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Father John E Boll & Abbot Emeritus Thomas X Davis, OCSO

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The History of the Abbey of New Clairvaux Vina, California



AN INTRODUCTION TO SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, ABBOT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH



Saint Bernard of Clairvaux

Bernard was born in a castle to a highborn family in 1090 AD and was sent away by his parents during his youth to receive a classical education. After the death of his mother, Bernard suffered from depression and pondered what God wanted him to do with his life.

When Bernard was a child in his native region of Southeastern France, a local monk decided to try something new. He founded a new monastery at a place called Cîteaux in the hope of living the Benedictine Rule with exactitude and rigor. At the age of twenty-two, still mourning his mother's death, Bernard decided to dedicate his life to God and to enter this new, experimental monastery.

But Bernard being Bernard, with all the force of his mind and personality, when he knocked on the door of the abbey, he was not alone. Behind him at the door stood a long train of thirty of his brothers,

cousins and friends, all noblemen. Bernard was the leader; they were the followers. They wanted to become monks because he wanted to become a monk. When he asked, they answered, and they answered "Yes."



Photo taken from the web

Cistercian Abbey of Cîteaux, Cote d'Or, France

Bernard's natural gift to command and lead was a sign of things to come. Cîteaux inspired and gave its name to the Cistercian movement of monastic reform. Because of Bernard's dynamic presence, Cîteaux soon overflowed with monks, and Bernard was sent, as Abbot, to found a new monastery at Clairvaux, or *Clear Valley*. This was his base for the rest of his itinerant life.

As the first Abbot of Clairvaux, Bernard stamped the Cistercian movement with its distinctive character: sobriety in art and architecture, solemnity in liturgy, austerity in life, industriousness in labor, strictness in observance of the Rule, and silence pervading all.

Cîteaux gave birth to Clairvaux, and Clairvaux spawned a vast Cistercian family that considers Bernard its founder. By the time of Bernard's death in 1153, there were 343 Cistercian monasteries in the length and breadth of Europe.



Photo taken from the web

Former Abbey of Clairvaux which is now a French Maximum Security Prison for all of France

For an austere contemplative monk, Bernard, ironically, spent much of his life on the road. He was like a medieval rock star who never stopped touring Europe. He traveled with an entourage, drew enormous crowds, was wildly popular, and called the cream of society by his friends.

The details of Saint Bernard's life, though he lived before even Saint Francis of Assisi, the Magna Carta, and Dante, are abundantly documented. He was nearly as prolific a writer as Saint Augustine, but primarily via letters, not thick books. And these letters outline his character in sharp profile. He was intelligent, emotional, erudite, forceful, and contemplative. He spoke and wrote poetically, beautifully, clearly, and deeply. Pope Pius XII called him "the last of the Fathers" of the Church.

His gifts were such that he was consulted by princes, kings, and popes on every imaginable issue. He participated in Church councils, mediated civil conflicts, inaugurated Crusades, and wrote commentaries on prayer, theology, and Scripture. He had to employ secretaries, like a minister of state, who recorded the prodigious correspondence that flowed constantly from his mouth.

He became famous as a miraculous healer. Crowds of people lined his route to receive his blessing or to feel his hands press against their skulls. In one incident, after wading into a large, clamoring crowd desiring his miraculous touch, he had to fight to return to his lodging as the people tore at his habit. A wit wrote that the real miracle was not his healing but that Bernard escaped alive!

Bernard's authentic and tender devotion to the Virgin Mary was expressed sublimely in his writings. For his Marian devotion, eloquence, and contemplative spirit, Bernard substitutes for Beatrice as Dante takes the final steps of his mythical voyage toward God in the Divine Comedy. In the blazing fire of pure love that is the Beatific Vision, Bernard is at Dante's side as their eyes drink in the vision of a splendid, holographic, white rose emanating like a vision from the Godhead's bright light. The Queen of this mystical white rose is the Virgin, and "faithful Bernard" gazes in silent admiration at the woman he loves so dearly. Saint Bernard was canonized in 1174 and named a Doctor of the Church in 1830.

THE NAMING OF THE NEW MONASTERY IN VINA

The year 1953 was the 800th anniversary of the death of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. The Abbey of Gethsemani, KY, was flourishing with vocations. In 1951, there were some 250 monks in the monastery. The Abbot and his consultants made the decision to establish another monastery, their fifth foundation, and this time it would be on the west coast of the United States since there were no Trappist-Cistercian monasteries on the west coast at that time.



Gethsemani Photo from the Web

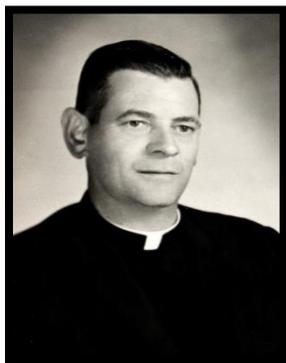
Gethsemani Cistercian Abbey, Kentucky

This new monastery would be called “Our Lady of Clairvaux.” In 1958, the Cistercian leaders in Rome insisted that the new monastery could not be called just “Clairvaux” since this was too personal to Saint Bernard. After proposing alternative names, “New Clairvaux” was agreed upon as the name of the new monastery to be located somewhere on the West Coast of the United States.

HOW VINA WAS CHOSEN AS THE SITE OF THE NEW MONASTERY

The Abbot of Gethsemani, Dom James Fox, OCSO, and the business manager, Brother Clement, had contact with Father Patrick Scanlon of the Archdiocese of San Francisco. Father Scanlon hosted Abbot James and Brother Clement on their trips to the West Coast in search of a possible site or location for the future abbey.

The precise relationship between Father Scanlon and Father James F Vaughn, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Corning, is unknown. But it was through Father Vaughn that the Flynn Ranch surfaced as a possible site. In July 1954, Abbot James, Brother Clement and Father Scanlon stayed a night at Immaculate Conception rectory in Corning with Father Vaughn, and the next day all four visited the Flynn Ranch. The dairy herd, a small prune orchard and rich soil convinced Abbot James that this was the site.



Father James F Vaughn

Negotiations for the purchase of the property proceeded but not without some complications, as Mrs. Miriam Flynn was strongly opposed to the sale. Eventually, she gave her consent and on July 1, 1955, the title of the property was transferred to Gethsemani Abbey.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VINA MONESTERY



Fr Anselm Steinke, OCSO
First Superior of Vina Monastery

The initial plan was to fly the founding group of monks to California at the generosity of the Skakel family, using one their private planes. Dom James, a native of MA, had contacts with the Kennedy and Skakel families. However, this plan did not materialize and the monks traveled by train, departing from the little train station near Gethsemani Abbey on June 30, 1955, and arrived in Sacramento on July 2, 1955.

Forty-six monks came from Gethsemani during 1955 to 1959 when the community was raised to the status of an abbey. Abbot James and 25 monks came by train to Sacramento, arriving on July 2, 1955, although two additional monks had arrived earlier to prepare for the large group. The remaining months of 1955 saw nine more monks come either by plane or train. The age span of the monks who arrived in 1955 was from their mid-50s to the youngest who was 21.

Father Anselm Steinke, OCSO, was appointed Superior of the newly founded Vina Monastery and he served as superior from 1955 to 1959 when the Vina Monastery became an Abbey.

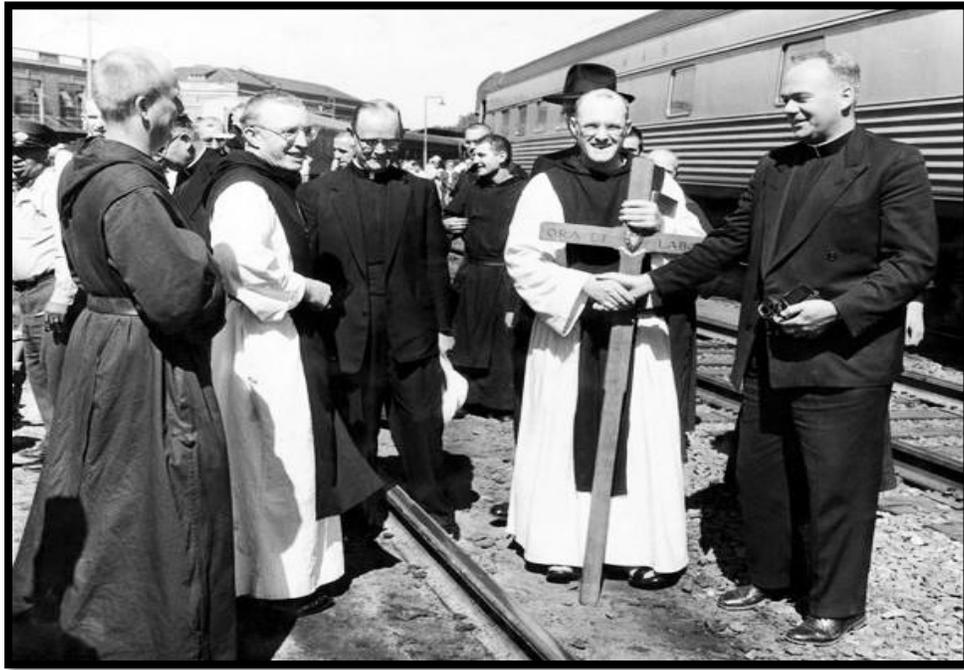


Photo from Vina Abbey Archives

Monks Arrive in Sacramento by Train from Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky



Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

The First Group of Cistercian Monks in Vina who came from Gethsemani Abbey, Kentucky

The first solemn profession of a monk as a Cistercian at the Vina Monastery was Brother Casimir Fusik on August 15, 1955. Brother Casimir persevered in his vocation until his death and his body is buried in the Vina Abbey cemetery.

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1955

On December 24, 1955, an atmospheric river storm from the Pacific Ocean came through California dropping heavy amounts of rain throughout the Sacramento Valley. There was extensive flooding from Deer Creek and the Sacramento River and the levee separating Marysville and Yuba City broke on the Yuba City side of the river sending flood waters into Yuba City, flooding the city in twelve feet of water for weeks. The flood waters also engulfed the newly established monastery in Vina.



Leland Stanford's Vina house

Photo from the Vina Abbey Archives

The Leland Stanford Ranch House becomes the first Monastery in Vina, 1955

THE FIRST ABBEY CHURCHES IN VINA

The first "temporary church" of the new monastery was the living room of the former ranch house. The second place of prayer and worship was the chapel on the second floor of the masonry annex to the ranch house that the monks constructed immediately after their arrival on July 2. It was used for the first time at First Vespers of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Dom James celebrated the Pontifical Mass on December 8.

The third church was the plywood building constructed when Dom Eusebius became the first Abbot in 1959. The wood was donated by the Martin Lumber Company, Roseburg, Oregon. This chapel was first used for Vespers on Christmas Eve in 1960.

The fourth and final church incorporates the Cistercian medieval chapter house of Santa Maria de Ovila, Spain. This church was consecrated by Bishop Jaime Soto on July 2, 2018.



Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

The Third Abbey Church, VINA

MONESTARY EVENTS DURING 1956

The main source of income for New Clairvaux Monastery in 1956 came from the dairy herd of 200 cows and a prune orchard on the monastery property. The monastery had its own sorting processor and dehydrator for drying the first prunes.

During that year, Father Hugh Bannon, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Corning, came to the monastery to give one conference on Canon Law to the theological students of the monastery.

On December 22, 1956, Bishop Joseph T McGucken, coadjutor of the Diocese of Sacramento, ordained Brother Malachy Gannon a sub-deacon.

THE YEAR 1957

In February 1957 at the Cistercian community meeting, the focus was on naming the various fields and orchards on the property after Cistercian saints and angels. The names chosen are still used today after sixty-five years.

On March 16 of that year, Bishop McGucken came to Vina to ordain Brother Malachy Gannon a deacon. The bishop returned to Vina on June 8, 1957 to ordain Deacon Malachy to the priesthood. Around the same time, construction began on a new building that would become the religious goods store which is still in use to the present day.



Bishop Joseph T McGucken

MONASTERY EVENT OF 1958

In January, the first group of diocesan priests from the area came to the monastery for a day of recollection. The priests arrived at 10:30 am and ended the day of recollection at 3:30 pm. The priests decided to make the gathering at Vina a monthly event.

The 1958 goal of the Vina monastery regarding the dairy was to milk 145 cows and to increase the production of milk.

The General Chapter of 1957 decreed that lay brothers could now attend choral office of the monks if they so desired. That change began on January 25, 1958. In the 1969 General Chapter, serious steps were taken to eliminate class distinctions in the Cistercian community.

Bishop McGucken granted permission for the monastery to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the guesthouse chapel. On May 24, 1958, Bishop McGucken ordained Thomas Davis a sub-deacon; on September 21, he was ordained a deacon; and on December 20, Bishop McGucken ordained Thomas a priest. All these ordinations took place in the Vina Monastery Chapel.

