

NEW SKETE

No. 13 Summer 2009

MISSION:

Our vocation as Eastern Orthodox monastics, united in interactive communities of monks, nuns and married couples, is to grow in the likeness of Christ through a vowed life and to embody and express Christ's love and message for all seekers in a manner responsive to contemporary needs and faithful to the prophetic spirit of the earliest Christian communities.

INSIDE:

Dog training tips /7

Thanking our supporters /12

New cookbook /22



A Novice's Reflections Changing Seasons

By SISTER MACRINA

Seven months have passed since arriving at Our Lady of the Sign Monastery to begin my journey in becoming a nun of New Skete. The views from

my room onto the hillside have offered a window into reflection on changing seasons in nature and this time; the brilliant colors of autumn fading into the gray blues of winter's snow and ice and now the increasing array of greens of spring. Life in community

has offered a deepening reflection on changing seasons of human life. This winter the communities offered a profound expression of hospitality in a memorial vespers for a young man none of us knew personally. One Monday evening a group of us went to the funeral home to sing a Lity for our friend Millie, a long time member of the

chapel community. Surrounding her body so changed by the process of dying, we sang the hymns accompanying her as best we could this side of heaven. In each of those moments, I glimpsed a changing

season in my own life; but, much like the trees in mid April, only a hint of visible new color.

Sister Macrina is clothed as a novice by the Nuns' Prioress, Sister Cecelia, during Matins, January 17, 2009.



Death is the ultimate change of season, yet

life is a series of deaths. Indeed, the spiritual life is a continual dying to the old self, thus emerging more in the image and likeness of God. Being formed as a novice is living each day with the gifts and the challenges of daily life. Work assigned can become moments of grace of dying to self to be

Please see REFLECTIONS /Page 2

MORE INSIDE:

Puppy kennel gets new look /3

Poetry /4, 9

A day on the mountain /5

Making a home for a New Skete puppy /6

Lord, help us to see /8

How did I get here? /10

I & Dog: The New Skete way /14

Book review /15

Spiritual companion on the road of life /17

Written in our hearts /18

Community news /19

Calendar of events /23

SERVICES:

All of our church services are open to the public.

DIVINE LITURGY

Sunday 10 AM
preceded by Matins
in Holy Wisdom
Temple at the Monks

VESPERS 5 PM

Tuesday through Saturday
in Holy Wisdom Temple

WEEKDAY MATINS 7:15 AM

Tuesday through Friday
at both the Monks and
at the Nuns

SATURDAY MATINS 8 AM
in Holy Wisdom Temple

CONTACT US:

MONKS OF NEW SKETE

PO Box 128
Cambridge NY 12816
Tel: 518-677-3928
Email: monks@newskete.com
Web: www.newsketemonks.com

NUNS OF NEW SKETE

343 Ash Grove Road
Cambridge NY 12816
Tel: 518-677-3810
Email: nuns@newskete.com
Web: www.newskete.com

COMPANIONS OF NEW SKETE

PO Box 189, Cambridge NY 12816
Tel: 518-677-8863
Email: companionsofnewskete@wildblue.net
Web: www.newsketecompanions.org

REFLECTIONS *Continued from page 1*

Christ for another, or mundane chores of washing lettuce, walking the dog, helping a sister with her music. Each of these tasks has been a window into the diminishment of another person's independence and need for support, even reliance on another. Bearing witness to these small deaths takes on new meaning in light of the passion of our Lord and what it means to join the monastic family. On Holy Thursday, as the newest member of the community, my feet were washed, and in that ritual I heard anew the teaching that I am to do likewise. In our monastic family



Like a word from a desert mother, my mentor observed that I had to be able to accept that pruned bushes are not particularly pretty in their first season.

During Holy Week I pruned the privet bushes, planted new forsythia and delighted in the daffodils and pansies. Like a word from a desert mother, my mentor observed that I had to be able to accept that pruned bushes are not particularly pretty in their first season. Later as I knelt saying a blessing for the forsythia and our monastery, I knew it is I who am being pruned and planted into this new soil of New Skete. In the ending and beginning of a new season, like mud season and newly pruned shrubs, it is the hope for the life that will come that sustains us through the challenges. These are changing seasons with my sisters and brothers, each day an awakening to God's presence. Christ is in our midst! ■

we bear the same burdens, challenges and joys as any family. How do I really understand aging, loss of memory, loss of eye sight, healing from surgery, ah, even energy for the day? More importantly, how does my heart respond? Changing seasons in life offer spiritual experiences and opportunities that open new horizons, both for the person and for those accompanying them through this life and their life in Christ. How do I live in authentic relationship with my sisters and brothers, with myself in this journey?

Puppy Kennel Gets New Look!



Julia Gates with Xenia and her pups.

Julia Gates came to New Skete about a year ago to help out in the puppy kennel during an unusually busy time. What began as a temporary need for us: more help with the puppies, has grown into a full-time (and some times over full time!) position. It was immediately obvious that Julia had organizational talent and a willingness to chip in wherever needed. This combined with her own creative ideas has lead to not only a "re-decorating" of the puppy kennel, but to a whole new organized approach to the socialization of the growing pups. We have a number of community people who volunteer their time to come to New Skete (angels all of them!) and "socialize" puppies and Julia took a system that was at best, a bit unorganized, and turned it into a system that works well for everyone.

Her sprucing up of the puppy kennel included hanging photographs of all of the adult New Skete dogs (so new puppy owners can see the parents in the event the adult is not available that day) and is a wonderful, comprehensive look at our family of dogs. This winter the entire puppy management office moved from the main monastery building into the puppy kennel. So the puppy office is not only busy when families come to pick up their new pups, but now it is also the beehive of activity managing the placement of puppies and all the correspondence and paperwork that goes with it.

If you get the opportunity to meet Julia in person, one quality that you will be instantly aware of is her friendly, open demeanor and her almost "mamma bear" protectiveness of the pups! Nobody, and I mean nobody, enters the puppy kennel without first dipping their feet in a cleansing solution and washing and disinfecting their hands. She also pays attention to the



LeeAnn Hurlburt, above, Maggie Hurlburt, right, and Michael and Elizabeth Bouteneff, below, help with puppy kennel chores.



Please see **KENNEL /Page 4**



LeenAnn and Maggie Hurlburt socialize puppies, a very important part of the breeding program here at New Skete.

KENNEL *Continued from page 3*

individual puppies within each litter, observing their personalities as they emerge from newborns to 8 week old bundles of energy eager to go to their new homes.

Although Brother Luke is a daily overseer/participant in all aspects of the puppy care, Julia is right there following out his instructions to the letter. She has recently expanded her duties to working with Brother John in the placement of pups and spends much time with new puppy owners reviewing pertinent material regarding ongoing puppy care.

