a Nucleus Fund of \$1.3 million to complete two critical components of the Sacred Stones project over the next year and a half:

Prepare the stones for reconstruction: As soon as funds are available, our two master stone masons and their apprentices will "set up shop" at the Abbey. They will refurbish existing stones and test them for strength and carve the missing stones. The Nucleus Fund will pay for their highly skilled work, the limestone that will be used to carve the missing stones, an on-site workshop, and an industrial saw for carving.

Complete other pre-construction requirements: The Ovila Chapter House must meet today's basic construction code requirements. The building also needs to be

outfitted with modern amenities, such as electricity, in a way that does not compromise the original form of the structure. Our architect will develop mechanical and electrical plans, prepare design development drawings and specifications, and assist with cost estimates.

The Nucleus Fund is Phase I of a larger building project that includes the development of an adjacent pastoral center and a new Abbey Church. These buildings will be built of stone in the same style as the ancient Chapter House. When fund raising for the Phase I Nucleus Fund is complete, we will move onto Phase II, the actual reconstruction of the Chapter House and construction of a cloister, archival library, foyer and pastoral center. Phase III is the construction of a new Abbey church, which will be undertaken when funds are available. The Abbey is developing naming opportunities for the project.

THE ABBEY OF NEW CLAIRVAUX

Sacred Stones Project Facts

The Abbey of New Clairvaux is a Roman Catholic men's monastery of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance. Founded in 1955 in the Sacramento Valley, the community has roots reaching back through Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky to the first Cistercian monastery of Citeaux in southern France more than 900 years ago. The monks of New Clairvaux strive to maintain a balance of communal and private prayer, manual labor and sacred reading, in keeping with the 6th century Rule of St. Benedict, ordering their lives to the worship of God.

The Abbey is in the process of restoring the Chapter House of an ancient Cistercian Gothic Abbey built by monks of our same order more than 800 years ago in Spain. Reconstruction of the Chapter House is part of a larger, \$14 million endeavor that includes construction of a church and Pastoral Center for the Abbey. These other buildings will apply Cistercian architectural ratios in order to match the unique style of the Chapter House.

We have developed this "fact sheet" to answer some common questions about the project.

What are the Sacred Stones?

The Sacred Stones are the dismantled stones from the Chapter House of the Abbey of Santa Maria de Ovila, originally located near Trillo, Guadalajara, a town some 80 miles northeast of Madrid, Spain. Cistercian monks, at the request of Alfonso VIII, arrived in 1181 to establish this Abbey. The Abbey functioned as a permanent establishment in a chain of outposts that would help settle and maintain the territory that Alfonso VIII, King of Castile, had recently reconquered from the Moors. The monks lived at Ovila for more than 600 years until a decree of the government of Maria Christina suppressed all small monasteries around 1835. Sold to a wealthy family, the Abbey eventually fell into disrepair while used as sundry farm buildings. The Sacred Stones were carved and the Chapter House itself constructed between 1190 and 1220.

How did the Sacred Stones get from Spain to Vina, California?

In 1931, William Randolph Hearst purchased parts of the Abbey, including the entire Chapter House, for \$85,000, dismantled the stones, and shipped them via 12 ships to the United States. Hearst intended to use the stones to construct a swimming pool and bowling alley at his Wynton Castle on the McCloud River. Financial problems led him to instead donate the stones to the City of San Francisco in return for a canceled debt. The City moved the stones to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, where they fell victim to a series of fires, theft, and vandalism that destroyed the identifying numbers that provided the code to reconstruct the Chapter House.

In 1980, Dr. Margaret Burke, an art historian in medieval architecture, surveyed the stones revealing that the stones of the beautiful Chapter House had survived the fires and vandalism and proved to be salvageable, even though their identifying numbers were gone. The Abbey of New Clairvaux acquired the Chapter House stones in 1994, after more than 30 years of attempts.

The Abbey of New Clairvaux is located on a 600-acre ranch, in the small town of Vina that was part of a land grant belonging to Peter Lassen during the Mexican control of California and later to Leland Stanford. Under Stanford, the ranch in the 1890's became headquarters for the world's largest winery.



Arches are reassembled to determine exact placement of stones

Why are the Sacred Stones so important?

The Santa Maria de Ovila Chapter House will be the oldest freestanding building west of New York, and one of only three examples of Cistercian Gothic architecture in the United States. France and Spain are preserving their medieval Cistercian monasteries simply because they represent a form of Gothic architecture totally unique.

The Chapter House will be reassembled according to strict ratios of Cistercian architecture. As such the building will be an authentic expression in stone of an experience of the divine, a place where one can walk into an encounter with God. This form of architecture has strong significance for prayer for our Order of monks and for our visitors, now numbering close to 2,000 per year.

The Ovila Chapter House will be an important contribution to academics, especially in the fields of history and architecture. By agreement with the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Chapter House and an archival library will be open to the public, free-of-charge, during specified hours.

What is a Chapter House?

In the 12th Century, the Chapter House was the part of the monastery where one of the monks daily chanted for the community a chapter from the Rule of St. Benedict, which translates the Gospels into a way of life. Hence the name: Chapter House. The monks also used the Chapter House for their community meetings, for giving the monastic habit to new comers, for monks making their first vows, and for the election and installation of the abbot wherein the monks individually promised him obedience until death. Today, every monastery has a Chapter House or room that is used for the same purposes as they were in the 12th Century. The only difference is that the Rule of St. Benedict is read aloud rather than chanted.