*You are a Priest forever
According to the
Order of Melchizedek*

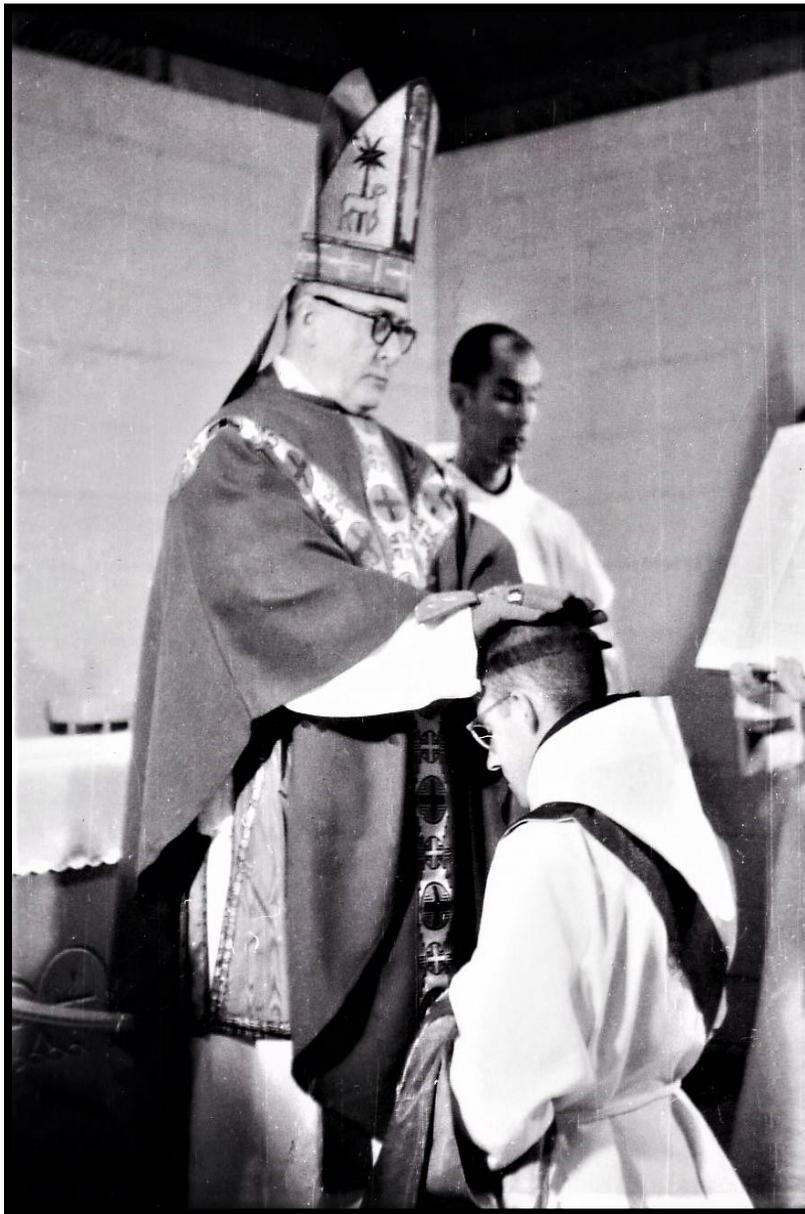


Photo courtesy of Abbot Thomas X Davis, ocsa

**Ordination to Priesthood of Father Thomas X Davis, OCSO, by Bishop Joseph T McGucken
December 20, 1958
Vina Monastery Chapel**

THE VINA MONASTERY RAISED TO STATUS OF AN ABBEY

On August 16, 1959, the professed monks of Vina voted favorably that the Cistercian Monastery of Vina be raised to the status of an Abbey. On October 27 of that year, the Conventual Chapter elected Father Eusebius Wagner as Vina's first Abbot.

On December 12, 1959, Bishop McGucken gave the abbatial blessing to Father Eusebius, raising him to the rank of Abbot of the Vina Abbey. In the fall of 1959, Fathers Thomas Davis and Matthew Torpey left for Rome to begin their graduate studies at the Jesuit Gregorian University.



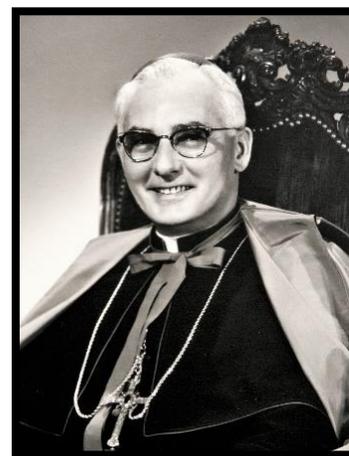
Photo from the Vina Abbey Archives

Bishop Joseph T McGucken gave the Abbatial Blessing to Fr Eusebius, raising him to the rank of Abbot

EVENTS AT THE VINA ABBEY IN 1960

In March of 1960, construction began on the new wood framed abbey church. First Vespers was held in the new church on Christmas Eve that year.

At the September Cistercian General Chapter at Cîteaux, France, approval was given to the Vina Abbey to become the Motherhouse for the monks of Lantau Monastery in Hong Kong.



Bishop Alden J Bell

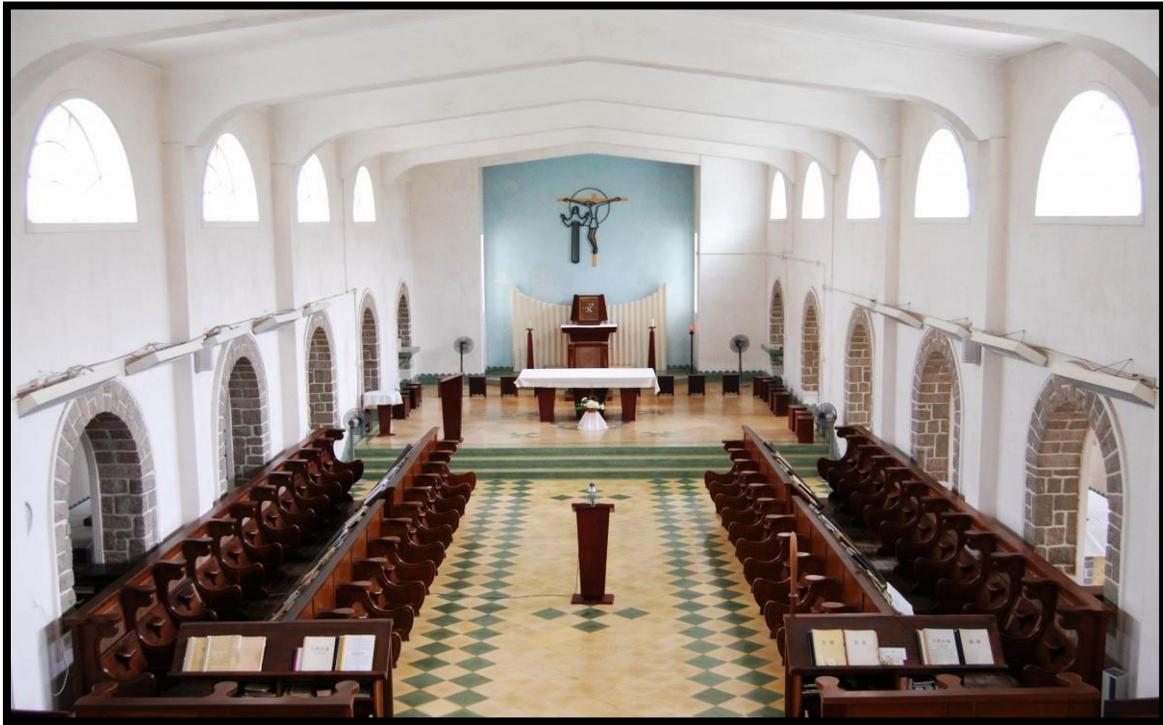


Photo from the Web

Chapel of Our Lady of Joy Trappist Monastery, Lantau Island, Hong Kong

THE EVENTS OF 1961

During April and May of 1961, Abbot Eusebius and the monks of Vina considered establishing a monastery in Russia. A Russian professor arrived at Vina to teach the Russian language to the monks. The foundation in Russia never happened due to the changes made by the Second Vatican Council, which was held from October 11, 1962 to December 8, 1965.

In September, the Trappistine Abbess from Belgium arrived to discern the possibility of establishing a foundation in the Redwoods at Whitethorn. The nuns were originally destined to go to the Congo, but due to the political situation there at that time, the Abbot General suggested California as an alternate place to establish a Trappistine Monastery.

In September/October, Father Jerry Roche and Brothers Francis and Columan left for the monastery in Hong Kong to assist the Chinese monks and the refugees from mainland China.

ARRIVAL OF THE TRAPPISTINE NUNS

In September 1962, Father Thomas Davis and seven brothers left for Whitethorn to prepare for the arrival of the Trappistine Nuns. On October 31, four Trappistine Nuns arrived from Belgium to begin a foundation of monastic life in the Redwoods, soon to be followed by other nuns from Belgium.

THE VINA ABBEY FOCUSES ON RAISING PRUNES AND WALNUTS

In 1963, the monks of the Vina Abbey decided to end their involvement in the dairy business. The dairy herd of cattle was sold and large cattle trucks arrived at the Abbey on April 15 to move the herd of dairy cows to their new home. From that point forward, the source of income for the Abbey would be prunes and English walnuts supplemented by row crops.



Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

The Vina Abbey Farm

On August 15, the Trappistine Convent of the Redwoods officially began the monastic way of life in Whitethorn, Humboldt County, as a cloistered community of Trappistine Nuns.

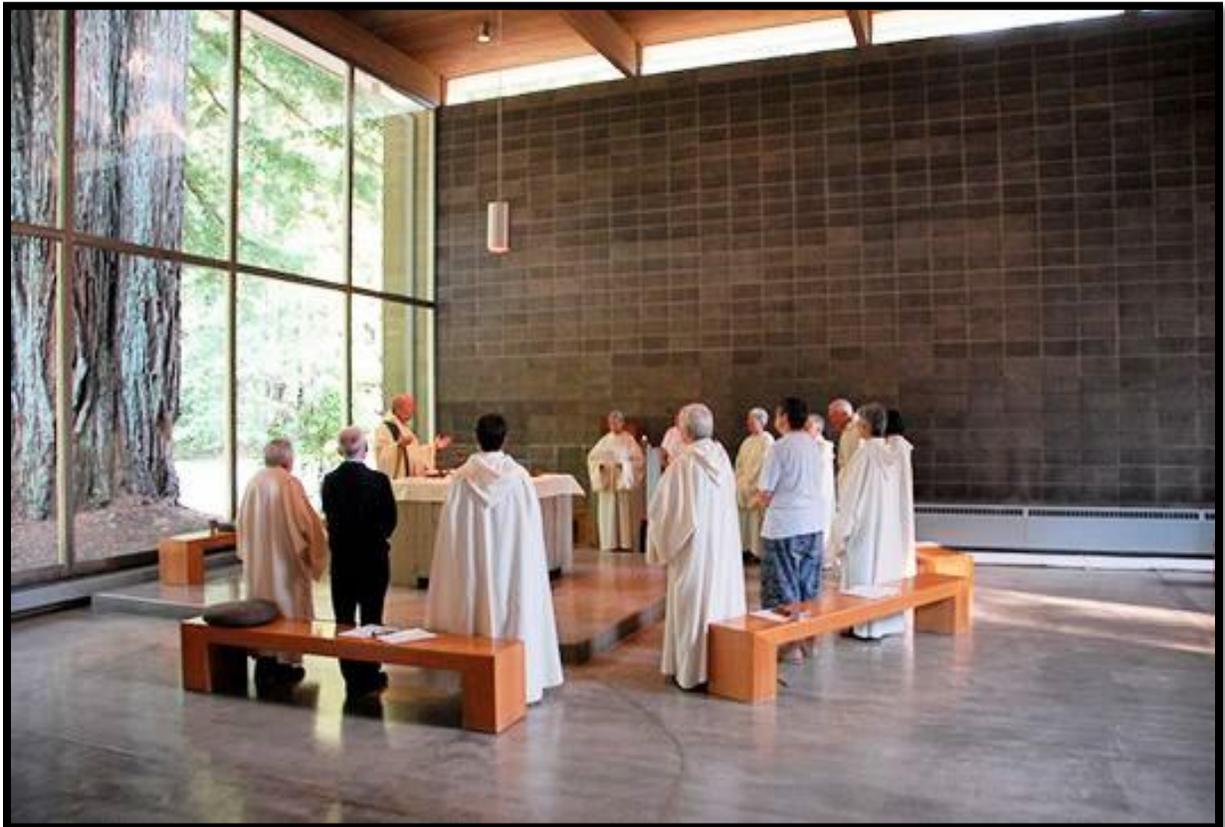


Photo from the Whitethorn Trappistine Monastery Website

Celebration of the Eucharist, Trappistine Abbey, Whitethorn, California

During 1963, various professors from the Cistercian Order arrived in Vina to teach philosophy and theology courses to the students destined for the ordained priesthood.

THE EVENTS OF 1964

On Holy Thursday, March 26, all the lay brothers changed the brown habit for the white and black habit of choir monks. This change was among the first that the Trappist Order made in anticipation of the *aggiornamento* changes of the Second Vatican Council's norms for Religious Orders.

On May 12, Bishop John Gran, O.C.S.O., Trappist coadjutor bishop of Oslo, Norway, and a former monk of Caldey Abbey, Wales, United Kingdom, visited the Vina Abbey for several days and spoke to the monks about his experience of the Second Vatican Council.



Bishop John Willem Gran, OCSO



Photo from Caldey Abbey Website

The Abbey of Caldey, Wales, United Kingdom

LIFE AT THE ABBEY IN 1965

The New Year of 1965 began with a nine hour snow fall on January 2. Although no snow accumulated on the ground, this was the largest snowfall since 1948 when eight inches of snow was recorded and the only snowfall of any consequence since November 1, 1955.

In September, the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order initiated the first Chapters of Renewal. The final Chapter would be in 1990 after the approval of the revised Constitution of the Order by the Holy See which was granted on the Solemnity of Pentecost, June 3, 1990.

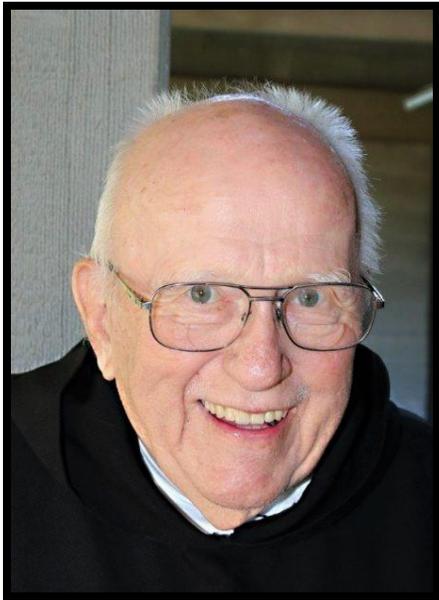
ABBOT EUSEBIUS TAKES A SABBATICAL LEAVE

On July 7, 1966, Abbot Eusebius Wagner took a three month sabbatical for health reasons. He returned to the Abbey in the fall to resume his role as Abbot of the Cistercian community.

SOME MONKS LEAVE RELIGIOUS LIFE

In 1967, with the effects of an ever changing world and the new vision for the Church coming from the deliberations and documents of the Second Vatican Council, marked the beginning of some departures from the monastic life by monks of the Vina Monastery.

FATHER BERNARD JOHNSON ELECTED AS THE NEW ABBOT



Abbot Bernard Johnson, O.C.S.O.

In 1968, Abbot Eusebius's resignation as Abbot of the Vina Monastery was accepted by the Abbot General in Rome. On July 28, 1968, Father Bernard Johnson, O.C.S.O., was elected the second Abbot of the Vina Abbey.

In September 1969, the General Chapter of the Cistercian Order meeting in Rome issued the document called "*Unity and Pluralism*," which officially initiated *aggiornamento* within the Cistercian Order according to the norms of Vatican II. This decree gave all communities extensive permission for experimentation.