Julia, her husband Frank and son Nate,

live in Cambridge in the original house that the Nuns of New Skete first purchased in 1969. Living with them is New Skete's Dux, who, in addition to being a stud dog in the breeding program, is also now certified as a Therapy Dog and has gone on visits to the Cambridge Central School and local nursing homes and hospitals, a true ambassador of goodwill and comfort for many in need.

Julia has owned dogs and horses all her life. A true animal lover. She is truly a blessing to us, to the puppies, and puppy customers alike! ■

CALLING HIS DOGS

By FREDERICK PHEIFFER

An old man walks from his home across the fields into the woods looking for his dogs that have run off.

Whistling for them to come back he continues with heavy heart calling out their names hoping they're not harmed.

Wondering how they got out he mutters to himself, "must have left the door open."

Calling again and again as he crosses a stream he slips and falls into the water unable to free himself he cries out.

Racing over the fields from the woods his dogs come to him they crawl under his arms and help him up.

Together, they leave the water's edge and head for home, giving comfort to each other.

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A Day on the Mountain

Rediscovering our story through spiritual retreat

By FR. RALPH and DR. BIRGITTA PETERSON

"God made people because He loves stories." These are words from rabbi's in the Hasidic Tradition as well as from the Danish writer, Isak Dinesen. Birgitta and I came to our "holy mountain" on March 14th of this year. Our first visit was in 1979. We have always made the journey in order to better understand and love our story. We love dogs, and we have always loved being with the professed in monastic communities. But our primary purpose has always been to get a grasp of our story.

This year is a major turning point for us.

deepens things...time is a wondrous thing."

We went to the mountain to have the time of our life. Self discovery and spiritual growth for these two youngsters engaged in a retreat gave us a glorious Lenten renewal. Sister Rebecca's reflections on self discovery focused our attention on where we were - things to change and things which are given. We were led to consider new ways of seeing our heart and soul. Brother David and Brother Christopher offered fresh ways of reflecting on our direction and formation, our need for confession and our conversion in turning toward God. Discussion



Left: Sister Rebecca, one of the presenters at the New Skete Lenten retreat this past March, focused on self discovery; Center: Ralph and Birgitta Peterson; Right: Retreatants experienced a blend of classroom presentations, quiet reflection, meal time and group discussion.

We are retired - as a medical doctor and as an Episcopal priest. At the same time we are not retiring from the joy of living! It is Pablo Picasso who once observed that "it takes a long time to become young." Both of us find ourselves at the end of a long life with very young souls! We have a son and daughter in law and grandchildren who live in London. We have our families in Sweden and in Minnesota and California. We have led a congregation in the building of a major building project for a new church in Mid-Manhattan. We have served with the Red Cross in Africa. And yet, we now see clearly some things we have never seen before.

As Joan Chittister has observed, "Time has its way with all of us...as we age the wanting and going and striving are immersed in being... being alive, being healthy, being young again in delight and vision...time ripens things...time

in groups and lunching by the fire and praying on the trail added to what became a day long love affair with Our Lord.

John Updike in his final New Yorker book review observed that the biography of John Cheever revealed a man who never loved himself. "He was blessed but lived in despair."

Our day on the mountain led us to rediscover our blessings. As we drove toward home we recalled that our young son, Kristofer, used to play on the floor of the Church and was very fond of the colored stones from the Hagia Sophia given to New Skete. We had been back to the House of the Lord, and just like our toddling son, we had been youngsters given the grace and courage to celebrate playfully a new life, because we were able to love ourselves as children of God. Thanks be to God for New Skete and its ministry! ■

A Dream Come True

Making a Home for a New Skete Puppy

By CARL and ANNA PATKA

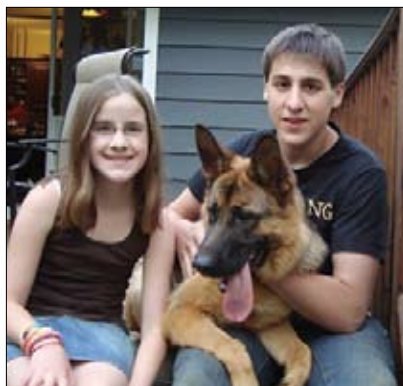
We have always wanted to have a dog, but through the harried years of going to school, raising children, and working, the time has never been right. In our dreams of having a dog join our family, we held out a New Skete shepherd as an unattainable ideal. However, a recurring theme in our lives has been if we wait long enough and are patient, what is truly right for us will come to be, and that is what happened when we were asked to be stewards for one of New Skete's breeding females.

We entered into this arrangement nervous as new parents. Anna and I read every book we could find in the library in addition to *The Art of Raising a Puppy* and *How to be Your Dog's Best Friend*. We watched hours of *The Dog Whisperer* and debated techniques, asked countless people for advice, looked into puppy kindergarten, bought the necessary supplies, and hired two dog walkers to help us until Lila was ready to be left at home without a noon-time feeding and walk, and waited eagerly for the big day. The children could not believe that WE were actually getting a DOG! We started playing with Lila at the puppy kennel when she was four weeks old and fell in love. A few weeks later, we had an early morning appointment to pick Lila up and go over paperwork and other details and told the children that they did not have to get up early and come with us. They would have none of that—they were up at the

crack of dawn, dressed, fed and ready.

When we brought Lila home, we understood that each of us would form our own relationship with her, which we must allow to unfold over time. Now after having Lila in our home for only five months, we can see that this has happened. Lila's sense of responsibility for all the living things in

The relationship that each of us has with Lila is the essential core of her training.



Sophie and Isaac Patka with New Skete Shepherd, Lila.

our home is evident in everything she does. Each morning when she is let out of the crate she makes the rounds of those who are still asleep, puts her front paws on the bed and gives them a kiss, and only then is she ready to go downstairs to be let out and to have her breakfast. She even checks on our pet bird and guinea pig.

The relationship that each of us has with Lila is the essential core of her training. One of

her first exercises was attention, and it is this exercise that is the foundation of all the other skills she needs to be a well mannered, obedient companion dog. We start each training session with having her turn her attention to us. We gain her attention when she tries to pull on the leash, when she barks at other dogs, when she wants to run along the fence at people who ride by our yard on scooters and bicycles. Lila is learning to look to us for guidance in how to react to a wide variety of situations. During her first thunderstorm, she began to bark at the noises outside until we told her, "Enough. Go lie on your bed." She settled right down and has not reacted to

a storm since then. She has put her trust in us, and she has repaid us tenfold in her affection and devotion to all of us.

When each of us returns from our days of work and school, the general aggravation of traffic and the state of the world, she's there waiting, tail wagging, ears back, an excited whine. Thirty seconds later, when she's on her back getting her belly rub, there is no stress. Worries melt away. It is impossible for me to look at Lila and not smile. I watch Anna, Emily, Isaac and Sophie with Lila, and it's the same.

