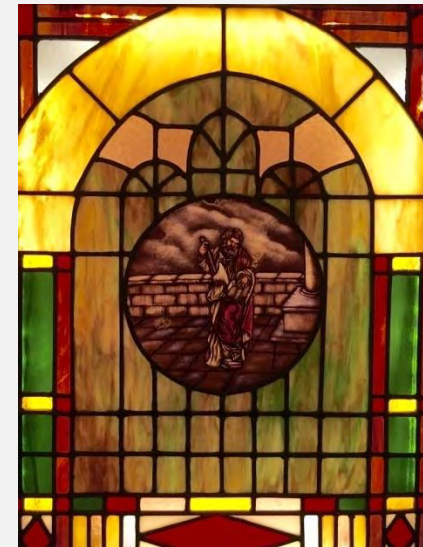




Obsculta

"Listen with the ears of your heart"

June 2019



"Indeed, our affiliation with the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross has brought tremendous spiritual blessings to us and our dear ones. The Cistercian habit has become an effective and visible sign of the healing and reconciling presence of our Lord, Jesus."

"The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross serves God in a variety of ministries throughout the world. Our union with each other, developed through common prayer also unites us to Jesus Christ, whom we ultimately serve with joy."

"Persevere in prayer. Gratitude will open our souls to the unity of God, self, and others. Gratitude moves us from limitations and fear to expansion and love."

Member of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod

The quarterly newsletter of

The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance

Worldwide Membership of Monks Living Inside and Outside of a Monastery

Founded 1981

1606 Briar Lake Circle Winston-Salem, NC 27103 336 918-0975

www.CistercianMonks.org

News From The Abbot General



Of Special
Interest In
This
Obsculta

- Br. Isaac reports
- Br. Albert takes Novice vows
- IAC House of Bishops Meeting
- Abbot on Prayer
- Abbot Speaks on Lack of Trust
- Article on Trusting God
- Companions of the Holy Cross
- Independent Anglican Church
- Global Fraternity for Christian Unity
- Daily Prayer for the Order
- Who we are and what we do.
- Looking for more Priests
- Contact us



Greetings Cistercians and Friends:

This has certainly been a fruitful season.

These past several weeks we have visited Br. Isaac Simon, OCCO our Vicar General and his faith community in Cleveland, OH.

Then off to Buffalo and Niagara Falls to see family and meet with Father Burt.

From there we went to Grimsby Ontario to spend some time with the Primate of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod, +Peter Goodrich and his wife Lorie.

From there we went to Hamilton Ontario to participate in a House of Bishops meeting of the IAC. I am honored to be a member of the House of Bishops.

During that time we received Novice vows from Fr. Burt, now Br. Albert Joseph, OCCO and participated in the consecration of two new bishops in the IAC.

We also met with some old clerical friends and made several new friends. Br. Isaac Simon, OCCO also participated in these events.

We are praying for and ministering to Ted Williams, member of the Abbot's Council, who is currently battling cancer. Please continue praying.



THE ABBOT GENERAL VISITS ST STEPHEN'S PARISH!

The weekend of June 1 – 2, 2019 saw the much-anticipated arrival of The Most Reverend Abbot General Oscar Joseph, OCCO, to spend time with the folks of St Stephen's parish in Cleveland, OH. Accompanying the Abbot was his lovely wife Kathleen.

This was a time of spiritual renewal and refreshment. The Abbot preached and taught on overcoming the personal limitations which hinder our spiritual growth and hinder our relationship with God. He instructed us to "get out of our own way". The sermon encouraged critical self-reflection, and acknowledgment that maybe it was time to "let things go" and stop being bound to the past.

During the visit, Abbot General Oscar Joseph also met with a potential postulant for the Cistercian Order. The postulant is an Anglican priest with previous experience living as a vowed religious person. Listening to this priest's retelling of his spiritual journey, I was inspired to hear how God had guided and ordered the steps of this priest.