Previously, community life was highly organized according to usages that were to be observed worldwide by every community, including the nuns. Observances were identical in every community. This decree now left each community free to determine their way of life, provided five or six basic norms were upheld, such as the Office of Vigils, had to be a night prayer and completed prior to dawn.



Photo from the Vina Abbey Archives

Ordination to Priesthood of Fr Paul Jerome Konkler, OCSO, by Bishop Alden J Bell, July 2, 1968

ABBOT BERNARD RESIGNS

Abbot Bernard Johnson submitted his resignation in April 1970. It was accepted by the Abbot General and his council on October 7. On October 22, the Abbot Visitor from Gethsemani appointed Father Thomas X Davis superior, after a consultation of the solemnly professed monks by a secret ballot.

On November 27, Monsignor Phil Maxwell of the diocese of Monterey made a trip to Vina to give a slide presentation to the monks of his trip to the Holy Land.

THE GREAT FIRE OF NOVEMBER 28, 1970

The next day, Saturday, November 28, at approximately 1 AM in the early morning, Father Joseph yelled, "Fire, Fire." The dormitory was filled with thick dark smoke. Most of the brothers climbed down the narrow fire escape, a ladder that had been installed just in case, if ever, there would be a fire. Five monks made their way down the only stairway that was filled with thick dark smoke making it impossible for others to follow.

Several brothers climbed out onto the porch roof and came down ladders; one slid down the drain pipe!; one brother jumped off the porch roof onto the orange tree; another brother, sleeping in the infirmary room and the last to awake, made his way onto the porch roof, breaking the window in order to escape. All the ladders had been removed. When this brother was

noticed, a ladder was put back to rescue him. He remarked calmly: "It is getting awful hot up here!" The brothers had to get a longer ladder to reach him. Afraid to place the ladder against the roof, the brothers held it; it tilted a bit but the brother was able to climb down without falling.

It was pitch dark and raining, and by this time the main part of the monastery house, the former Stanford Ranch Mansion, was fully aflame and clearly evident that it could not be saved. Father Thomas was going through the melee, trying to count the brothers to make sure all the monks had escaped. Fortunately, everyone escaped the flames of the fire.

The fire was seen from Corning since the Abbey is only ten miles from Corning. Various firetrucks rushed to Vina and the brothers pitched in to help with the hoses, including the hoses of the Abbey. A fireman later remarked how beautifully everyone worked together.



Photo from the Abbey Archives

Ruins of the Monastery House, the former Stanford Ranch Mansion

One brother hooked a tractor to the large orchard water wagon, but it eventually bogged down in the lawn and mud around the burning mansion. Rain and wind continued during the fire, but fortunately, the wind was blowing from the south which kept the fire from spreading to the adjacent buildings that included the novitiate and the wooden church with various offices.

At first, there was hope that the burning structure could be saved, but after a few minutes, that proved to be wishful thinking. The mansion was a total loss: library, kitchen, dining room, bakery,

dormitory, adjacent rooms for study, and offices. The washroom and restrooms underneath the building remained unscathed but were flooded with three feet of water.

THE TRAGIC ABBEY FIRE USHERS IN A NEW BEGINNING

The fire left an indelible mark in the minds of all the monks. It gave a real living sense of detachment, and at the same time, opened up a new future for the Abbey. It was a catharsis, a freeing from the past, and an opening to a new future that would be shaped by the new vision of Vatican II that was just beginning to take shape. This tragic event ushered in a new vision for monastic life at Vina beginning with a new building program and a new superior.

ASSISTANCE GIVEN BY THE MERCY SISTERS AND PRESENTATION SISTERS

The Mercy Sisters of Auburn and the Presentation Sisters of San Francisco were extremely generous in supplying the Vina Abbey with furniture, utensils and other household items. Their generosity made it possible for the monks to begin anew.

The brothers began to transform some of the outlying buildings into needed community spaces. The bulk of the community members moved into the guest quarters; others slept in their offices and work areas not affected by the fire. The superior, business manager and cantor slept in their offices for the coming two years until new quarters were built.

FROM STANDFORD-FLYNN RANCH HOUSE TO MONASTIC VILLAGE STYLE COMPLEX

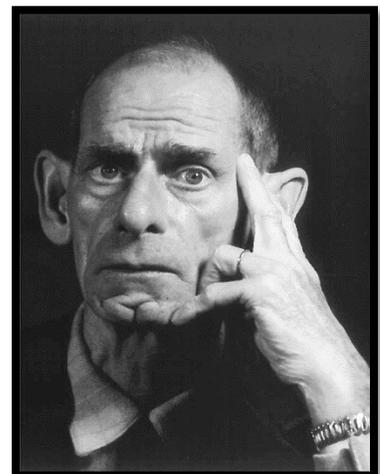
The experience of the devastating fire led to the decision to use a village plan in rebuilding the monastery. The buildings would be separate structures connected by covered walkways or cloisters. If there would be any fires in the future, they would not destroy the entire monastic complex, but one or perhaps two buildings only.

The architect for these buildings was Brother Robert Usher, an associate oblate in the community. Several of the brothers were talented craftsmen. They would work on the re-building.

BROTHER ROBERT USHER

Brother Bob was born on February 27, 1901 in Saint Louis, MO, and arrived in Vina on October 27, 1959. He received an art education at the Chicago Institute of Art. In 1929, while on his way to Tahiti, he managed, unexpectedly, to obtain a job with United Artists in Los Angeles. In 1932 he continued his trip to Tahiti and spend a year there. Upon returning to the United States, he was employed by Paramount Studios as an Art Director. During this time, he did movies with Bob Hope, Dorothy Lamour, Claudette Colbert and Mae West.

Robert Usher



Bob continued over the years his friendship with Bob and Dolores Hope, spending a week from time to time visiting with them. The last time Bob visited the Hopes

was with Bishop John Gran, OCSO. Bob did the art work for the movie “She Done Him Wrong,” based on “Diamond Lil.” The movie was a success, and after that, Mae insisted that Bob do the art work for her movies. In later years, she would write to Bob at the monastery, on occasion, asking for prayers.

Bob Usher was nominated for an Academy Award for the design set of “Frenchman’s Creek”, but he allowed his co-workers to take the honors. Many of Bob’s handmade sketches for design sets of sundry movies are in the Robert Usher Collection at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. He also has work or sketches at the Smithsonian Institute.

In 1942, Brother Bob volunteered for the U.S. Army and after his discharge in 1943, he did not return to his career in Hollywood, but made his residence at “Green Pastures” near Whitethorn, Humboldt County, CA, near Garberville toward Shelter Cove. It was at this time that Bob designed several homes in the Eureka area including the design and supervision of the construction for the Carson Memorial building.



Photo by John E Boll

The Carson House, Eureka, CA

After his conversion to Catholicism, Bob came to live at the Abbey of New Clairvaux on October 27, 1959. He renovated the bull barn as his residence. His property of "Green Pastures" was donated to the Trappist-Cistercian Nuns and is now Our Lady of the Redwoods Abbey.

Bob spent several years, (1960-1962) living in Rome near Monte Cistello, the headquarters of the Trappist-Cistercian Order. It was at this time that he became a close friend of Bishop John Gran, OCSO, Catholic Bishop of Oslo, Norway. There is a lively account of their friendship during those Roman years in Bishop Gran's two volume autobiography, *A Hand on My Shoulder*. Bob spent the summers touring Europe in his Mercedes-Benz! He returned from Europe with many pieces of magnificent art.

During two of these years, Father Thomas Davis was in Rome studying at the Gregorian University. This was prior to Bishop John's appointment to Oslo. These three friends, Bishop Gran, Father Thomas and Robert Usher, would spend time together in Rome.

Brother Bob designed and helped build most of the present monastic buildings as well as landscaping the monastic grounds and laying out the cemetery. The present guest-retreat quarters of the Abbey, though designed by an outside architectural firm in Chico, were inspired by Bob's monastic design. He also assisted in the designing of Saint Joseph's Church, Elk Grove, CA, and the chapel in the Newman Center at California State University, Chico.

Brother Bob was found on the floor of his residence, the "bull barn," on July 23, 1990, around 5:00 pm. It is believed that he died of cardiac arrest.

NEW CLAIRVAUX'S RELATIONSHIP WITH TWO CHINESE MONASTERIES - A bit of History

Two Trappist monasteries were established in China. The first, Our Lady of Consolation Monastery, founded in the Chahai Province in April 1883 from a French Abbey, beyond the Great Wall of China.

At the time of its total destruction by the Chinese Communist, there were some 110 professed choir monks and lay brothers, in addition to a good number of temporary professed monks and novices.

The Communists began to harass the monks in 1946. In 1947, after brutal torture, mock trials, outright murder of some monks, and a death march in the bitter cold to a place of imprisonment, this community could boast of 33 professed martyrs. The non-perpetually professed and novices had all been sent home by the Communists. The monks that survived the death march and prison eventually were able to gather in Peking and open a dairy near the East Gate of the City. This community survived there from 1949 till 1953 when the Communists confiscated the property and forced the community to scatter.

Some of the monks returned to their families; others found small jobs and lived either alone or close to one another; a few remained in prison. The Trappist Order lost contact with them due to the situation with the Communist Government. Consolation Abbey was totally destroyed, burnt to the ground by the Communists. Today, only the walls of the Church stand as a sign of the past.

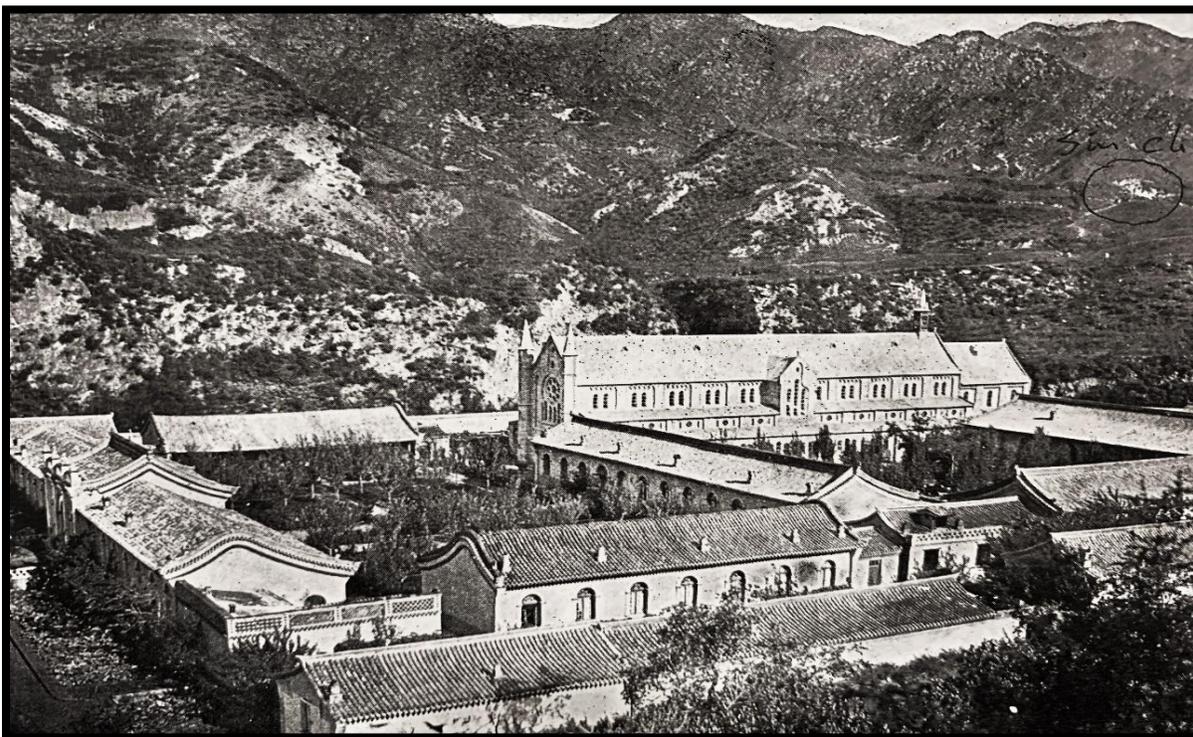


Photo courtesy of Abbot Emeritus Thomas Davis

Monastery of Our Lady of Consolation, Chahai Province, Mainland China



Photo courtesy of Abbot Emeritus Thomas Davis

What is left of Consolation Monastery today after destruction by the Chinese Communists

The canonization of these 33 martyrs is on hold, due to the situation between the Vatican and the present Chinese Government. A new tiny community of Consolation has been able to be re-established, although all the former monks have passed on to their eternal happiness. This new community cannot live together as a group for various reasons.

The founder and first superior of Consolation Abbey was Dom Ephrem Seigno, 1883-1887, a personal friend of Saint John Bosco. They visited together in Turin prior to the departure of Dom Ephrem and the French monks for China. There is a chapel in Turin dedicated to Madonna della Consolazione. Saint John Bosco himself suggested this name for the new Chinese monastery.



Dom Ephrem Seigno

There were many vocations from this new monastery. In April 1928, monks were sent from Consolation Abbey to establish the second monastery, Our Lady of Joy, in Hebei Province. The community was forced to move several times to flee the Communists. At the advance of the Communist Red Army in early 1947,

there were some 65 monks and lay brothers. The community divided into different small groups and became refugees in their own country. Ten monks crossed the border to get into Hong Kong, and they eventually began a new monastery that continues today as The Abbey of Our Lady of Joy. This community has one monk numbered among the 33 martyrs.