New Skete German Shepherds are not like any dogs I've encountered before. Brother John has said that many breeders have the same blood lines as our dogs, but it is the way the dogs are birthed and raised by Julia, Brothers Peter and Luke, and the volunteers at the puppy kennel, that makes them so special. Whatever the reason, Lila, her mother and father, and the other dogs are loyal, gentle, attentive and protective with a dignity that is hard to put into words.

She's a favorite with the trainers and other dogs at Shaker Veterinary, where she goes for doggy daycare once a week for socializing. Isaac and Sophie love to play with her, whether it is fetch the ball, tug, hide and seek, or "rescuing" one us with licks when we lie on the ground and pretend to play dead.

Lila gets us outside away from the television and Internet and into the fresh air. She has brought us closer together, and has truly become a member of the family. We have been honored and grateful for the opportunity, and I can't wait to see her bring the next generation of New Skete puppies into the world when it is her time. ■

Training Tips:

By JANINE LAZARUS

ALL WORK...

So, you're training your dog Sadie to sit and she still doesn't put her haunches down with the finesse you would like.

You ask and you ask; but your dog's attention is everywhere but on you. You try to push her hind-end down. She swings it to the side and collapses. You raise your voice. She shuts her eyes. You glower at Sadie with frustration and wonder if she has a hearing problem! Where are you going wrong?

And then, you produce a BALL!

Oh my goodness! Look at that! Her head comes up! Her eyes take on a bright and interested look! She gives you her undivided attention as you ask her to "SIT". Well, it's effortless, perfect, and you feel great!

You throw the ball, Sadie brings it back to you and you ask her to "down". Down she goes! No. It's not cheating.

What fun training is now and how much better friends you are.

It doesn't have to be the hardest way. Although we have certainly been trained to believe that the best results come from hard work. We are sometimes so focused on our goal that we forget to enjoy the process.

In any training session you and your dog undertake, there should always be a pause for breath—even if it's just a "good girl."

Some days you are both fresh and enthusiastic but on other days, when you are not quite so tuned-in, a spoonful of chase-the-ball can encourage even the most jaded palette.

Remember, keep those sessions short and break them up from time to time with a different perspective. An enthusiastic, attentive dog makes you proud! ■



We are sometimes so focused on our goal that we forget to enjoy the process.

Lord, help us to see

by BROTHER CHRISTOPHER

Once, a Frenchman was crossing the desert with an Arab guide. Several times a day the Arab would kneel upon the sand and pray. Now the Frenchman wasn't a believer, and after a time he started to grow annoyed with the Arab's piety. One evening, when the Arab was beginning his prayer, the Frenchman interrupted him and demanded, "How do you know there is a God, anyway?"

The guide looked calmly at the Frenchman for a moment and then replied, "I'll make you a deal: I'll answer you, if first you let me ask you a question." The Frenchman agreed, so the Arab asked, "This morning, when we got up, how did we know that it was a camel that passed by our tent during the night, and not a man?"

The Frenchman replied, "Why, we could tell by the print of the hoof in the sand. That print certainly wasn't from the foot of a man."

The Arab then looked to the West, where the setting sun was throwing shafts of red and gold light into the sky. Pointing towards the sun he said, "Neither is that the footprint of a man..."

I suspect part of the dilemma of human life these days is that too often we look to the sky and all we see are human footprints. It's easy to fall into this kind of blindness, missing the forest through the trees, thinking all the while we see perfectly. That's the condition of the Pharisees in the episode of the blind man in the Gospel of St John: they think they see; they've got the answers. The contrast to this is the blind man, whose healing reveals what true sight really is.

Seeing is a process. Taken spiritually, all of us start out blind: each of us is the blind man in the story. It's only in passing through deepening stages of faith that we come to true sight. Interestingly enough, this starts with mud. St Irenaeus, an early father of the Church, recognized long ago that when Jesus smeared mud over the blind man's eyes, he was hearkening back to God's creating us from the dust of the earth. Jesus performed a new act of creation, where blindness gives way to sight in the waters of baptism. "Go wash in the waters of Siloam...", that is, be baptized in Christ, the one sent by the Father. It is a beautiful image of healing and sanctity.

But it's also well for us to notice how the man's vision progresses: despite being healed, he doesn't "see" all at once. Instead this new



Brother
Christopher

creation shows that his vision changes as his knowledge of Jesus deepens: at the beginning of the narrative, when his neighbors question him the man says simply that his benefactor was "the man they call Jesus." Later, to the Pharisees, he confesses that he believes Jesus is a prophet, then, further, that he comes from God. Finally, at the end of the story he comes to see Jesus as the Son of Man, the Messiah, before whom he bows and worships. He has come to true sight. Paradoxically the Pharisees are now the ones who are blind.

During Bright Week I had the opportunity to visit the Clark Museum over in Williamstown, one of my very

favorite places. For the first time, I rented the audio tour that you wear around your neck and which offers detailed explanations of a number of the most important paintings. I was amazed how it slowed me down, helping me to appreciate paintings I've long admired, but on a new level, a much deeper and richer level. In a sense, the Jesus we come to know in faith is like coming to know a great painting of a Master. To look at the painting once, quickly, and then to move on, leaves us almost as good as blind. To really see Jesus takes time. It's a process, a contemplative process, that deepens each day as we meditate anew on the Gospels.

To really see Jesus takes time. It's a process, a contemplative process, that deepens each day as we meditate anew on the Gospels. That discipline allows the Spirit to lead us to true faith, to an authentic relationship with Jesus that only ages with time... so that when we look at a sunset, for example, we don't see footprints, but the very handiwork and splendor of God. ■

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

In searching for a deeper inner life, people can become frustrated by roadblocks that are difficult to overcome alone. One time-honored practice in our tradition is spiritual direction, in which an experienced guide "walks" with a seeker, to help an individual discern God's movement in one's life. Several monks and nuns at New Skete are trained in this ministry and offer regular spiritual direction/companionship. If you are interested, please contact either the Monks' or the Nuns' monasteries.

TEMPUS FUGIT

By BROTHER STAVROS

*An oddly cool night for July,
West wind herding
the remains of a cloudy day
over the Eastern mountains,
I stand outside and watch a while.*

*The receding cauliflower tips of
cumulus catch the ghost of dusk.
Their stately drift relaxes me,*

*but winking Venus draws
my sleepy eye to look
the other way where*

*bruise-gray mists emerge,
sluice past
the mute horizon
(immaculate of dwelling lights)*

*and lithely fill the hollow
with inky fog.
It swells with mindful haste,*

*as mesmeric as hourglass-sand
to hint:
carpe noctem - carpe vitam!*

As likely slow the moon.