In the blink of an eye the weekend visit ended and Kathleen along with the Abbot were headed to their next destination. The parishioners of St Stephen's parish will wait with baited breath until the next visit by this spirited filled monk of God.

Submitted by +Brother Isaac Simon, OCCO

THE CISTERCIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS, COMMON OBSERVANCE TRAVELS TO HAMILTON ONTARIO.

The good monks of the Cistercian Order visited Hamilton, Ontario during the weekend of June 8-9, 2019. The purpose of the visit was twofold: to receive Father Burt Weigen as a novice within the order (upon the profession of his Simple Vows); and to participate in the College of Bishops' meeting of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod (IAC).

The weekend began with Morning Prayer in the beautiful Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church; afterwards Father Burt Weigen was received to the novitiate. He took the religious name Albert Joseph (in honor of his father). Later that morning Abbot General Oscar Joseph gave a presentation on the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance. He spoke of the Order's history, the Rule of St. Benedict, and what it means to be a monk in the post-modern world. The abbot also introduced the Order's two seminaries: St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary, and St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology.

Bishop-elect Seraphim Mary, OSF gave a presentation on the current canons of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod. There was discussion regarding the review and revision of the canons, especially regarding the formation of missionary dioceses, the incardination process of clergy and parishes, and establishing appropriate protocols regarding several other matters. These reports were well received.

Two bishops were also consecrated during this weekend. The Right Reverend Brother Seraphim Mary, OSF, and the Right Reverend Andrew Nussey became Suffragan Bishops of the IAC. Music was provided by the Chancel Choir, and an inspired homily was provided by Father Sebastian. It was humbling to participate in the consecration of two more bishops for God's church. These men have become Defenders of the Faith, chief pastors, and represent the embodiment of Christ's priesthood.

The Cistercians were well represented, by the monks present, and some initial inquiries were made regarding the academic processes at the Order's seminaries. The visit ended too soon but friendships were renewed and strengthened. Deo gratias.

Submitted by +Brother Isaac Simon, OCCO



The Perfect Spiritual Storm

By Br. Albert Joseph, OCCO



Br. Albert with his wife Connie

Remember the movie “The Perfect Storm”? Three weather patterns, the right time of the year, and the nearly perfect geological location spelled doom for a New England fishing boat. The result was a struggle that ended badly. This is the preface to “The Perfect Spiritual Storm” but a storm that is breaking to “Sun”. This is the journey of many reference points converging to one Center. This center has one location but many landscapes. It is a journey that has ended but one that offers many doors to go through.

These are my thoughts looking back to June 10, 2019, having been received into the Cistercian Order of the Common Observance as a novice, going from postulancy, asking, to a period of training and preparation for vows. I’ll leave the storm explanation for a future article for I want to share some thoughts with you on Benedictine Spirituality.

I would like to address the subject of work. Traditional monks are “in”, we of the OCCO are generally “out”. The handling of work depends on our relationship with God. Taking advantage of support available on either side, it does not matter, in the nuts and bolts of the situation, whether we are “in” or “out”. I would think Benedict agrees.

In finishing or passing through postulancy, I used as my guide one text on Benedict and only one, the one that I found in my hands. The one that I found in my hands, I believe, was meant to be. In the book, *The Rule of Benedict* by Joan Chittester, O.S.B., it is written “the message of Benedictine Spirituality is a consistent one: live life normally, live life thoughtfully, live life profoundly, live life well. Never neglect and never exaggerate. It is a lesson that a world full of cults and fads and workaholics and short courses in difficult subjects needs dearly to learn”(p. 79).

By Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO

Our travels to the House of Bishop's meeting early June was quiet eventful.

As per our usual, doing several things at one time, our trip consisted of 1573 miles, 36 hours driving, five hotel stays, and seven cities during a period of 11 days.

There were many special events, people, family, and meetings all too numerous to mention here.

Certainly participating in the meetings and consecration were important features for me.

Apparently I was the very unofficial photographer for the consecration.

I gleaned other photos as many clerics shared their ministry history with me. These pictures of burning hearts and minds, filled with inspiration was an experience indeed. I was more than impressed by their depth of experience.