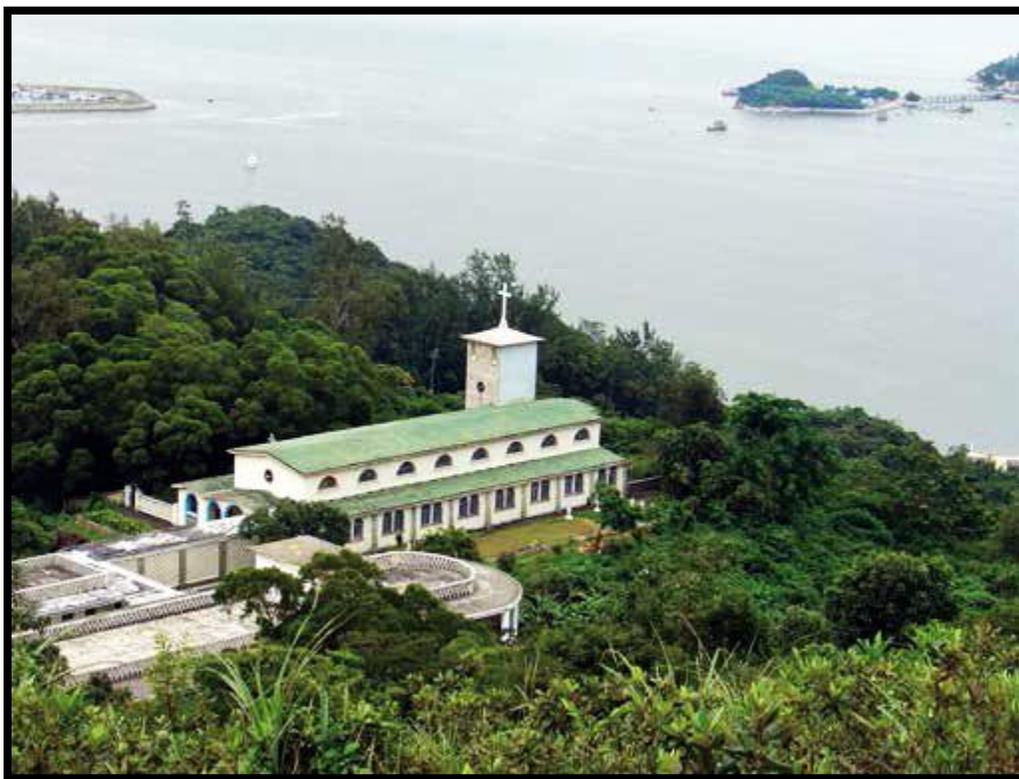


Photo of the Abbey of Our Lady of Joy is from the web

The Monastery of Our Lady of Joy, Lantau Island, Hong Kong

In 1949, around 8 or 9 young monks of Our Lady of Joy Abbey were able to come to the USA to study for the priesthood. They did their studies at the Trappist monastery in Utah and at Prairies

in Canada. While in Utah, Father Eusebius Wagner, a monk there, became acquainted with them. This acquaintance was the genesis of the New Clairvaux Abbey becoming the “Motherhouse of Our Lady of Joy” and Father Immediate, according to the Constitution of the Trappist Order in September 1960.

Since Consolation Abbey had been destroyed, it could no longer be responsible for the foundation of Our Lady of Joy. This monastery was looking for a community to replace the role of Consolation Abbey, preferably an American community. In the meantime, Father Eusebius Wagner had become the first Abbot of New Clairvaux Abbey, so he and the community accepted this responsibility. This is all the fruit of personal contacts in the Utah Abbey, which is now closed due to a lack of vocations to the monastic life.

The abbots of Vina visit the Hong Kong Abbey at least every two years, if not more frequently for various purposes, including canonical visitations in the role as Father Immediate.

EXPLANATION OF THE TERM “FATHER IMMEDIATE”

The supreme authority of the Cistercian Order is the General Chapter that meets every three years. The Abbot General presides at this meeting and is the contact person with the Holy See. In between Chapters, the Abbot General acts in the name of the Chapter and at each Chapter, he has to give an account of his service.

The Chapter consists of all the superiors of the monasteries in the Order. The superiors are Abbots, Abbesses, Priors and Prioresses of monasteries that do not yet have abbots and abbesses.

While each monastery is autonomous, the monasteries form a network of daughter houses and motherhouses. Usually, the Abbot of a monastery that founded a new community, or is centuries old, is called Father Immediate. It is also possible that a monastery can adopt a community in need for various reasons with the approval of the General Chapter. This abbot or prior is called Father Immediate.

The Father Immediate has the canonical jurisdiction to make the official visitation every two years of his daughter-houses and presides at the election of a new superior in his daughter-house.

Because the Cistercian Order is a clerical order, the nuns’ monasteries have to be joined with a monk’s monastery. The Father Immediate has the same responsibility for them also, plus the supply of a chaplain for the nuns’ monastery.

Since the Vina Abbey adopted the Lantau Monastery because Consolation Monastery was destroyed and could not function as Father Immediate, the Abbot of New Clairvaux in Vina now serves as Father Immediate.

The Trappistine Convent of Hinojo, Argentina, decided to make a foundation in Nicaragua. The first sisters arrived in Nicaragua in 2001 to establish this new community named Monasterio Santa Maria de la Paz on property near the small town of San Tomás, Chontales, in the diocese of Juigalpa. The church was dedicated on June 7, 2003. The Vina Abbey accepted the responsibility as Father Immediate of this new community as well.

Since 2014, the women and men superiors form one body. Abbots and Titular Priors have to be priests because they are elected by the community. Other priors who are appointed and not elected can be removed at any time and do not have to be priests. When this body elects a new General who has to be an abbot, as soon as he accepts, he automatically becomes the General. No confirmation is needed from the Vatican.

ABBOT THOMAS VISITS THE TRAPPIST MONASTERIES IN CHINA

In 1987, when China had begun to open up a bit by allowing tours, Abbot Thomas Davis and Dom Benedict Chau, (Titular Superior of Our Lady of Joy), were able to enter China with a tour group for the purpose of allowing Abbot Thomas to experience China, and for both Dom Benedict and Abbot Thomas to meet with some of the Trappist monks from both communities of Consolation Monastery and Joy Monastery who were still living and could make their way to Beijing.



Dom Benedict Chau celebrates his 103 birthday on July 28, 2020; he is still going strong with a clear mind

Dom Benedict was one of the monks who made it to Hong Kong at the time of the Communist take-over of China. Somehow he was able to arrange that these monks would know of the arrival in Beijing of these two superiors. This was the very first time any of these monks had contact with the Trappist Order and their superiors since 1947.

About 8 of these men were able to meet in Beijing. Despite having had no contact with the Trappist Order during these years, they remained faithful monks and loyal to the underground Church. Several had been ordained to the priesthood by faithful bishops. One of the priests had spent 32 years in prison. All these monks have had a very difficult life under Communist rule, many having spent time in prison. But they remain faithful and now are enjoying eternal glory with God.

Since then, Dom Benedict has been able to enter China, as has his successors. Abbot Thomas has also entered China on several occasions since 1987.

PROPERTY PURCHASED IN TAIWAN AS A POSSIBLE REFUGE

There had always been talk about a possible refuge for the Hong Kong community of Our Lady of Joy in view of the eventual return of Hong Kong to Communist China. In the early 1980s, steps were taken in this direction. Father Clement Kong, a monk of Hong Kong, went to Taiwan to learn the Taiwanese language and looked for an appropriate piece of property. Dom Benedict and Abbot Thomas visited Taiwan on occasions.

Property was purchased near the town of Shuili. In October 1984, Brother Regis King, a monk of the Vina Abbey, went to Taiwan to assist in the establishment of this venture. From time to time, other monks from Vina have traveled to Taiwan to serve there on a temporary basis. Presently, this very small community is an annex house of Our Lady of Joy Monastery.

The Chinese Trappist communities in Asia are five: Consolation, Our Lady of Joy in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Trappistine nuns in China and Star of Hope in Macau. The future of these communities remain in the hands of Divine Providence.

NEW CLAIRVAUX'S RELATIONSHIP WITH VIETNAM

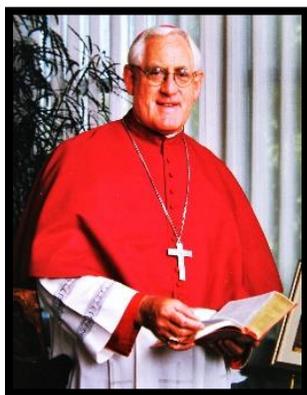
Abbot Thomas attended the 900th anniversary of Cîteaux on Sunday, March 21, 1998, at Cîteaux, France. At breakfast that morning, he sat down at a table which happened to be across from a Vietnamese Cistercian of the Observance, known as Order of Cistercians, as distinct from the Trappist Cistercian Order. This Cistercian priest, named Father Dominic Tran, was a student in Paris from Chau Son Monastery in Vietnam. The two monks became acquainted and kept in contact with one another.

After Father Dominic completed his studies in Paris, he was unable to return to Vietnam due to the political situation at the time. He opted to come to Vina until he could return to his monastery, Chau Son.

FIVE MONKS COME TO VINA FROM VIETNAM

Chau Son, like the other Cistercian monasteries in Vietnam, was experiencing numerous vocations. Abbot Thomas conceived the idea of asking Chau Son if a few of their many postulants would be willing to come to Vina with the intention of joining the Trappist Observance. Abbot Thomas visited Chau Son Vietnam in 2002 and spoke with the Vietnamese Abbot, Dom Francis, about this possibility. Eventually, five young men did come to Vina. Three of them have persevered at Vina and made their solemn monastic commitment and final vows. One of these monks, Father Stephen Nguyen, was asked to proceed to the priesthood. Of the two who left, one returned to Vietnam and the other was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Seattle.

MONASTERY OF CHAU SON, VIETNAM, OPENS A MONASTERY IN WALNUT GROVE



Bishop William Weigand

As the political situation changed, Father Dominic arranged to open a Cistercian Monastery in the Diocese of Sacramento at Walnut Grove. This became possible through the kindness of Bishop William Weigand who welcomed this new community to the Diocese of Sacramento. Now there is the possibility of monks from Vietnam coming to the United States.

FATHER DOMINIC TRAN BECOMES SUPERIOR OF THE MONASTERY IN WALNUT GROVE

Father Dominic left Vina in 2005 to become the superior of this new Cistercian Monastery of the Order of the Common Observance in Walnut Grove. In 2019, he was elected Abbot of his own Monastery in Vietnam for a term of six years.

VIETNAMESE CISTERCIAN NUNS OPEN A MONASTERY IN THORNTON

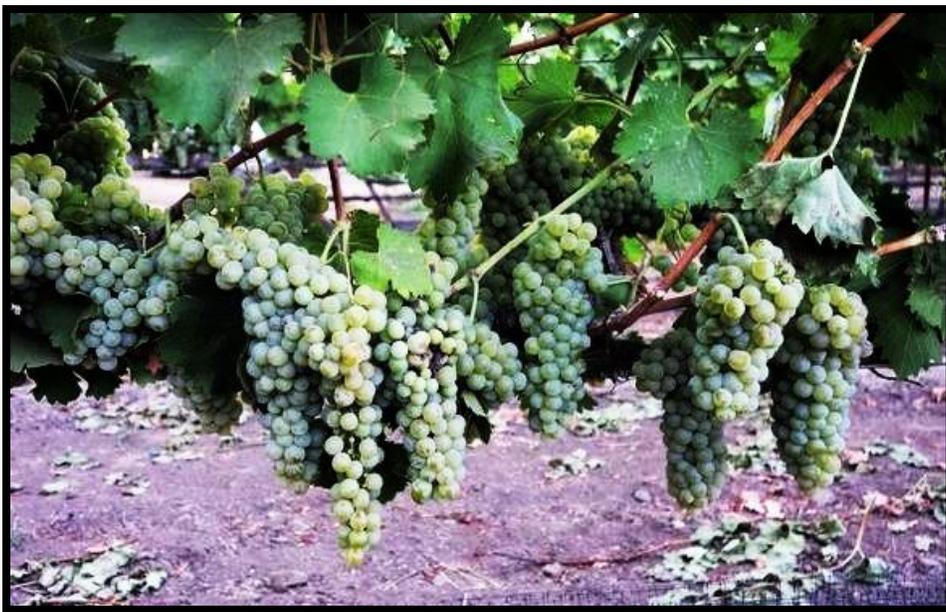
In 2016, Vietnamese Cistercian Nuns opened a monastery in Thornton, Diocese of Stockton. The Vina community maintains contacts with these Vietnamese communities.

Father Mark Hoc, formerly from Chau Son, Vietnam, transferred to the diocese of Oakland. He did all his studies in the Vietnamese Monastery but was ordained at Vina by Bishop Weigand in 2000.

THE VINA ABBEY BEGINS AN ADVENTURE IN WINE-MAKING

Growing grapes and producing wine have been part of the Cistercian heritage since the very first days of the Order's founding. Citeaux, founded in 1098, received in 1108 the vineyard of Meursault as a gift from the Duke of Burgundy. In 1110, Citeaux received the vineyard of de Vougeot from a certain Gueric of Chamballe. In 1112-1115 Citeaux began the construction of the wine cellar of de Vougeot. (Bernard of Clairvaux entered the Order in 1113, and founded Clairvaux in 1115). The Abbey of Santa Maria de Ovila, from where the chapter house comes, began making wine in 1194.

In 1843, Peter Lassen obtained the land grant of Rancho Bosquejo from the Mexican government. The Abbey of New Clairvaux is located on this land grant. It was in 1846 that Peter Lassen planted one acre of vines with cuttings he obtained from the Missions in Southern California, travelling there by horse.



Vina Abbey Vines

Henry Gerke acquired Rancho Bosquejo from Lassen in 1852, increased the vineyard to 100 acres, and began by 1861 to successfully produce wine and brandy. By the time the Rancho was sold in 1875, the Rancho had 100,000 vines of different varieties, producing 55,000 gallons of wine and 6,500 gallons of brandy. By this time, the Bosquejo was known as Gerke's Ranch and soon acquired the name of Viña due to the vines he had planted. It is said that Gerke took with him to the grave the key to producing fine wines.

In the fall of 1881, Leland Stanford acquired the Ranch, refurbished the wine making and eventually increased the grape production to some 2 million gallons of wine coming from some 3,800 to 4,000 acres of vines. He could never produce a fine quality wine like the French wines.

Stanford, among his properties, owned both the Palo Alto Ranch that eventually became Stanford University and the Great Viña Ranch in Tehama County.

In 1887, construction began on the Great Wine Cellar, a building covering about two and half acres. Today, this building houses the New Clairvaux Tasting room and winery, along with monastic offices and work areas. Currently, the building is referred to as 'The Winery.' The bricks came from a Thomas Royer's brickyard in Roseville.

Leland Stanford died in 1893, but the ranch continued under the auspices of his wife, Jane. After her death in 1905, the Board of Trustees of Stanford University assumed control, and with the Prohibition Act, wine producing was discontinued. The 60,000 acre Ranch was subdivided and sold in 1919.

In 1955, the monks acquired close to 590 acres of the original Ranch. Their purchase included the original headquarters of the Great Ranch along with the Great Wine Cellar, the bandy and other buildings, and especially the Stanford mansion on the property that was the first monastery that burned in 1970.