How Did I Get Here?



I believe God keeps me here... A word, a gesture, a smile, a hug, a cheesecake, a dog lick, a kiss of peace, a moving homily, a mediation garden – I'm not going anywhere.

By ROBIN HETKO

My relationship with the monastery began 15 years ago when I moved into a house on New Skete Road. My husband and I, wishing to raise our son in a small town, settled on Cambridge for its proximity to the Batten Kill River and its eclectic mix of arts and culture within a farming community. We had visited New Skete a few times with my in-laws who frequently attended the Liturgy there. One Easter eve, prior to moving to Cambridge, I found myself tucked in the back seat of their car on our way to the mid-night Matins and Liturgy. At that time I knew very little about the Orthodox faith. I had recently married a “cradle Orthodox”, sans converting. I had attended a few services at his church prior to the wedding, where the icons and incense dominated my focus. My religious background was sketchy with brief stints as a Baptist, a Lutheran and then a Presbyterian where I was baptized at age thirteen. I found the Paschal Liturgy mysterious and quite long, however I thoroughly enjoyed the feast immediately following the Liturgy and thought – these folks know how to party.

After settling into our new home, we called on our neighbors, the Companions of New Skete, to find out about attending Liturgy. Br. Stephen welcomed us and minced no words – we had moved to a holy mountain and God was here. He quickly dispelled any romantic notions we might have been harboring regarding the monas-

tics - they are people – and if we come to Liturgy we come for God, not the people. With some trepidation we started attending Liturgy. I was particularly moved by the simple beauty of the Holy Wisdom Temple and the four part harmony of the choir - these people could sing! Within a few months I knew this was my spiritual home. I wanted to become Orthodox and so was turned over to Br. Stavros for my religious instruction. I felt like the luckiest person alive. I was finally received into the Orthodox faith a little over a year later. It was one of the happiest days of my life.

Why not a German Shepherd?

If moving to a place with no street lights and converting to a new religion were not enough of a change, I took on dog ownership as well. We wanted a dog for protection as well as companionship. After some bad luck with another breeder, the Monks suggested we consider a German Shepherd Dog, and they happened to have a pup available. Lobo was my first dog and clueless does not even begin to describe my lack of preparedness for this intelligent, assertive, protective creature that within the first week of his residency had ripped the knees out of every pair of pants that I owned with his sharp little teeth. I recall our first visit to the veterinarian where in Dr. Wolski immediately called the Monks and said, “You have to help her”. And they did. Lobo was a challenge for me but he taught me more than I realized about myself.

Sadly, he died of gastric torsion when he was seven. I was prepared for our next NS shepherd, Rascal, who continues to be a source of great joy and peace for me.

You Call this Work?

In 2004 the hospital in Cambridge closed its doors, and I became an unemployed information technology manager in a small, rural town. A long, frustrating job search ensued, leaving me feeling quite low. About this time, the Monks offered me a part-time bookkeeping position which I could manage while continuing my job search. I welcomed the opportunity and began by learning the ropes from Br Luke who seemed cautiously optimistic. A few months later Br. Elias turned over the Farms’ bookkeeping piece as he was preparing for knee surgery. The brothers and I slowly got comfortable with each other, while trying to respect each other’s boundaries. Meanwhile I discovered that this was the best place I could be to heal my brokenness. Within a few months the Nuns asked if I would be interested in helping them set up their bakery bookkeeping. Upon accepting their offer, I entered the sublime world of New Skete Kitchens where I experienced the amazing smell of 115 chocolate cheesecakes simultaneously baking in a giant oven across the hall from my office.

Working amongst these monks and nuns was not like any work atmosphere I had ever experienced. Office politics, sabotage, and subterfuge simply do not have a place.

Instead there is balance of work and prayer, not to mention awesome food. In working for both communities I gained a unique perspective and was able to offer suggestions for improvements to workflow and business interactions between the two, while learning how to work prayerfully.

What Keeps Me Here?

Five years later my part-time assignment had evolved into a full-time position as my role expanded into other areas. The more entrenched I became in the life-giving climate of the monastery; the less likely it seemed I could return to submersion in a corporate culture that would ultimately lead to spiritual drowning. I have been able to bring prayerfulness into my interactions away from the monastery – it is not easy, but nothing worth doing ever is.

I believe God keeps me here. As a member of New Skete’s Chapel Community, I enjoy the privilege of singing in the choir, enabling me to find my voice, and some days even waking up singing psalms. The availability of spiritual direction and guided retreats here has helped me open my heart, boot out my ego, and make room for God to come in. Finally I value being around gentle, loving people who wish me no harm, have no agenda except God’s, which is openly shared but not proselytized. A word, a gesture, a smile, a hug, a cheesecake, a dog lick, a kiss of peace, a moving homily, a mediation garden – I’m not going anywhere. ■

A W A R M E M B R A C E

In our work with puppies, one of the most touching and satisfying moments in the process of shepherding a family adopting a puppy is when they come here and meet the puppy, take it up into their arms and embrace it as it smothers them with puppy kisses. Adults cry, children dance with delight, then the puppy bounds to the floor racing from one new friend to another, not putting anyone first but wanting to please them all – all at once -- if that were “caninely” possible!

Would that we, like that puppy, could warmly embrace each and every one of you who have been so supportive of New Skete over the years, and especially now during these difficult economic times. Even though we cannot meet and embrace each of you in person, unless, God willing, you are able to visit us here, we are striving to learn new ways of increasing our outreach to our friends, especially in 2009 as we pursue our strategic planning project.



Your concern for our future as expressed by your support for and, where possible, participation in our ministries, continues to energize us as we seek creative ways to open our lives and work to others, including those seeking a deeper spiritual life through a monastic vocation.

To thrive well into the future, it is clear that we have plenty of opportunities:

- To welcome vocations in New Skete’s expression of Eastern Orthodoxy
- To enrich our contemplative way of life

My first visit was 2008’s Pilgrimage... it was 24 hours that changed my life... a dynamic process for regular people.

-- Steve Walker, Boston, MA

■ To strengthen our businesses (dog breeding and training, cheesecake operations, farms, books, art and music) for sustaining our way of life

■ To extend our ministry beyond the monastery grounds, through retreats, spiritual direction, and events at New Skete and in other communities

■ To steward our charitable donors and volunteers, and open ourselves to the thoughtful assistance of new benefactors

I live 200 miles away but New Skete lives in my heart. I joined the Chapel Community because New Skete is my spiritual home and so worth the journey.