Primate Peter Goodrich was a "Michaelangelo portrait" of a true gentle leader whose endurance is epic. I was impressed how he been able to gather so many inspiring clerics in the joint mission of the IAC.



Bishops Andrew Nussey and Seraphim Mary ofc,



Primate Bishop Peter Goodrich in center/Bishops Oscar Joseph and Isaac Simon



Prayer

by +Abbot General Oscar Joseph, OCCO



All too often I hear people complain about dryness in prayer. They complain from an erroneous belief that prayer was intended to always be filling and meaningful. St. John of the Cross calls this spiritual gluttony.

I remember reading a letter between St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. She was encouraging him to join her on a trip to see the latest “fad” in miracles. He responded that there were enough miracles in his garden so he would not go.

Let me assure you that prayer is mostly an act of obedience and a joyful giving of our time to the Lord.

When I pray I am giving my gift, self oblation of time, to my Creator. He is not obliged to respond in any way.

When He does respond it is mostly through an enlightenment or a better understanding. I used to go to Him for emotional encouragement. His response was that it was my job and I should go for a run.

Frankly, I find God the most during the Eucharist. I saw the bread actually turn into flesh. Frequently I feel joined with the saints. I also become one with the Lord when I pray with others. He often directs my prayers and brings healing. Br. Brendan, OCCO reported that I had transcended on one prayerful occasion.

So dear ones, prayer can be very exciting at times. God will create those moments. Meanwhile we simply do The Work of God.

Main points of the sermon that I gave at Br. Isaac Simon's OCCO church in Cleveland on June 2, 2019.

Title “God’s Love and Our Lack of Trust”

By Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO

- God’s names are points of reference for us to contact His love for us, Healer, Almighty, Protector, Provider, Faithful, Father, Merciful, Love, Peace, and so on.

- God is always the initiator. We are always the responders.**

- God loves us first so we can return His love to Him.

- He loves us regardless of our sinfulness, lack of faith, or trust in Him.**

- We live in, with, through, Him even if we are not aware of this.

- We fail to respond to His love because: 1. Our lives are full of distractions. 2. Everywhere we turn we are being lied to.**

- Distractions: We are easily self absorbed, full of noise. We create as many as 3000 negative thoughts per hour. Consequently we become fearful. Fearful people do not trust.*

- The problem is not that we do not love God it is that we do not trust God.**

- We reject God because we do not trust Him.

- St. Benedict says that “murmuring” can destroy us and our communities.**

- Pop psychology gives the illusion of thought control by the lie of thinking positive. When that soon fails we then have another negative thought, that we are failures. Thinking is the illusion of action.

- Scripture says: Solution: 1. Repent (not only stop “murmuring” but mature to the state that you no longer care to be negative). 2. Do (action) things that are: noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praise worthy and charitable.**

- Lies: We are surrounded by lies and we believe them.*

- Our culture, church, government, neighbors, family all lie to us.**

- The purpose of the lies is to get us to doubt. When we doubt we do not trust. This leads us to not trusting God.

- Religious euphemisms and purposeful manipulation of Scripture have invaded the church.**

- Examples of lies: “God gives us no more than we can handle”, “God tests us with difficult situations.” “We have to forgive ourselves.” The focus of worship is on us. We have to be entertained in order to feel good about ourselves.

- Examples of truth: Our sins produce difficult times. We need to take responsibility for the consequences of our sinfulness. God can help us during difficult times. God’s forgiveness is more than sufficient. What we worship we become. Worship a Good Holy God and we will become good and holy. Worship ourselves and we become fearful and unwilling to trust.**

- Solution: God has always known that we would be troubled by fear and lack of trust so He has given us His Son, Jesus the Christ.

- Jesus empowered the apostles to continue His mission of reconciliation.

- The Holy Spirit has empowered the church to teach authoritatively on faith and morals.**

- We participate in God’s solution to our fears and lack of trust by fully participating in His true Church which is “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic..”