In 1999, Phil Sunseri, with others involved in the reconstruction of the Chapter House, along with Abbot Thomas, were visiting Cistercian medieval chapter houses in Spain. One evening during dinner when the group was passing though Spain, Phil suggested to Abbot Thomas that they go in partnership and "resurrect" the wine tradition at Vina. Phil's daughter, Aimee, was becoming the family's fifth generation of wine makers, and New Clairvaux had the history or "story" that would sell the wines. Abbot Thomas proposed this venture to the community of monks and they supported it. In 2000, the first vines were planted. The wine tasting room was opened in the fall of 2005.

The Sunseri Ranch is in Vina also, across Highway 99E from the Monastery. Both the Sunseri and the Monastery each have 15 acres of vines.



The Abbey Tasting Room in the former Great Wine Cellar

The monks' vineyard, (St. James Block and Trinity Block), produces Red wines: Tempranillo, Syrah, Graciano, and Ruby Cabernet. The white wines are Alberino, Viognir, Muscat Blanc, Muscat Alexandria, French Columbard, Marsanne, Rousanne, Trebbiano, and two Greek varietals: Moschofilero and Assyrtiko.



The Vineyard at the Abbey of New Clairvaux, Vina

New Clairvaux Vineyard is the first in America to both grow and produce these two Greek wines. In 2020, St. James Block and Trinity Block became Certified Organic vineyards.

It so happens that Frederic Bioletti (1865-1939), University of California's first viticulturist, was the first to introduce Tempranillo to the US and cultivate it on Leland Stanford's Great Ranch at Vina. The monastery's wines are sold in local retail stores around the Chico and Redding areas, Corti Brothers in Sacramento, and by mail order.



Two of the Monks Walk Through the Abbey Vineyard in Vina

THE GENESIS OF THE FOURTH AND FINAL CHURCH AT NEW CLAIRVAUX ABBEY, VINA

In the fall of 1954, Father Louis (aka Thomas Merton), who was director of the junior monks, (those in temporary profession as well as students for the priesthood), gave them a course in sacred art dealing especially with Cistercian art and architecture. Abbot Thomas was a junior monk at Gethsemani at the time, and took this course from Merton.

Abbot Thomas, as a young temporary professed monk, had been requested to be part of the group sent to Vina to establish a monastery. That group arrived in Sacramento by train on July 2, 1955. But because of various reasons, Thomas accompanied Brother Odo Metten two months later by plane, arriving on September 15 in San Francisco. They were met by the superior, Father Anselm Steinke.

The two monks were given a short and quick tour of San Francisco that included a drive through the Golden Gate Park. As they drove down what is now John F. Kennedy Drive and passed behind the former de Young Museum with the stones from Santa Maria de Ovila Monastery in wooden crates neatly stacked behind it under the eucalyptus trees, the driver of the car, (a friend of the Vina community), off-handedly remarked that the crates were the stones of a Cistercian monastery from Spain that William Randolph Hearst brought over and had never re-constructed. Immediately, Thomas realized the importance and value of "those wooden crates" and had the wishful dream, "How nice it would be for the future monastery at Vina to have those stones for its future building." At the time, it seemed to be simply a pure dream that seemed both improbable and impossible, but one he never forgot.



Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

The Scattered Cistercian Abbey Stones at the de Young Museum, San Francisco

After many years that saw the stones damaged by five fires, subjected to vandalism, pilferage and neglect, left to the elements of the damp San Francisco weather and become the rendezvous of the “flower children,” it was impossible for this monastery to be restored. This was an unfortunate loss since this Ovila Abbey’s dining room and chapter house were extremely fine examples of early Gothic architecture of Spanish Cistercian monasteries.

Once Thomas had become Abbot of New Clairvaux Abbey, he began to pursue with de Young Museum and the City of San Francisco authorities the possibility of these stones coming to Vina. It had been determined that the reconstruction of the chapter house was feasible, for 511 carved stones proper to the chapter house had been found, among them, stones essential to give the proper proportions for the vaulting.

Negotiations dragged on and off over the years. The Loma Prieta earthquake of October 17, 1989 resulted in making it clear that the City of San Francisco would not be able to do any kind of reconstruction. Mr. Al Wilsey, a Catholic and member of the de Young Board of Trustees, made it possible for the stones to be awarded to Vina. The lawyers of The City and the Vina Abbey hammered out an agreement with an essential requirement that the chapter house receive an authentic historical restoration and that there be some form of public access on a limited basis.

On September 12, 1994, the document was signed, and on September 13, the first truck and trailer loaded with stones left the Golden Gate Park for New Clairvaux Abbey in Vina. From September 1994 to October 1995, nineteen truck and trailer loads with a total of 272 pallets of stone arrived at New Clairvaux Abbey.

THE LONG AND TEDIOUS PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS



Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

Dr Margaret Burke Examines the Monastery Stones in San Francisco

A group of San Francisco Druids, who regretted seeing the stones leave their sacred spot in the Golden Gate Park, expressed two wishes to Abbot Thomas. Firstly, that some stones be left in the Grove of the Grandmothers and Grandfathers, a site of Meditation and Love for the Druids since 1941. Secondly, that the Druids, who wanted to say goodbye to the stones, could perform a small ritual of pouring sacred Scotch over the last pallets of the last load to leave the Park in the presence of the Abbot who was simply to observe the process. This ritual took place at a curb site of Middle Drive East in the park, early in the morning on October 13, 1995.

The reconstruction of the chapter house was a long process. Around 1983, Dr. Margaret Burke, with a grant from the Hearst Foundation, made the first evaluation of the stones in the Golden Gate Park and determined that reconstruction of the chapter house was feasible.

Once all the stones were at Vina, Chico architect Patrick Cole of Arcademe began a second evaluation of the stones, using the Autocad 2000 program. Eventually, stone masons Werner Oskar Kemp and Ross Leuthard, laid out the external face of the three arches of the portal to ascertain more precise measurements and dimensions of the chapter house. Slowly the building began to take shape, at least in terms of construction documents.

A large stone cutting machine was purchased from England. A work place was created in the building that Leland Stanford used for making brandy, and even today this site is referred to as the brandy barns. Stones from other parts of the monastery that were not part of the chapter house were re-cut for future use.

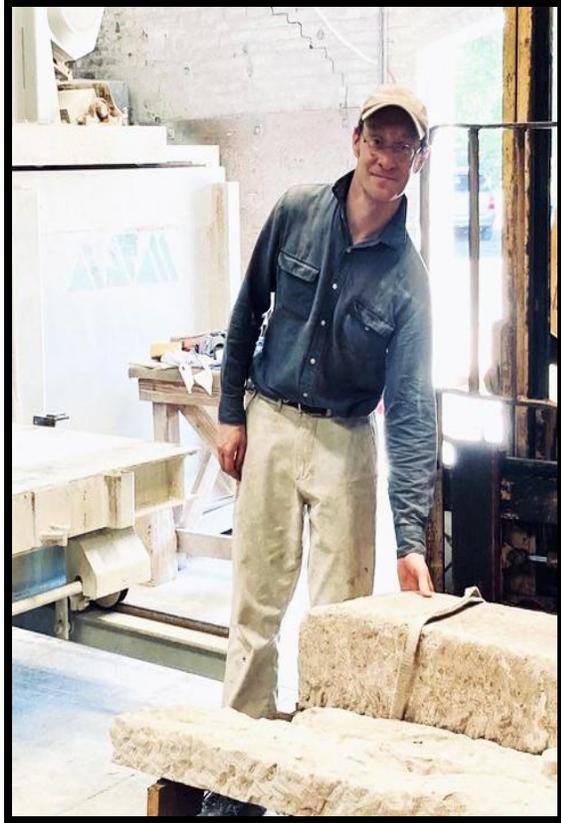


Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

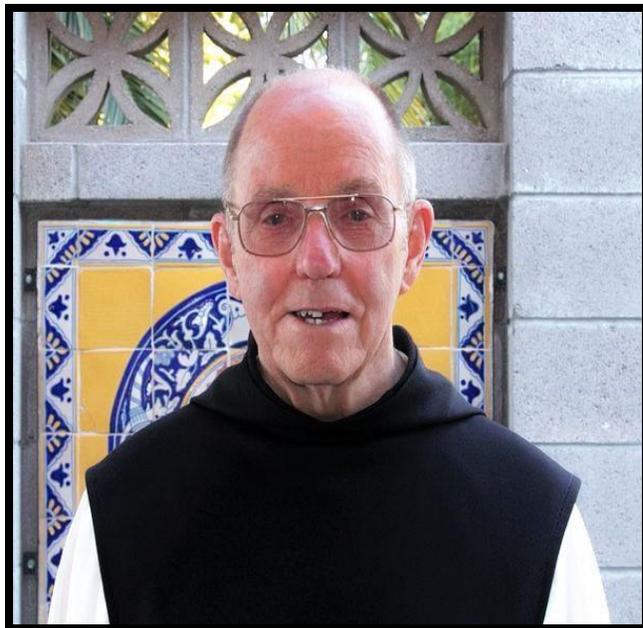
One of the stone masons working on the Abbey Church

The cloisters and Chapter House and other parts of the abbey were brought to the United States by Hearst. Some of the stones of these restored Cistercian buildings now serve as an Episcopal Parish in North Miami, Florida.

When the monastery was dismantled in Spain in 1930, pictures were taken but there were no construction documents. The stones were simply numbered and a drawing was made by hand of the walls with the stones drawn in and numbered. This brown wrapping paper drawing is in the Vina Abbey archives. This crude drawing would facilitate in the reconstruction!

During the fires and vandalism in San Francisco, stones were lost, stolen, or used in Lake Merritt, and on those stones that remained, the numbers on the stones had disappeared.

GROUND BREAKING OF THE NEW CHURCH AT THE VINA ABBEY



Abbot Emeritus Thomas X Davis, OCSO

Ground breaking took place on September 14, 2003, and the portal of the chapter house had an 'Opening' on October 25, 2008, to celebrate Abbot Thomas' 75 birthday and his coming resignation as Abbot that following December.

FATHER PAUL MARK SCHWAN, ABBOT OF VINA

In 2009, with the election of the new Abbot, Father Paul Mark Schwan, the decision was made to use the Chapter House as the core of the new Vina Abbey Church.



Abbot Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO

THE ANCIENT STONES RISE TO BECOME THE PERMANENT ABBEY CHURCH OF VINA

Frank Helmholz replaced Oskar Kemp and it was Frank who raised the stones into a building. Frank officially completed the chapter house in October 2013. He claims that 70% of the stone in the building came from Spain, the other 30% from Texas. Frank works during the winter season in Upper Egypt restoring ancient Egyptian monuments there.

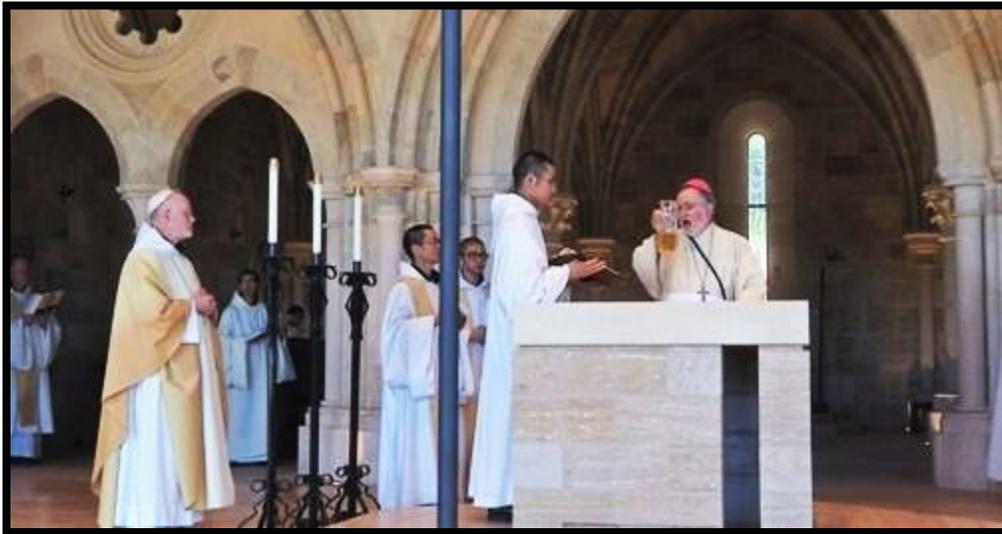


Photo from the Vina Abbey Website

Bishop Jaime Soto Anoints the Altar and Celebrates the First Mass in the new Abbey Church

Sometime in 1963, the Buddhist monastery of Middlebar, Amador County, became interested in the stones in Golden Gate Park. The City of San Francisco auctioned them off to the Buddhist abbot for \$1. Public opinion in the City was strongly opposed to this Catholic monastery going to a Buddhist monastery, so the transaction was dropped.

This abbot visited Vina in 1957 and met Father Thomas who was guest master at the time. When the abbot learned of the stones coming to Vina, he visited again and gave Abbot Thomas the bill of transaction, which was placed in the abbey's archives and hasn't been found since! The Buddhist abbot also gave three very small bells to Vina that he claims came from Mexico. These three small bells, stamped with the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, today hang in the monks' foyer of the new Church.

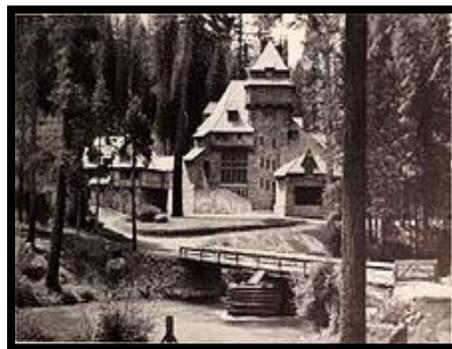
THE HISTORY OF SANTA MARIA DE OVILA ABBEY, SPAIN

1167 The Abbey of Santa Maria de Ovila was founded by Alfonso VIII, King of Castile, fourteen years after the death of Saint Bernard and thirty-five years after Cistercians first came to Spain. This Abbey was one of the establishments the King used to safeguard the country recently conquered from the Moors.

1190 Construction began on the Chapter House - an early example of Cistercian French Gothic design brought to Spain. San Martín de Finojoso was instrumental in this construction. He was the Cistercian Abbot of Huerta, Bishop of Sigüenza, and a saint of the Cistercian Order. The Chapter House was completed in 1220 and the monks of Vina insert the name of San Martín de Finojoso on occasion at Mass.