— Patti Bangert, Carver, MA

To be good stewards of the gifts God and you have given to us we are:

■ Encouraging interest in monastic vocations through new brochures and web site information as well as welcoming individual visits throughout the year and “Experience Monastic Life” retreat weeks in the Spring and between Christmas and the New Year

■ Using our strategic planning process to make our internal operations more effective while using our businesses’ income and charitable giving to make much-needed improvements in energy efficiency, initiate facilities upgrades for fire safety and improving our products and services while reducing negative environmental impact

■ Bringing a new vitality to New Skete’s outreach activities by empowering a new retreats committee composed of staff, friends and monastics to heighten efficiency in planning and scheduling retreats and opening opportunities for spiritual direction/companionship onsite and by phone for interested individuals (see side bar, page 9) while continuing to welcome visitors to our Open House (June), Annual Pilgrimage (August) and Blessing of Animals (October)

Much of this is made possible through the generous philanthropy of so many of you. Achieving the 2008-09 Challenge goal of \$200,000 is 75% complete, with over 192 donors contributing \$150,784 as of July 15th. In addition, we have prepared a new packet of materials to assist those of you who have expressed interest in an estate gift for New Skete.

Thank you for supporting us in so many ways as we continue – and further develop – our way of life. Your support, ideas and encouragement are so important in all that we do!

— BROTHER LUKE
Prior, Monks of New Skete

If you would like to participate, please contact Br. Stavros at stavroswinner@hotmail.com; 518-677-3928. Thank you.

The New Skete community gave us all a wonderfully happy Saturday. The serenity of the garden and surroundings was a remarkable contrast to the activity of the people and the dogs. For me, it was a joyous and special occasion that I shall always cherish.

— Alice Evans Pratt, Houston, TX

Your enthusiasm to share your life, your vocation, your knowledge and even your food (with our tenth graders) demonstrated the magnanimous soul of the monks at New Skete.

— Brother Roger,
Kellenberg Memorial High School, Long Island, NY

It has been a real conversion for me to see the importance of offering others outside the community the opportunity to share in our New Skete’s mission. At the beginning of this process, I feared that people would resent our appeals – but people have expressed gratitude for this opportunity to give, and for the chance to be connected with us on a deeper level.

— Brother Christopher, Monks of New Skete

I & DOG: The New Skete Way

by BROTHER CHRISTOPHER

Two years ago I had the privilege of representing New Skete at the annual IACP (International Association of Canine Professionals) national conference in Hutto, TX, in which our community was inducted into that organization's Hall of Fame. It was a memorable event for me, both personally and professionally, a unique opportunity to meet and engage with some of the most knowledgeable and gifted dog professionals in the world. It was also a deep honor for our community to receive their recognition, an important signal to us that our work has had a broad impact throughout our country and the world.

No doubt due to the strength of that experience, I was delighted when I received an invitation to make a presentation at this year's conference. The organizers were looking for me to give an overview of how we came to be involved in dogs and discuss some of the transformative lessons we have learned over the years, both in regards to dogs and people. The opportunity to discuss in detail the spiritual dimension present in the dog/human relationship is something I felt an immediate connection with, and so having a couple of months to prepare for the presentation was something I took with deep seriousness.

With that background, this past March 19th I got up extra early in the morning and made the long flight to Texas for the conference, once again being able to enjoy the unique

camaraderie and friendship of the IACP. Coming from the cold Northeast, the weather in Texas set the tone for the whole gathering: sunny and warm. I was fortunate to be slated to give the first presentation on Friday morning, "I & Dog: The New Skete Way", as after I was finished I was then able to relax



IACP Executive Director, Martin Deeley; speaker, Cheri Lucas of Second Chance at Love, a no-kill rescue organization in California; and Brother Christopher.

and enjoy a lineup of outstanding presentations over the rest of the weekend. I'd be a bit disingenuous if I didn't admit that presenting to such a distinguished and knowledgeable group of professionals wasn't a bit intimidating. It was, but I was grateful that my talk was very well received. From what people expressed, it set a tone for the conference that participants appreciated and found interesting.

One of the wonderful aspects about getting to attend such a conference is being exposed to some very knowledgeable dog professionals who are also wonderful presenters. That was very much the case for this year's conference. Sarah Wilson, who works with her husband Brian Kilcommons, gave two outstanding presentations on dealing with people and their dogs, offering important insights on how to effectively communicate with our clients, especially women. Cheri Lucas, who has worked with Cesar Millan and who runs Second Chance at Love, a no-kill rescue organization in California, spoke about how pack work can be a powerful tool in helping turn problem dogs around quickly.

I found listening to Cheri describing her experiences at her ranch fascinating. Stanley Coren, a noted author and canine professional, gave a delightful presentation on Canine body language and communication that was thoroughly grounded in hard science. John Wade, a trainer from Canada, made a very stimulating and amusing presentation on working with aggressive dogs and their owners, providing us with a detailed protocol for understanding specific problem situations, and helping owners to resolve them. Unfortunately there were several presentations I was unable to see: Pam Lauritsen who spoke on grooming techniques for the non-groomer, and Kyra Sundance, who did a presentation on dog tricks on Thursday morning to begin the conference, and who made a presentation on 14 training secrets late Saturday afternoon. My loss, I'm sure. Finally, the last presentation of the conference was Sunday morning on canine cognition by Pam Reid who brought us up to date on what science is learning about the learning capacities in dogs and how that might apply to the way we approach training. It was a very stimulating presentation and a fitting way to close the conference.

Looking back on the conference, in addition to having learned a lot, I'm particularly grateful to have been able to re-connect with old friends and to have made a number of new ones as well. The IACP is indeed a remarkable organization comprised of very dedicated people. I've come to see the enormous value in being able to be connected with peers in this field, and to keep in touch with new insights that such occasions bring to light. It sure made the first part of a chilly spring this year particularly joyful and life-giving! ■

IACP Presentation DVD

Brother Christopher's 2009 IACP Presentation, **I & Dog: The New Skete Way**, is now available on DVD from the monastery for \$25.00 plus shipping and handling. In two hours, you will learn how New Skete got involved in breeding and training, and some of the crucial lessons we have learned from that work. Special emphasis is placed on exploring the spiritual dimension in the human/dog relationship.

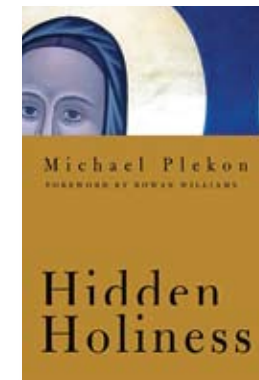
BOOK REVIEW

HIDDEN HOLINESS

by Fr Michael Plekon

University of Notre Dame Press

Paper Edition 2009 • 224 pages



Reviewed by
BROTHER DAVID

Saints. Depending on one's religious tradition and background different names spring to mind: Nicholas of Myra (aka Santa Claus), Mary Magdalen, Seraphim of Sarov, Francis of Assisi, Maximus the Confessor, John of the Ladder. Outside of the catholic traditions one might think of Martin Luther or even John Calvin as examples of holiness. Today, people like Mother Teresa of Calcutta or Martin Luther King might come to mind. And, indeed, while one might consider all of these to be examples of holiness or perhaps debatable holiness, they all share one thing in common: celebrity. Saints are luminous beacons. Saints are extraordinary. Famous. Perhaps notorious. Saints are not people like us.