The Chapter House is the most important room in the monastery, even taking precedence over the church. In the 12th century the best materials were used in its construction. For example, the Chapter House alone had solid blocks for the walls.

All other buildings, including the church, had walls that were filled with "rubble," or that were built with smaller blocks.

What is the process for restoring the Ovila Chapter House?

The first step is to prepare the stones. Master stonemason, Oskar Kempf, and his associate have surveyed the stones and are using computer imaging to determine their placement. They will refurbish existing stones, test them for strength, and carve the missing stones. We have retained an architect and construction firm to reconstruct the Abbey once the stones are prepared. With funding for an additional stonemason and apprentice, preparation of the Sacred Stones should be completed by the beginning of 2003, and the full construction by mid-2004.

How much will the project cost?

The cost of the project – Chapter House, Pastoral Center, and Church is \$14 million.

Phase I \$1.3 million The "Nucleus Fund" will pay for preparation and refurbishment of the Sacred Stones, first part of the pastoral center units, and construction documents.

Phase II \$3.7 million Construction of the Chapter House and cloister, archival library and foyer and second part of the pastoral center,

Phase III \$9 million Construction of the Church and Sacristy

How can I help?

The Abbey of New Clairvaux (a tax exempt corporation) will gratefully accept:

Gifts of cash

Gifts of appreciated securities

Gifts of real estate or real property

Gifts to support the Sacred Stones effort may be pledged over a period of two to three years or longer, if needed.

How can I learn more?

For more information, or to discuss naming or memorial opportunities, please contact:

Abbot Thomas X. Davis O.C.S.O.

Abbey of New Clairvaux

P.O. Box 80

Vina, CA 96092

Phone: 530.839.2161

email: txdavis@maxinet.com

In Requiem: *Brother Paul Bernard Williams*



Photo: David Penata

Brother Paul Bernard Williams died on February 25, 2001, after a brief bout with pancreatic cancer. He was seventy years old.

All the monks feel the hand of God on them in special ways, but Brother Paul Bernard's was marked in a very special way. Born into a Protestant family in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1930, who nevertheless named him Bernard, he found himself walking in the steps of Thomas Merton. Like Merton he went to Columbia University, where he happened to find a copy of Thomas Merton's autobiography, The Seven Storey Mountain, which led to his conversion to Catholicism. Like Merton he was early attracted to Cistercian life, but figuring the life would be too hard for him, he joined the Carmelites. But his love for Cistercians continued to percolate, and by a series of coincidences, including a personal letter of invitation from Thomas Merton, he entered the Abbey of Gethsemani in 1955, where Thomas Merton was his novice director. Then in 1957 he came to the Abbey of New Clairvaux.

For Brother Paul Bernard life with the Trappists was a forty-six year love story, and his joy was infectious. He served the monastery as an organist, cantor, composer, business manager (cellarer), and in many other capacities through his long service. In the 1960's he wrote our English liturgy, both the music and Opus Dei texts.

At his Mass of Resurrection and burial a large number of people attended; the Abbey church was filled to near capacity, a tribute to the honor and love we all had for him.

**“Without a life of the spirit
our whole existence becomes
unsubstantial and illusory.”**

-Thomas Merton

Abbey Ranch Update!

After a wonderful blossom set and pollinating season this spring our crops of prunes (now officially called dried-plums) and walnuts looked promising. Then on the evening of April 8 our area was hit by an unusually late frost and about 75% of our crops were badly damaged or wiped out completely. In the Rule for Monasteries by which we monks live the gospel, St. Benedict states that the monks be self-supporting. With the recent disastrous loss of our crops, the austerity and simplicity that characterize our Trappist-Cistercian life take on a deeper significance.

The good news is that our one-year old vineyard was not damaged and shows much promise. Here is an update on the current developments:

Smart-Dyson trellising was chosen to accommodate the vigorous growth of the grapevines expected in our rich Vina loam soil. It is the normal growth pattern for the vines to run uphill (apical dominance). By forcing some (40 to 50%) of the shoots to grow downwards, the vine's vigor is much reduced. Smart-Dyson trellising was developed to cope with this problem.

Since stressed vines produce better wine grapes, not only will stress be managed through this



The vines are back in Vina!

type of trellising but also through the withholding of irrigation.

Spacing is an 10-foot wide tractor row, with seven feet between vines. Cordon height is 36 inches above ground. The cordon wire is the wire to which the two arms (cordons) branch to the left and right of the vine trunk which gives rise to all fruit-bearing growth. Each cordon is three feet long running unilaterally toward the next vine.

Out of nearly 2,500 vines less than two dozen replants were required. The vines are very healthy and already have numerous clusters of grapes on them.

We expect to begin harvest mid-August. The first harvest is always earlier than the following ones. We have decided to have the grapes custom crushed, fermented and bottled. We are doing this because we are anxious to test the quality of the wine. Our consultant, Markus Bokisch, has lived and studied vineyards and winemaking in both France and Spain. He has assured us that the varieties we have chosen are the best suited to our climate and soil and should give a high quality wine. He says we can expect a minimum of 143 cases this year.

There has been a surprising amount of interest in our planting of a vineyard. We and those in the wine industry who know about our venture are really excited! The history of the old Leland Stanford winery as well as the history of quality winemaking within the Cistercians (Trappists) make this a very special undertaking. Be one of the first to enjoy wine from the New Clairvaux Vineyards!

- Brother Laurin, OCSO

Abbot Thomas X. Davis, OCSO
Abbey of New Clairvaux
P.O. Box 80
Vina, CA 96092

Nonprofit Organization U.S. POSTAGE PAID Vina, CA Permit No. 1
--