1835 The Abbey was secularized by the Spanish Government - only 4 monks and 1 lay brother were left after monks had lived there for 700 years. Property went to private owners.

1931 The Abbey was purchased by William Randolph Hearst for his estate at Wyntoon. This private Hearst Estate was located on the McCloud River in rural Siskiyou country in Northern California. The main building of the estate burned down in 1929. Hearst did not bring the entire monastery from Spain to California, only sections of it. Arthur Byne was the art dealer whose advice Hearst followed to purchase it. Julia Morgan was an architect for Hearst, and Walter Steilberg her assistant. Plans were drawn to restore the Chapter House at Wyntoon.



Hearst Estate at Wyntoon

1931 Eleven boat loads of stone come to San Francisco and were stored in a warehouse near the Cannery. The Depression hit and Hearst was financially unable to reconstruct this monastery.

1941 William Hearst presented the stones to the City of San Francisco with the understanding that the entire monastery would be reconstructed as a museum near the de Young Museum. Plans were in process but World War II interrupted them. The stones remained stored outside near the de Young Museum.

1946 – 1959 After World War II, plans were revived but attempts to raise money failed.

1970 Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo manifested some interest in the stones and sent Dr. E. Rozanne Elder to San Francisco to discern the possibility of restoration. The decision was that this seemed not to be feasible. Dr. Elder was head of the Department of the Cistercian Institute at the University.

Listing of Superiors

Appointed Superior 1955 – 1959: Father Anselm Steinke, OCSO

First Abbot 1959 – 1968: Father Eusebius Wagner, OCSO

Second Abbot 1968 – 1970: Father Bernard Johnson, OCSO

Appointed Superior 1970 – 1972: Father Thomas Davis, OCSO
(Appointed Superior in October 1970 and elected Abbot
for an indefinite term in July 1972)

Third Abbot 1972 – 2008: Father Thomas Davis, OCSO

Fourth Abbot 2009 – current: Father Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO

The term of office for the superiors and first abbots was either
Indefinite or with resignation at the age of 75.

The fourth abbot is being elected on the basis of a six year term.

The Trappist-Cistercian Abbeys have the option of an

Indefinite term with resignation at 75 years of age or six year
Terms renewable until the age of 75.
The term of office is voted upon at the beginning of any
Abbatial election. The same applies to abbesses of the order.

ABBATIAL BLESSINGS

Abbot Eusebius Wagner, OCSO, December 12, 1959 by Bishop Joseph McGucken
Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Sacramento
Abbot Bernard Johnson, OCSO, September 26, 1968 at Vina
Abbot Thomas Davis, OCSO, October 3, 1972 at Vina
Abbot Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO, March 21, 2009 at Vina

PRIESTLY ORDINATIONS AT VINA

Father Malachy Gannon, OCSO, June 8, 1957, by Bishop Joseph T McGucken
Father Thomas X Davis, December 20, 1958, by Bishop Joseph T McGucken
Father Phil Tracy, June 10, 1960, by Bishop Joseph T McGucken
Father Cajetan Roche, OCSO, June 10, 1960, by Bishop Joseph T McGucken
Father Paul J Konkler, OCSO, July 2, 1968, by Bishop Alden J Bell
Father Mark Scott, October 31, 1987, by Bishop Francis A Quinn
Father Paul Mark Schwan, June 12, 1988, by Bishop Francis A Quinn
Father John Baptist Porter, May 19, 1990, by Bishop Francis A Quinn
Father Placid Morris, OCSO, October 18, 2013, by Bishop Jaime Soto
Father Stephen Nguyen, OCSO, October 7, 2017, by Bishop Jaime Soto
Father Gueric Llanes, OCSO, October 7, 2017, by Bishop Jaime Soto

ABBAY CHURCHES AT VINA

FIRST CHURCH, living room of the former Ranch House.

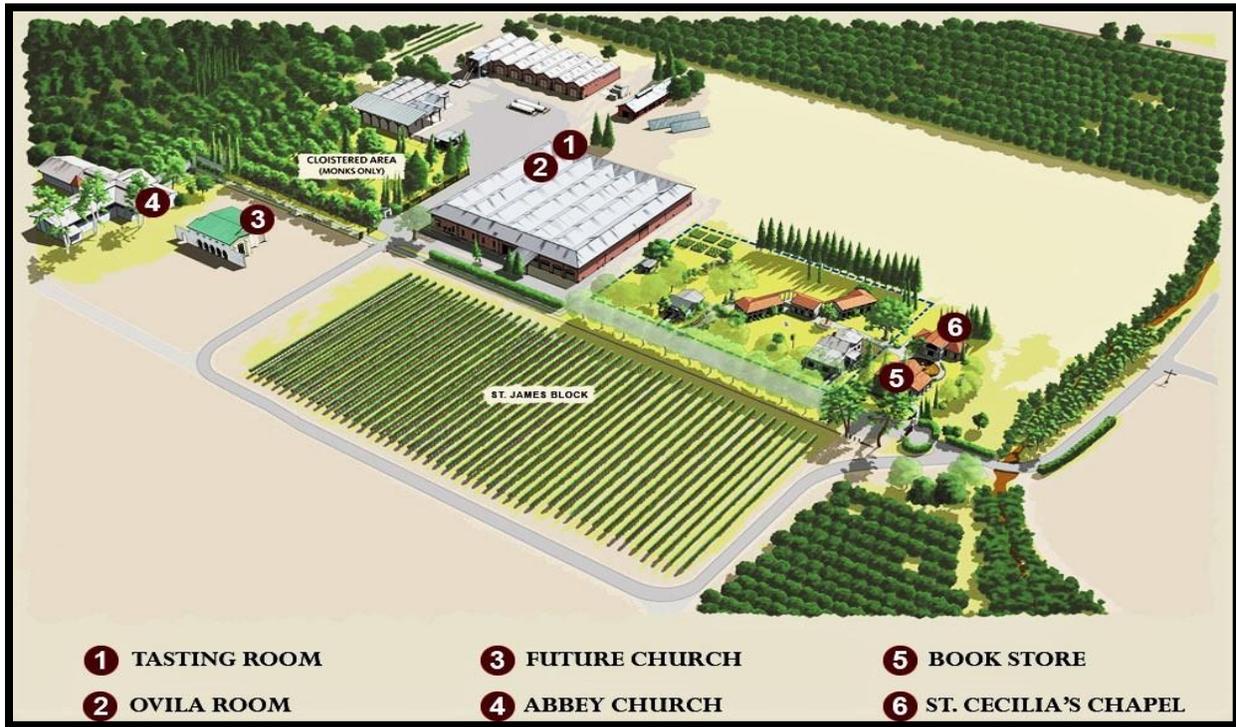
SECOND CHURCH, Chapel on the second floor of the masonry annex
to the ranch house that the monks constructed immediately on their
arrival on July 2, 1955. It was used the first time for Vespers of
the Immaculate Conception. Dom James celebrated the first
Pontifical Mass on December 8.

THIRD CHURCH was the plywood building constructed when
Dom Eusebius became Abbot. The wood was donated by the
Martin Lumber Company, Roseburg, OR. The Chapel was first
used for Vespers, Christmas Eve, 1960.

FOURTH AND FINAL CHURCH incorporates the Cistercian medieval
Charter House of Santa Maria de Ovila, Spain. The altar was consecrated
by Bishop Jaime Soto on July 2, 2018.

PHOTOS OF THE LIFE OF THE MONKS AT VINA

The following photographs are from the Vina Abbey Website unless noted otherwise



Map of the Grounds of New Clairvaux Abbey, Vina, CA



Liturgical Procession of the Monks of New Clairvaux Abbey, Vina



Christmas in the Abbey's Third Church



Monks at Prayer in the Third Abbey Church



Bishop William Weigand celebrates Mass in the Third Abbey Church



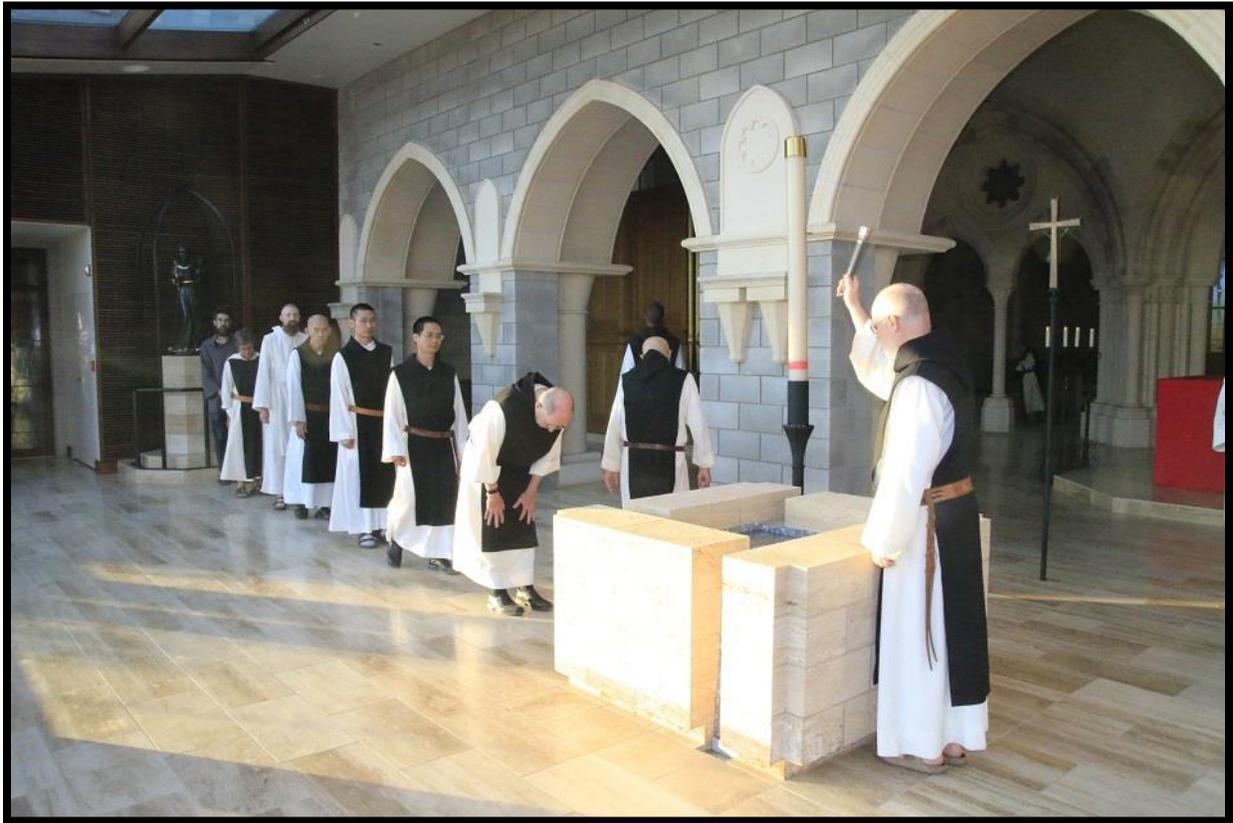
Abbot Paul Mark Schwan marks the Monks with ashes on Ash Wednesday



The Monks of New Clairvaux Abbey, Vina



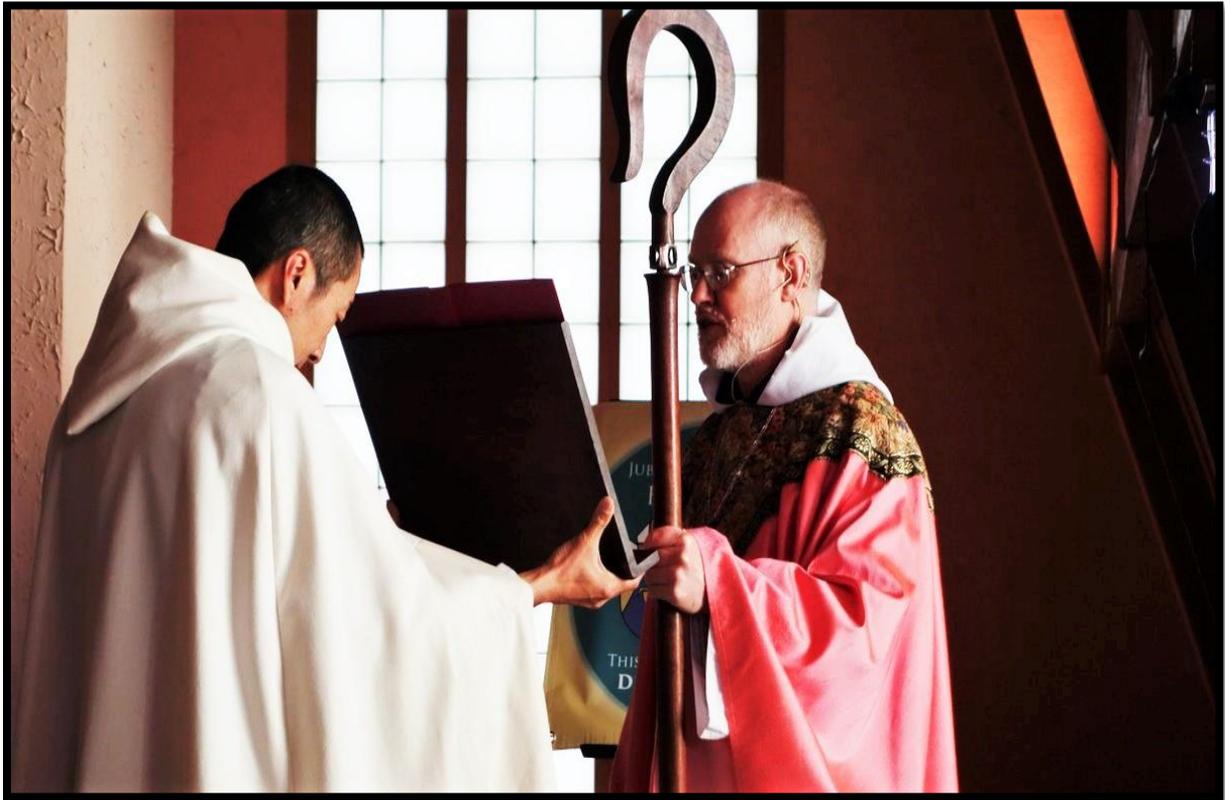
Palm Sunday Mass in the New Abbey Church