Please see **REVIEW /Page 16**

And yet...

There is a hidden holiness. An extraordinary way of living that is so very ordinary. The way of doing one's work with joy. The way of encountering the other not as if the other were Christ or as if I were Christ but with the sure knowledge that you are you, I am I, and Christ is with us here, now. The way of struggle with our sinfulness and character defects, with our lack of faith, with our pain and sicknesses both physical and mental in the awareness of God's love and mercy. This is a different kind of holiness: ordinary, work-a-day, hidden.

While Fr. Michael Plekon uses the lives of individuals who exemplify various qualities of contemporary holiness – hidden holiness – it is important to realize that this is not a work of or about hagiography. His real purpose is to call us to realize that holiness – being a saint – is not just for people on holy cards but also for you and me; that in holiness “is joy and peace.” (page 185)

Given the title, when I first perused *Hidden Holiness* I thought to myself, “Sergius Bulgakov? Simone Weil? Paul Evdokimov? Hidden? I realize that these are not household names for a lot of people but hidden?” As I started to read him, I realized that Fr. Michael is not looking at what we have made these people into but rather how they were in life; the reality that they embraced life in the day-to-day. The fact that we might “celebrity” them, placing them far above and beyond us mere mortals is something to which each of them might well respond, as did Dorothy Day, “Don't call me a

saint; I don't want to be dismissed that easily.” (page 156)

I also encountered a couple of surprises: we come to know most of these people through their published works or journals but Fr. Michael also presents us with examples like Olga Arsamquq Michael of Alaska, a Yu'pik Eskimo, priest's wife, mother, and midwife, whose beautiful life would remain hidden in her community had not Fr. Michael presented it here to us by way of a few reflections of people who knew her.

Another big surprise was seeing – us, the communities of New Skete, in these pages. (You have to be kidding!) Yet, as I reflected on our day-to-day life of interaction with each other, with our guests and friends, with dogs and dishes, Fr. Michael helped me to truly understand what he is aiming at (and which was beautifully expressed by a quote from a sermon by Archbishop Rowan Williams on Dietrich Bonhoeffer): “(Bonhoeffer) is asking us to forget models and images, the attempt to ‘make something of oneself.’ We are not to aim at effective, modern involvement in the place of prayer and praise of sacrifice... involvement in the world is not undertaking a bold programme of service or reform; it is simply doing what has to be done, in awareness of God – more specially in awareness of God's presence with us in the form of Jesus in his agony in Gethsemane.” (page 144)

Finally, to quote Fr. Michael himself: “Authentic holy people of our time... tell us, not only by their words but even more so by their lives, that there is really no limit to the ways in which holiness can be lived.” (page 19). ■



Brother David

Another big surprise was seeing – us, the communities of New Skete, in these pages. (You have to be kidding!) Yet, as I reflected on our day-to-day life of interaction with each other, with our guests and friends, with dogs and dishes, Fr. Michael helped me to truly understand what he is aiming at...

“A bba, give me a word...” so start a number of stories and sayings of the Desert Tradition. The story usually unfolds that a monk goes to an elder to talk about some issue and seek direction. The elder listens and gives something from his or her experience. You get the feeling in a number of these stories that this is a long-standing relationship and that this is something of an ongoing conversation. When we talk about spiritual direction or spiritual companionship we are talking about this same kind of revelation of the self to another: a telling of my story - the story of the relationship between God and self as experienced in all facets of one's life.

In an article, “The Story Revolution: How Telling our Stories Transforms the World” (http://www.communityarts.net/archive-files/2005/01/the_story_revolution.php), Arlene Goldbard reflects that our lives are made up of a “multitude of little stories” and that it is in these little stories that we find the true meaning of our lives. Our own stories are the ones that we know simultaneously both best and least. We live our lives up close, intensely involved in our day-to-day struggles, joys, graces, failings - all the ordinary and extraordinary things that make up our lives. While we frequently relate the extraordinary events of our lives (the birth of a child, the death of a family member or friend) or the “interesting” stories (“Wait until you hear what happened to me...”), we forget that these stories rest on the story of my “everydayness” where I meet God in the reality of here and now. As we tell the story of who we are in the mundane, we start to recognize the truth of our relationship with God.

A second aspect of stories (and spiritual direction) is that they involve both a teller (the directee) and a listener (the director). Again, Arlene Goldbard has this to say: “When the listener is an artist who can help to shape

these little stories into a narrative that carries big-story power, the relationship is even more important.” The director consciously shapes the story being presented through questions or by connecting it with other events in the directee's life and re-presents it to the teller in a way that reframes the story to reveal more of who this God is in the directee's life. In spiritual direction this is the entire purpose of the relationship: to listen and reflect in order to aid in the directee's encounter with God in her/his life.

This purposeful listening is also what distinguishes spiritual direction from therapy and mere advice-seeking. Therapy seeks

to diagnose and treat an illness, and the point of getting advice is to solve a problem. Spiritual direction does promote important healing, but it is a healing of our relationship with God and self. In like manner, direction is a process whereby we discover and encounter truth of the self and God so that our actions proceed from a stance of authenticity.

A third aspect of the stories of our lives is that they are ongoing. In *Alice in Wonderland* there is that wonderful exchange between Alice and the Caterpillar:

Who are YOU? said the Caterpillar.

... Alice replied... I - I hardly know, sir, just at present - at least I knew who I WAS when I got up this morning but I think I must have been changed several times since then.

We keep changing and growing, and our story continues to do the same. In the ongoing relationship with our director we continue telling our story, filling in more detail and background over time, so that our story can be re-presented to us, giving us better and greater awareness of who we are and who God is in our lives. Sometimes the story will be about prayer, but it might just as easily be about how angry one was in a traffic jam: God is in the traffic jam, too. ■

Spiritual Companion on the Road of Life

By BROTHER DAVID

Written in our hearts

by SISTER CECELIA

SCRIPTURE READINGS

DT 30:11-20 • RM 10: 5-13 • LK 16: 19-31

Scripture does not tell us exactly what the rich man has done or did not do which qualifies him for the fires of Gehenna. Can we figure it out? One thing for sure, the rich man was eating sumptuously while one of his fellow men was starving by his doorstep. It seems he was so obsessed with his own desires that he could not be mindful of another.

When the rich man wanted to warn his brothers, Abraham told him his brothers have Moses and the prophets to tell them how to live. As we heard also in the first reading this morning God told the chosen people they have the law written in their hearts. They did not have to look for it anywhere else—not in heaven nor on earth.