- We participate in a sacramental life. Christ gave us the seven sacraments to show us His presences in the various stages of our lives.**

- Really study the Holy Scriptures and the Church’s teachings believing that they can positively contribute to our lives.

- Formulate and remember how our Good Lord sees you.**

- Conclusion: We can grow in trust. Remember that God initiates everything. We are responders.*

Del McCune writes

There was a nun in St. Faustina's convent who had doubts that the Lord had forgiven her for all of her past transgressions.

Saint Faustina wrote in her Diary:

"On the evening of the last day before my departure to Vilnius, an elderly sister revealed the condition of her soul to me. She said that she had already been suffering interiorly for several years, that it seemed to her that all her confessions had been bad, and she had doubts about whether the Lord Jesus had forgiven her.

I asked her if she had ever told her confessors about this. She answered that she had spoken many times about this to her confessors and "the confessors are always telling me to be at peace, but I still suffer very much, and nothing brings me relief, and it constantly seems to me that God has not forgiven me."

I answered, "You should obey your confessor, sister, and be fully at peace, because this is certainly a temptation." But she entreated me with tears in her eyes to ask Jesus if He had forgiven her and whether her confessions had been good or not.

I answered forceful, "Ask Him yourself, Sister, if you don't believe your confessors!"

But she clutched my hand and did not want to let me go until I gave her an answer, and she kept asking me to pray for her and to let her know what Jesus would say about her.

Crying bitterly, she would not let me go and said to me, "I know that the Lord Jesus speaks to you, Sister."

Since she was clenching my hand and I could not wrench myself away, I promised I would pray for her.

In the evening, during Benediction, I heard these words: "Tell her that her disbelief wounds My heart much more than the sins she committed."

When I told her this, she began to cry like a child, and great joy entered her soul. I understood that God wanted to console this soul through me. Even though it cost me a great deal, I fulfilled God's wish"

~Diary of St. Faustina, 628.

His Excellency the Most Rev. Abbot General, Oscar Joseph, OCCC
Ecclesiastical Proclamation
on the day of our Savior's birth, 2018 the formation of
The Companions of the Holy Cross
Comites Sancti Crucis

As a medium for The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance to give their highest honor to those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary love for the Holy Cross through outstanding qualities of character such as:

Dedication to personal or corporate spiritual growth:

Demonstration of Spiritual Giftedness through evidence of genuine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

Personal courage to overcome overwhelming odds through the use of:

Godly wisdom

Dedication to Justice

Uses temperance, humility, meekness, discipline

Self Sacrificing:

Charity (love and generosity) towards the Cistercian Order, or a specific member of the
Order, social, physical, emotional, spiritual needs of others

Generous with their time, talents and resources

Genuine care for the unlovable

Nominations

Nominations** for receiving the highest honor of companions of the Holy Cross may be given by Members (those under vows), Postulants, Oblates, leaders, Council Members, faculty, and others directly associated with the Cistercian Order.

The petitioner should send to the Office of the Abbot General:

The contact information including, mailing address and e-mail of the petitioner, and the candidate. Include several paragraphs describing the candidate's biography and reasons for the nomination.

Upon making a decision the Office of the Abbot General will advise the petitioner on further actions.

From the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross you will receive and number of wonderful benefits.

You have an "Associate Membership" into the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

We will give you a pin representing the shield of the Cistercian Order that may be worn.

You will have our apostolic benediction and spiritual covering/protection.

You and your intentions will be prayed for during the monks/Oblates morning prayers.

You will have access to The Cistercian leadership for personal prayer and spiritual guidance.

You may use the letters CHC after you name as a declaration that they are Companions of the Holy Cross. Example: Mary Smith, CHC.

You will be invited to retreats and events.

You will receive quarterly Obsculta/newsletter.