Abbot Paul Mark Schwan bless the monks after Night Prayer



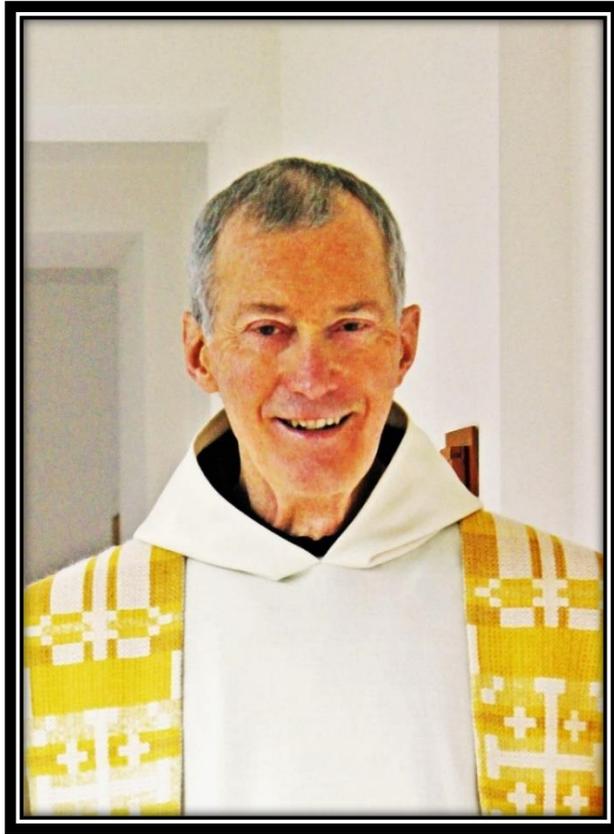
Lenten Procession at the Abbey



Abbot Paul Mark Celebrates the Community Mass at the Abbey

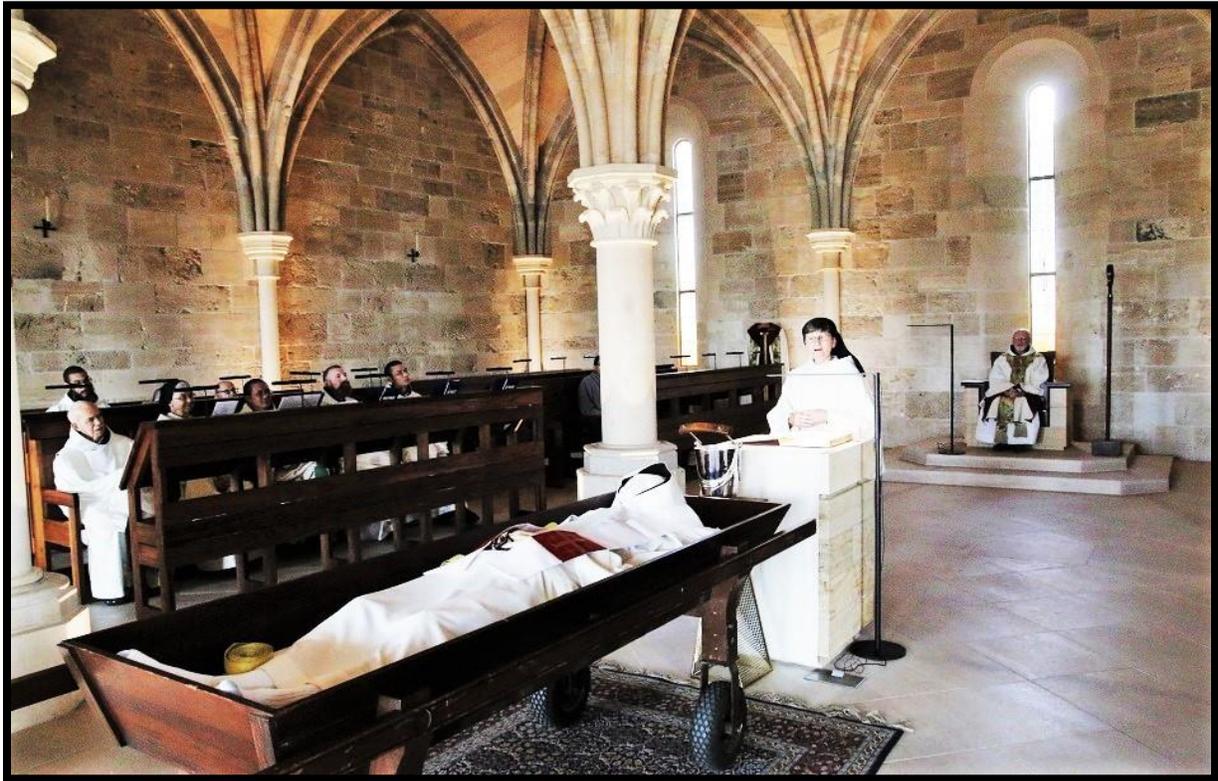


The New Vina Abbey Church at Sunset



Father Charles Cummings, OCSO

A monk from the Cistercian Monastery in Utah, died suddenly on a visit to Vina



Funeral Mass for Father Charles Cummings, OCSO, in the Vina Abbey Church



Abbot Paul Mark Blesses the Body of Father Charles



Procession to the Cemetery of the Vina Abbey



Cistercian Tradition directs the burial of the body of a monk without a casket



A Next Generation of Monks at the Vina Abbey



Preparing the Community Meal to celebrate the Asian Lunar New Year





The Monastic Community gathers for the Lunar New Year Festive Meal



The New Clairvaux Abbey Community in Vina



The monks hike to the hills overlooking the Sacramento Valley

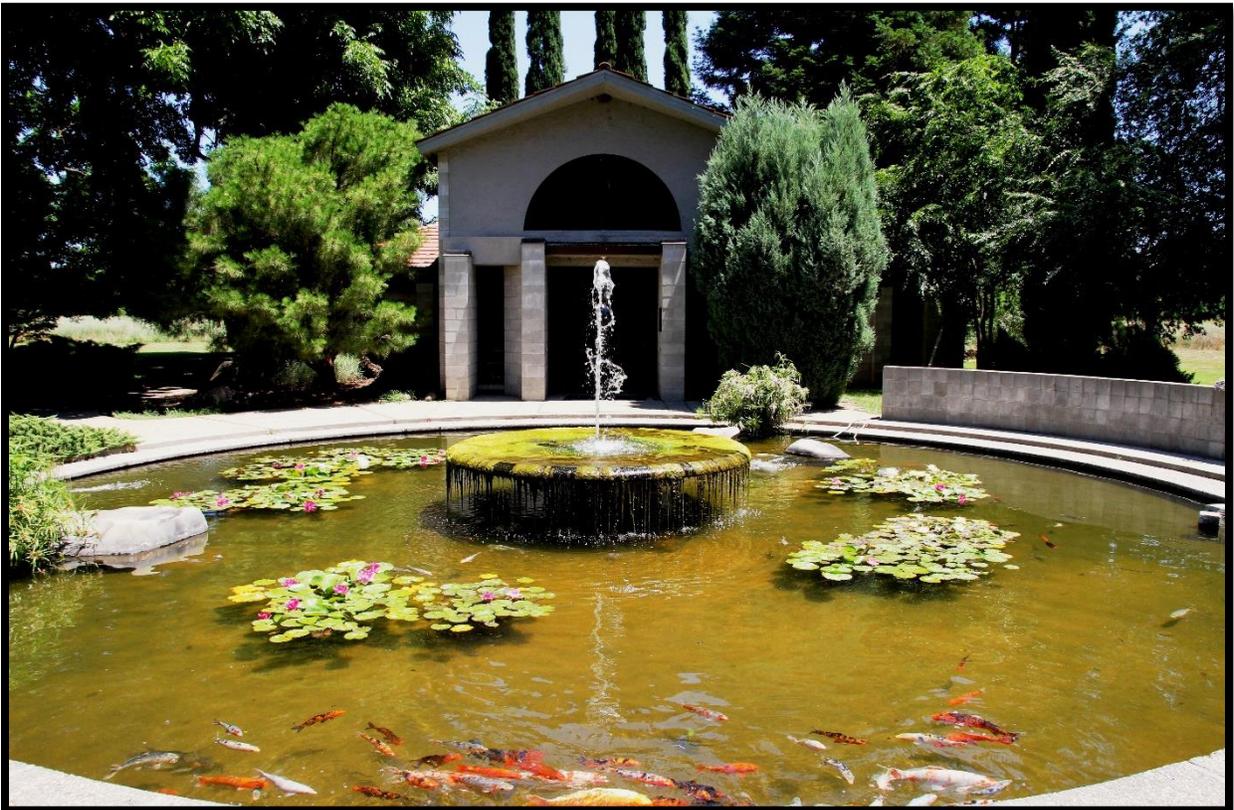


Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off to Work we go!!



Photos by John E Boll

Guest Quarters at the Vina Abbey



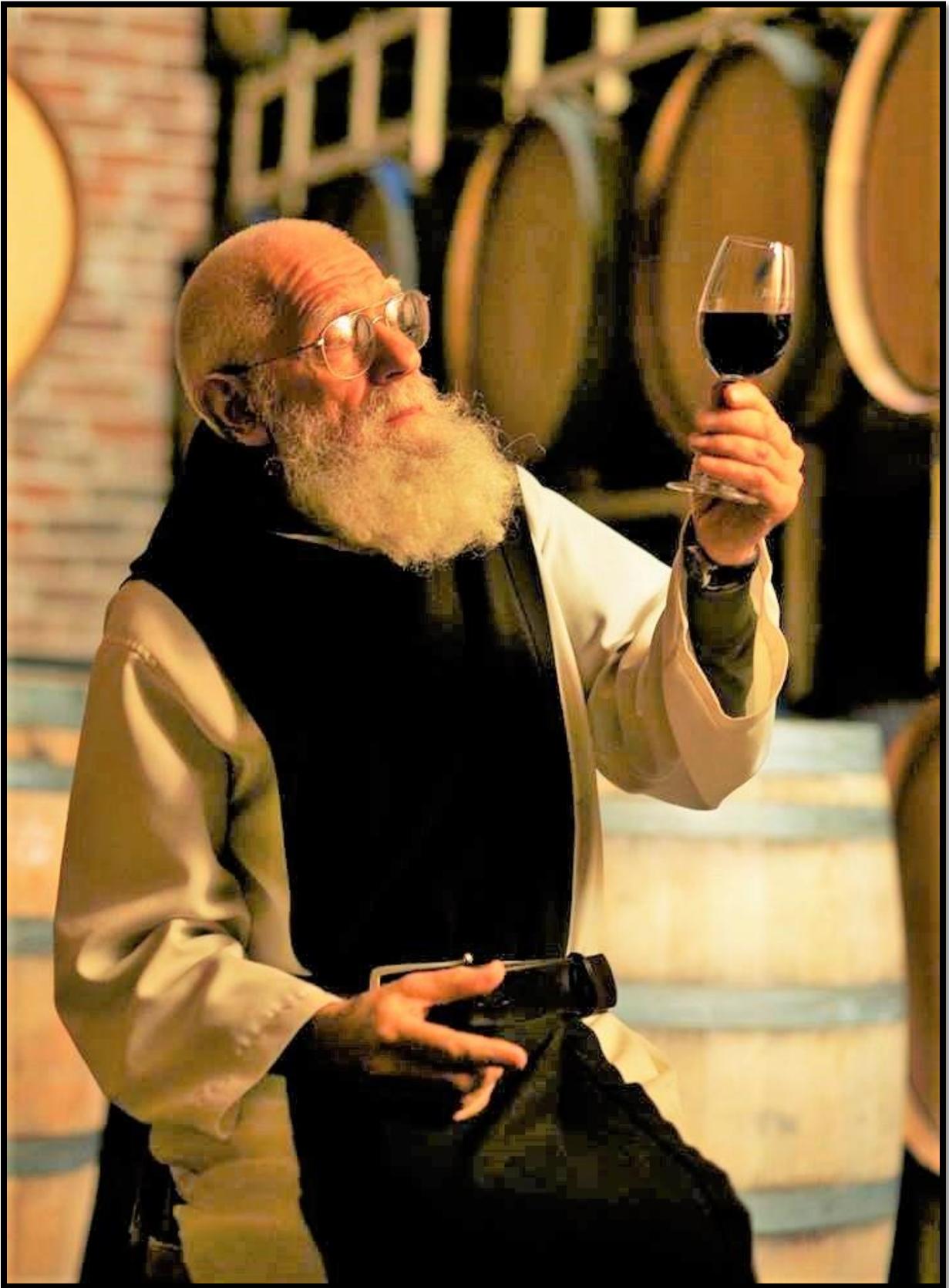
Abbey Guest Quarters Reflection Pool



The Abbey Wine Tasting Room



New Clairvaux Abbey Wines are now served!