What about us? If we are so taken up with our own wants, we cannot be mindful of the needs of the other. We cannot know what is written in our hearts if we do not stop everyday and LISTEN to that something inside of us. We each have a job to do. It is different for each one of us.

Hopefully we have set up our life so that it revolves around a regimen of work, prayer, reflective reading, adequate rest, relaxation, exercise and nourishment. If we are faithful to a routine such as this, we will come to a love that casts out fear. Fear can cause all manner of problems for us. Besides fear, there are battles of all kinds waging within ourselves. It is possible we see ourselves trying to control everything around us. We want everything done according to our standards, but unless a grain of wheat is in the ground and dies, it remains

alone. It cannot grow. Likewise we have to die to ourselves many times so that what we are really meant to be can come to life. We have to be willing to develop into something new to see newer dimensions of life and to gain a true freedom of spirit.

Is hospitality a law of God that is written in our hearts? Hospitality is a way that we can come out of ourselves.

It seems the first step toward



Sister Cecelia

Our mission is to be still and silent enough to hear the Word of God and then be able to impart it in such a way that we sustain the weary, bind up the broken hearted and encourage the weak.

dismantling the barriers between nations and even neighbors. Hospitality is a way that we can turn a prejudiced world around, one heart at a time. Hospitality is taking people into the space that is our lives, our minds, our hearts, our world and our efforts.

Hospitality is sharing what we have, what we are, even our belief system.

What about us? Christians believe that Jesus is risen from the dead. We believe that He not only lived once but lives now. We do not only know about Christ but

we know Christ! Believing in our heart that Christ lives is not all that we do. We confess our beliefs with our lips and by our actions.

Our mission is to be still and silent enough to hear the Word of God and then be able to impart it in such a way that we sustain the weary, bind up the broken hearted and encourage the weak.

Our lives have two complimentary parts—listening and doing as servants of God.

Christ is in our midst!

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES



Parishioners from St. Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church in Cambridge, MA visit New Skete for a weekend retreat in May led by Brothers Christopher, David and Stavros and Sister Rebecca.



The last six months has been a time of transition in many areas of our lives. Transitions can be sad, bittersweet or joyful, but they always challenge us.

Our German Shepherd breeding program is by nature always in transition. This period saw females **Gillie** and **Quanja** and males **Zico** and **Astro** retired and placed in homes. New Skete pups being raised for our breeding program are **Lila** with the **Patka family**, (see story on page 6), **Wallah** raised by **Brother**

Stavros, Xerxes with **Brother Luke**

Brother Luke attempts to get his four-month-old pup, **Xerxes** to look at the camera!



Isaac Patka, Nate Gates, Brother Luke and Sophie Patka with Xerxes, Dux, Petra and Boris visit Gucci (center, now 12 years old,) at the Companions.

and **Zoe** with **Brother Christopher**. New dogs will be coming in from Germany include: **Basta, Yami**, and one more female plus two males. We also have two new sable German Shepherds, **Boris** and **Sasha**. They came to us from West Virginia but their lines are Czech and (East) German.

In January **Sister Macrina** was clothed as a novice while in May, **Brother Zacchaeus** (Michael Matis) began his transition back to secular life. Both transitions were accompanied with the prayers and the best wishes of the community.

Once again New Skete hosted the **Capital District St. Andrew's Brotherhood Mission** Sunday



Sister Macrina (left) is clothed as a Novice by the Nuns' Prioress, Sister Cecelia.

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

Vespers on Palm Sunday evening. **Fr. Igor Burdikoff**, **Fr. Terenti Wasielewski** and **Fr. Peter Olsen** concelebrated with Fr. Marc. We joyfully welcomed into Orthodoxy at vespers on Holy Saturday **John Abbracciamento**, **Fred Pheiffer** (see Fred's poem on page 4) and **Patti Bangert**.

It was with a heavy heart that we bade farewell to several dear friends and local community members during this period including **Millie Katz**, **Nadya Goldsmith**, and a student of 19, **Corey Hunter**, who died unexpectedly and suddenly. We were honored and humbled to have been asked by these individuals and their families to offer memorial services which were attended by hundreds of family and friends. We also joined our prayers to those of Chapel Community member **Charlie Cernica and his family** over the passing of his son **Michael**. For them all: MEMORY ETERNAL!

Brother John spent over seven weeks in the hospital this winter and spring, divided between Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire and Ascutney Hospital, in Windsor, Vermont. Doctors had to take out his infected hip and then wait to be sure the infection was gone before replacing it. He returned home for several weeks in May and June. He received his new hip in June and is now doing rehab back at the Monastery. He wants to let everyone who visited him while he was in the hospital plus all of you who called or sent cards, letters, and flowers, how much he appreciates your expressions of concern for him.



Brother Peter visits Brother John during his stay at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.



Brother Marc received Patti Bangert, John Abbracciamento and Fred Pheiffer into the Orthodox Church on Holy Saturday.



Fr. Harry Pappas and parishioners from Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church participated in a two-day retreat led by Sister Rebecca and Brothers Christopher and Stavros.



Kellenberg Memorial High School students with members of New Skete communities on April 25.

We welcomed in all three houses many visitors during this period, some on personal retreats, others with groups and some who attended retreats or other scheduled events at the monastery. Groups who visited include: **Fr. Harry Pappas** with a group of parishioners from **Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church**, New Rochelle, NY; **New Skete Chapel Community and friends** attended our **Lenten Retreat**; **Kellenberg Memorial High School** students from Uniondale, Long Island; Interns from the **Albany Medical Center Chaplains program**; students and teachers from the **Rock Harbor Academy of the Community of Jesus**, Orleans, Cape Cod; and

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

parishioners from **St. Mary's Antiochian Orthodox Church** of Cambridge, MA. We also welcomed three men who participated in our first "**Experience Monastic Life**" retreat the first week of June.

The community also schedules retreats for its own renewal. We gathered for a **Day of Recollection** in January at **Christ the King Spiritual Center** in Greenwich, NY. We invited **Fr. Alexis Vinogradov**, **St. Gregory's Orthodox Church**, Wappingers Falls, NY, to lead a two-day retreat in February on the themes of Personal and Ecclesial Renewal and Repentance with special reference to the teachings of **Fr. Alexander Schmemmann**. In May **Kevin Lawrence** gave us a 3 day music workshop which we plan to continue on a regular basis.

Community members also attended in January **St. Vladimir's Seminary** symposium marking the 25th anniversary of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's death. **Brother Stavros** visited friends of New Skete in California and the northwest and visited **St. John's Monastery** (OCA) in Manton, California.