*"Associate Membership" is a non-voting participation in the Grace and Charism of the Cistercian Order

** Members (those under vows), Postulants, Oblates, leaders, Council Members, faculty, and others directly associated with the Cistercian order are not eligible for nomination to the Companions of the Holy Cross

**The Companions of the Holy Cross
Comites Sancti Crucis**

**Individuals who have received The Cistercian Order's
highest honor**

**Julie Brown
Alexia Thiessen
Bishop Peter Goodrich
Robert Ted Williams**

We Welcome your Nominations

Nominations** for receiving the highest honor of companions of the Holy Cross may be given by Members (those under vows), Postulants, Oblates, leaders, Council Members, faculty, and others directly associated with the Cistercian Order.

The petitioner should send to the Office of the Abbot General:

The contact information including, mailing address and e-mail of the petitioner, and the candidate. Include several paragraphs describing the candidate's biography and reasons for the nomination.

Upon making a decision the Office of the Abbot General will advise the petitioner on further actions.



The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross are Proud Members of The Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod

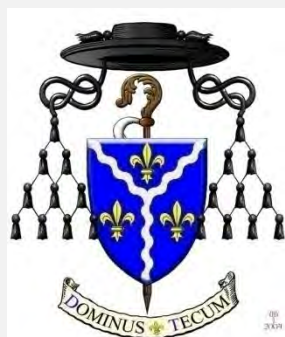
We are the **Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance**, an independent dispersed religious order within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and an autonomous member of the Independent Anglican Church -Canada Synod.

“The Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod is proud to be traditional Anglicans. Who follow, "where the saints have trod", the old, familiar path; the path that leads, in order and dignity, to warmth and tolerance.

“The discipline and public worship of the Church are, most properly, Catholic. Our adherents will experience a spread of services and style stretching gloriously all the way from Anglo-Catholic to (Low) Evangelical. Most of our congregations would be described as being Broad Church, following a via media.”



A message from the Archbishop Oscar Joseph, OCCO



People of prayer have always been the spiritual fiber holding together the Church.

We are pleased to sponsor The Global Fraternity for Christian Unity whose purpose is to pray and work (Ora et Labora) so: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 1

Every few weeks we have a topic for discussion.

Members are from all over the world.

New: Prayer for Intentions. A place where you can ask for us to pray for your needs.

Prayer for Petitions is a place where people can list their personal petitions and find spiritual support for the same.. Prayers for political, social or anything other than sincerely personal needs are not welcomed.

Join today on FaceBook

Daily Prayer for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

C. Let us pray

C. Our help is in the name of the Lord,

R. *Who made heaven and earth.*

C. Holy Lord, Holy Mighty One,

R. *Incline your ear towards us.*

C. St. Benedict, Father of our Order

R. *Pray for us.*

C. Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven

R. *Pray for us.*

C. All the Angels and Saints

R. *Pray for us.*

All. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you praise and thanks.

May we respond to Your call in charity and courage and grow in numbers and holiness.

Bless our Abbot General Oscar Joseph with good health, growth in wisdom and grace. Help him to see the world as you do.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with leaders, both monks and clerics, who will carry forward our charism.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with the material and financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission.

We ask you, Lord, to bless us with a residential monastery in Winston-Salem where we can live as brothers and host others in a spirit of hospitality as taught by our Father, Benedict.

Holy Father Benedict help us to bring a contemplative balance to everyday matters, to cultivate the daily disciplines of work and prayer, to persevere in our vows of obedience, stability and daily conversion.

We pray for all those who have requested our prayers particularly members of our Order and those who are in union with us.

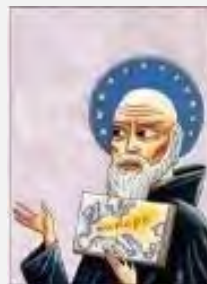
We pray also for those who may have given up hope or have forgotten to pray for themselves.

We pray that at all times and under every circumstance that every holy action, prayer, Liturgy, joy and even suffering that we experience is perpetually offered as a prayer for each of us, our intentions and the intentions of others. Let it be known that when you pray we all pray. AMEN.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen.

Please pray this prayer every day.
The Abbot has proclaimed this to be our
new daily prayer. Please join him daily to
pray this together.