Father Anthony Bellesorte checks the wine for Clarity and Quality



Walnut Trees at the Abbey



Abbey Walnut Orchard at Sunset

Photo by John E Boll



“Unless you become like little children, you shall not enter the Kingdom of God”



The Monks in Liturgical Procession





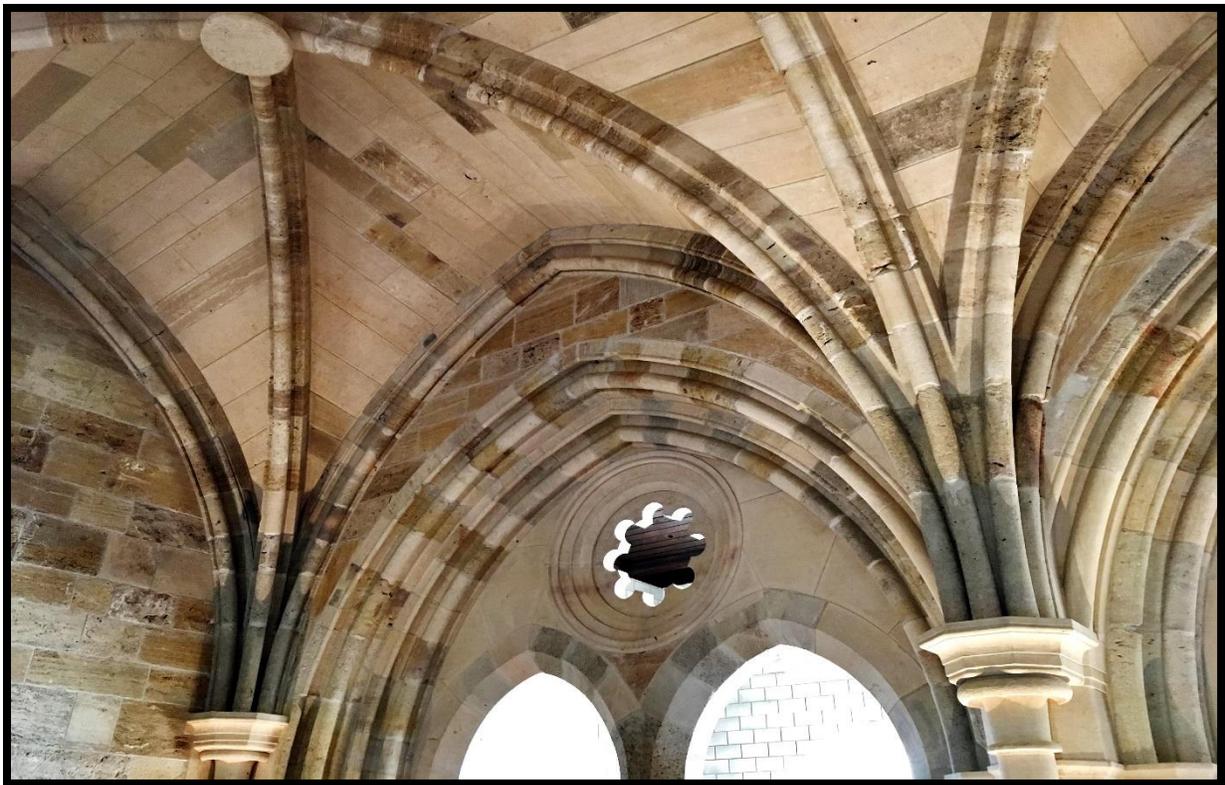
Abbot Emeritus Bernard Johnson shows his Pectoral Cross to Abbot Paul Mark Schwan



The Monks' choir stalls in the new Abbey Church, Vina

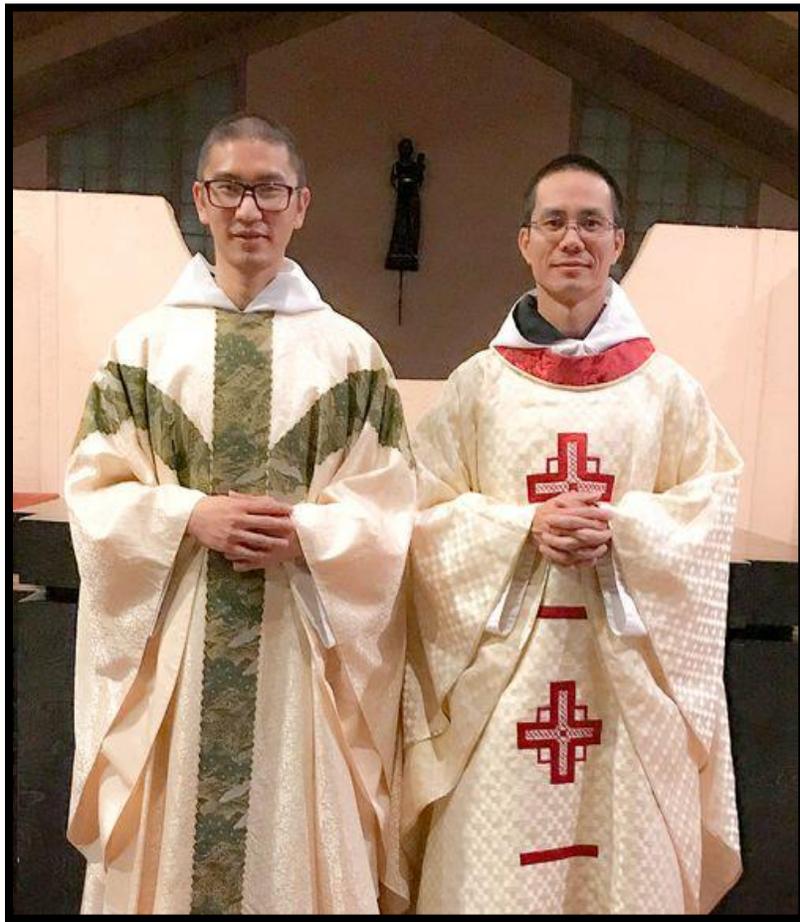


The Monks at prayer in the Vina Abbey Church



The Vaults of the Abbey Church

Photo by John E Boll



Newly ordained Priests Fathers Gueric Llanes, OCSO, and Stephen Nguyen, OCSO



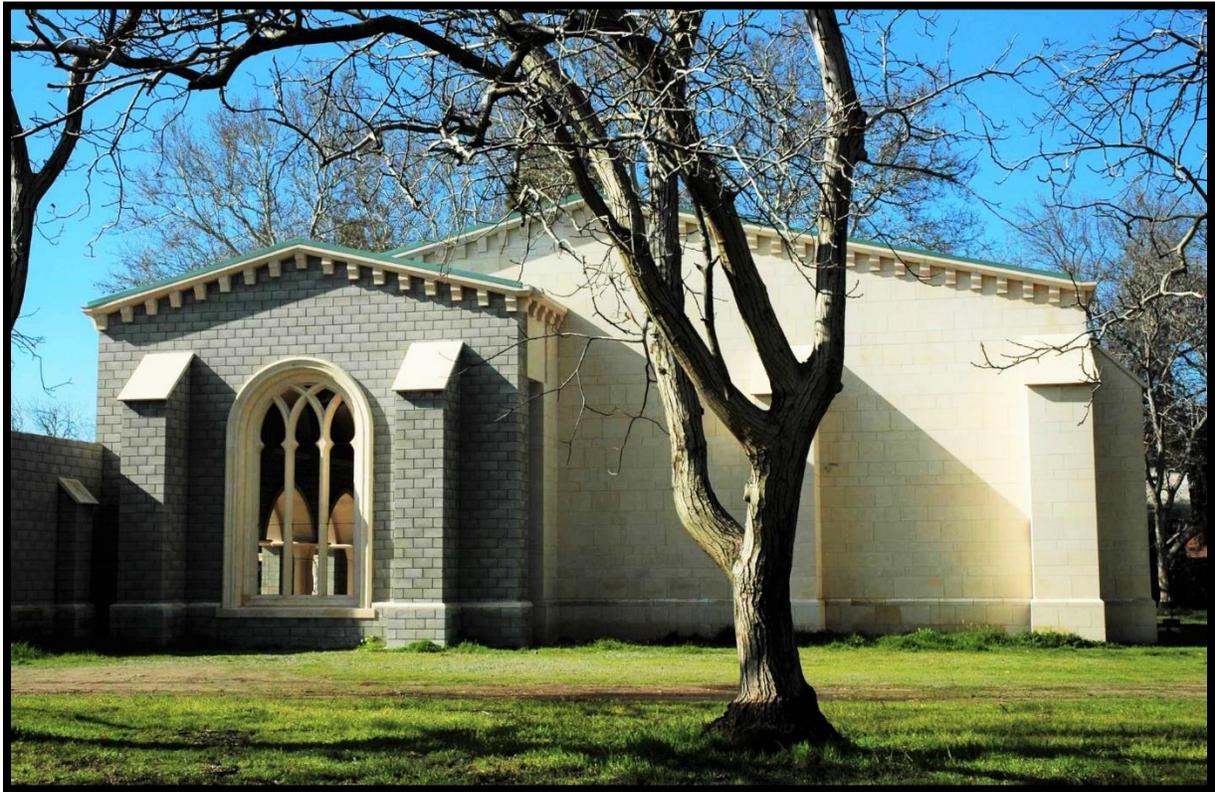
Eucharistic Procession at the Abbey



In Monastic Life, the bell is the *Vox Dei*, calling the Monks to Prayer



And coming into the Light and Presence of the Lord



The New Vina Abbey Church

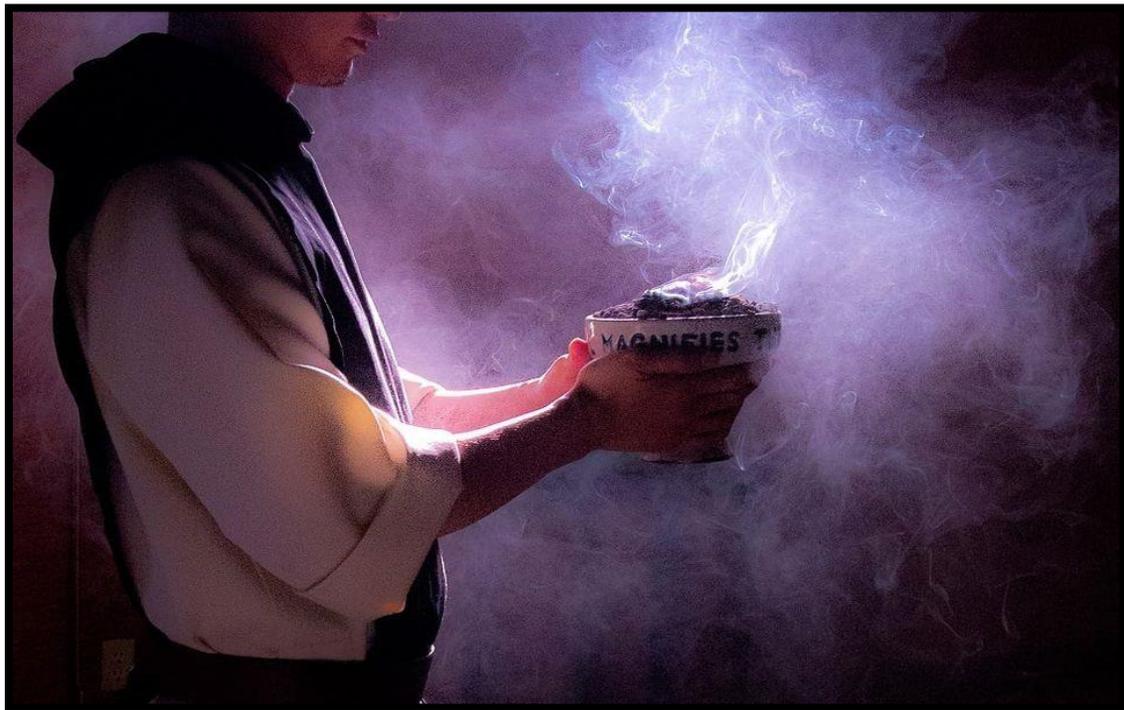


Photo by John E Boll

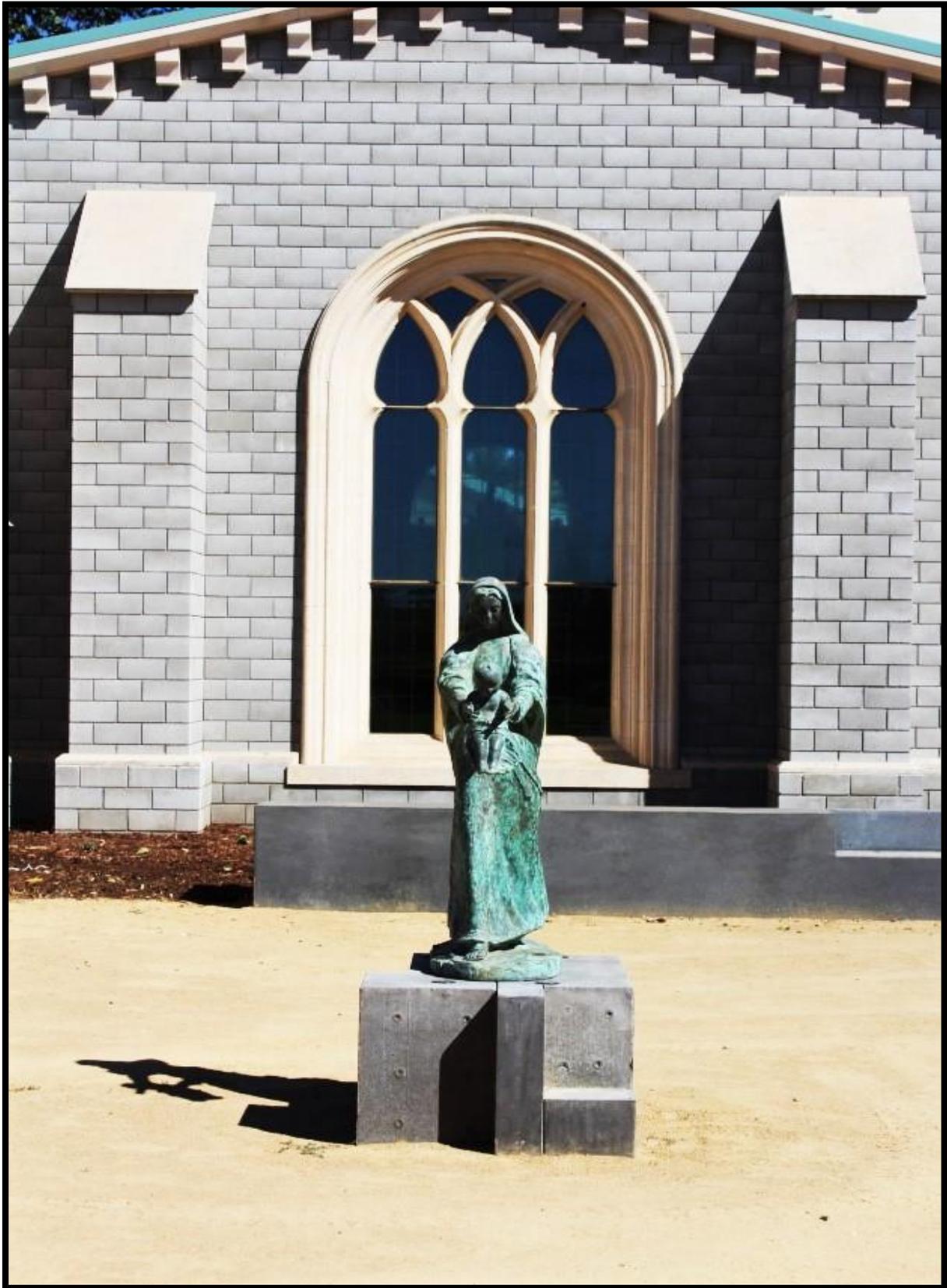
The Fourth and Final Abbey Church, Vina



The Abbey Community at Liturgy in the New Abbey Church



“To You, O Lord, I Lift up my Soul, O my God”



Mary Presents her Son to the World

Abbey Church, Vina

Sculptor Father John J Kyne