The New Skete Chapel Community decided to arrange a series of talks on Church History after divine liturgy on selected Sundays this spring. Speakers included: **Brother Stavros**, **Fr. Alvian Smirensky** and **Dr. Roberta Ervine**, (on the faculty at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary). Again on June 6th we held our **Open House** as part of the **Cambridge Balloon Festival** weekend.

Our many visitors during this period included **Fr. Mi-**



Brother Stavros learns what it's like to milk goats during a May visit he and Brother Peter made to the Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery in Otego, NY.



Ft. Melitios Webber and two other monks of St. John's Monastery in Manton, CA with Brother Stavros during his visit to the Pacific Northwest in February.

chael Plekon from **St Gregory's Church** in Wappingers Falls, NY, who came with **Antoine Arjakovsky** from Lviv, Ukraine, Founder and Director of the **Institute of Ecumenical Studies** (IES) at the **Ukrainian Catholic University**. He is grandson of **Saint Dmitri Klepinin**, who was chaplain to **St. Mother Maria Skobtsova**.

The community was also honored by the **Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America** which awarded **Father Marc** the title of **Iguman**. In addition, **Metropolitan Jonah** spoke about New Skete as part of a published interview during his spring visit to Russia.

The Nuns have replaced one of their **bakery freezers** and a second one will be installed later this year. One of our former German Shepherds, **Nama**, is back on "retreat" for a few months at the Nuns' monastery. They also decided the time to replace aging vehicles has come. The **new "previously owned" car** is a welcome improvement.

The spring weather has brought new life and allowed the Companions, Nuns and Monks to get back out to work in their gardens. We hope you can visit us and enjoy them during the summer.

The Monks now have a new enclosed structure (Moo-tel) attached to the **dog training kennel** which allows for training to continue even during inclement weather.

Food for the Soul

For those of you who have known the New Skete communities over the years, you may remember Sister Magdalene, who was affectionately known as Maggie. Born Rose Oliver, Maggie became a Nun of New Skete in 1975 where her love of baking for others eventually launched New Skete Kitchens. To our delight, a collection of her favorite dessert recipes has been compiled into a marvelous new cookbook, *Food for the Soul*.



"For me baking is a mystical experience. It engenders a sense of wonder and awe that have become the

FOOD FOR THE SOUL
My ABC's of Soulful Baked Goods
By Sister Magdalene

chief ingredient in all that I bake." Her dream came into fruition only after her death. Her son, Ken Oliver

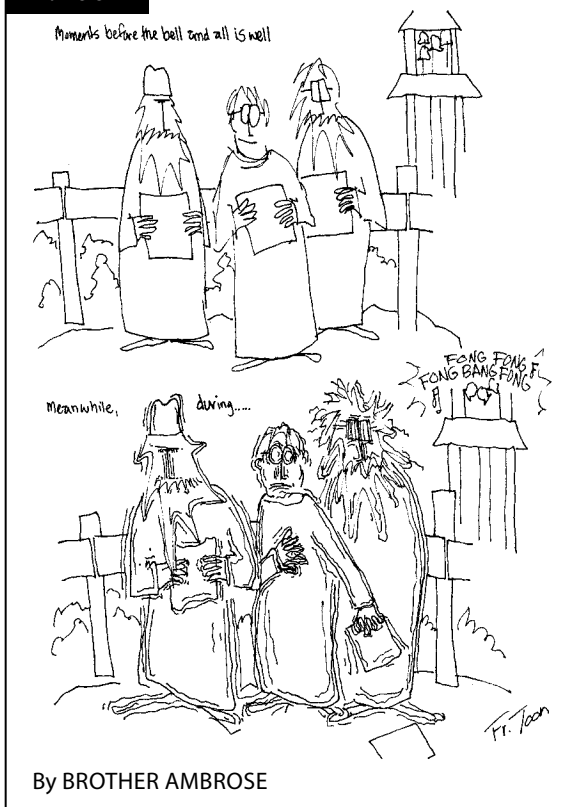
has published a 2009 limited edition.

Food for the Soul is now available at the Nuns' and Monks' Gift Shops and at our online store at www.newskete.com.

After a reminiscent introduction that offers a personal testimony of her journey as a lover of baking, Maggie literally bakes her way through the alphabet of inspiration and recipes. Beginning with AWE... "Pay particular attention and you will begin to view all things with awe and amazement especially what you turn out of your oven with love." With that, comes recipes for such delicacies as Almond Bars, Apple Brown Betty and Apricot Sticks and ending with ZEAL... "Keep blending it in your mixer and expect the extraordinary" with a recipe for Zucchini Bread. What you will find within and in between these chapters are some of Sr. Magdalene's amazing and most-loved recipes as well as Maggie's personal reflections that truly integrate her spiritual journey as a professed monastic and her love for baking.

This cookbook was Sr. Magdalene's dream. In her own words,

Fr. Toon



By BROTHER AMBROSE

We invite you to visit New Skete and experience our lovely setting, our services and choir, our monastic life and hospitality, or our modest guesthouse. Or a combination!

ONLINE:

The New Skete Newsletter is now available online (and in color!) as a PDF document. If you would prefer to receive our newsletter in electronic format, please send your name, address and email address to:

webmonastic@newskete.org

We will put you on an electronic mailing list and notify you when the next issue will be available.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 6
Feast of the Transfiguration

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8
Annual Pilgrimage: Jesus, the Heart of Renewal
Guest speaker: Dr Peter Bouteneff, St Vladimir's Seminary; Post festive Matins, Liturgy & Vespers; Healing service; food court, tours, hikes, dog training demonstration, exhibits, gift shops

SATURDAY, AUGUST 15
Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16 – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
Communities summer retreat
During this retreat the monastery closed to the public

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6
Nativity of the Theotokos
(celebrated)

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
Feast of St. Francis Vigil
(celebrated) 5 pm

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4
Feast of St. Francis – Blessing of Animals 4 pm

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17
Chapel Community Prayer Retreat

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
FEAST OF THE THEOTOKOS OF THE SIGN
Feast day of the Nuns of New Skete – Brunch follows Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 22
Entry of the Theotokos
(celebrated)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25
Feast of the Nativity
Monasteries will be open for visitors and guests from Christmas through Theophany

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28 – SUNDAY, JANUARY 3
Experience monastic life
An opportunity for seekers to experience life at New Skete

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 6
Feast of Theophany





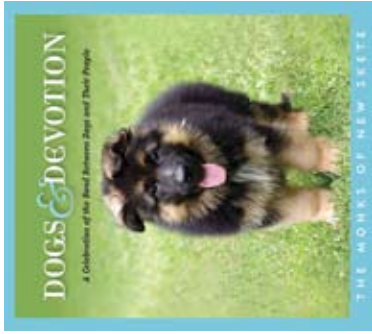
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c/o The Monks of New Skete

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