The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance is an independent dispersed contemplative Religious Order that consists of laymen and women, single or married and male Diocesan clergy, from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Old Catholic traditions who live in the world as well as in monasteries or hermitages.

Our Cistercian roots date back to the eleventh century.

We live the Cistercian charism in our love of solitude, contemplation, work, and study as well as living under the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and vows of Conversatio, Stability, and Obedience.

Our purpose is to:

- a) seek perfection.
- b) praise and worship God

Our work is to:

- a) produce educational materials.
- b) host retreats.
- c) found autonomous religious communities.
- d) prayerfully intercede for those in need and for peace in the world.
- e) perform works of charity, pastoral ministry and mission work



The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is 37 years old. We are one of the oldest Religious Orders of our kind.

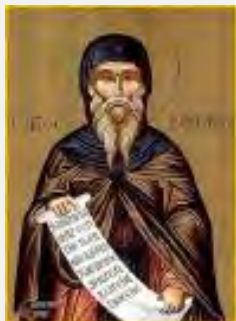
We are an independent dispersed religious order within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and an autonomous member of the Independent Anglican Church - Canada Synod.

Our monks and oblates give sacrificially to their communities.

Additionally the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross operates The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary and Saint Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology. They currently have 5 Certified Degree Granting Academic Institutes and provides education for a worldwide student body and several Diocesan jurisdictions.

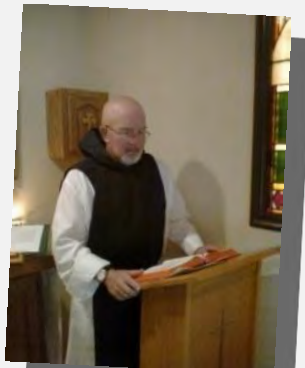
Martyrs and monks have always been the spiritual fiber holding together the Church Catholic.

Br. Columcille, OCCO writes, *"I believe Cistercians, and all contemplatives to be the heart of the Church. Our intentions, made perfect through the Holy Spirit, support all of the apostolic work around the world. Perhaps the stars would fall from the sky were it not for men and women dedicated to a life of prayer and sacrifice. We are a part of something holy, and are being made holy in the process."*



We, the Cistercians of the Holy Cross, are embedded icons, living sacramentals; who sustain, grace, and hold together the fiber of our communities.

Monks can also be deacons and priests



Deacon Monks can

- Develop local faith communities
- Do religious services
- Preach
- Baptize
- Marry
- Bury

Priest Monks can also

- Celebrate the Holy Eucharist
- Hear confessions
- Give The Sacrament of the Sick



The Memorial Day for our dear Br. Paul, OCCO is June 24th. He was a true blessing to our Order.

- The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is happy to receive male applicants for Holy Orders, e.g., Priest, Deacon. We would also consider incardination for other rightfully ordained clerics.

- While there are traditional qualifications for ordination/incardination, the principal interest is discerning a true vocation and developing Priests or Deacons who are fruitful ministers. Therefore, educational requirements may be individually tailored.

- We celebrate valid apostolic lines of succession, the seven sacraments and liturgical worship consistent with the historical churches. While some practices may differ, e.g., married clergy, we adhere to the dogmas constituted by true apostolic teaching.

- If you are interested in ordination or incardination, complete the application found on our website and forward it to the Abbot General. His office will then contact you.

CISTERCIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS, COMMON OBSERVANCE



We serve men and women, clerical or lay, married or single by:

- *Helping them grow in perfection through the use of the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and Manual, and community life.*
- *Consecrating to a first or second order religious life those who want to live either in community or outside community.*
- *Third order oblate program.*
- *Validating and assisting those already living the religious life but not living in a formal community.*
- *Supporting men with a call to the diaconate and priesthood through ordination, incardination.*

The Cistercian charism is a refuge for ardent lovers of God. The adherence to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict and focus on contemplating God in prayer is a precious balm on hearts aching for closer union with the Lord. The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is an opportunity for men or women to become a true monk or nun in this revered tradition."

*For more information contact
Abbot@bellsouth.net*