



FROM THE HEART OF

# The Pelican

NUMBER 6

FALL 2006



**Sr. Gertrude Gillette, OSB, looks on while Mr. Thomas Monaghan signs the paper deeding the land over to the Sisters for the new monastery.**

# Small Steps in the Lord

By Sr. Gertrude Gillette, O.S.B.

Dearest Friends,

Since we last wrote you, we've made many small steps in the Lord: we received the deed for our new property, the engineering plans for the road have been submitted to the county for approval, a new postulant entered the community, and a Benedictine nun from Brazil has come to help us out in our initial stages of this foundation (for more on each of these, see the *News & Updates* below). We are also awaiting a new member who is due to arrive in December. If all goes well, by Christmas we'll have 6 in the house. Praise God!

Looking back over the last 6 months—indeed over the last three years since our beginning—I am struck by all the little miracles that God has so kindly wrought on our behalf. Looking to the future, I could be overwhelmed with what awaits us in the next 15 months—till the time when we move into the new monastery! It seems that every week we hear that a new permit is needed (some as expensive as \$50,000 !!); or that we'll need more “fill” than originally planned (\$500,000 more!); or that the rising costs of materials in Southwest Florida has added considerably to the original estimate of the building project (1 million dollars more!). These can be rather daunting figures, that is, if one is not rooted in the Lord and his ways. The memory of all the little miracles, however, fills us with confidence that this is *his* project and not ours. So whether we are hit with another bill of \$5,000 or \$50,000 or \$500,000—we realize that, before God, it all amounts to the same.

As one dear friend recently put it: “It’s *his* problem, not yours!...If you act as if it were your problem instead of God’s, then you’re forced with having to solve all the difficulties and carry the burden. But if you act, confident that God will solve the difficulties, then you allow him to work through you.” So true.

So we do what we can as his lieutenants on



this project of making a foundation, without worrying about the outcome...that is *his* business. We wait for the miracles, and give him thanks when they come. This turns the venture into an adventure! A divine adventure! I encourage each of you to step back and contemplate the miracles in your own lives and give thanks to God for his providential goodness.

Let me once again take this opportunity to thank each of you for being there with us as we continue to take our many small steps till we move into the monastery....onward and upward, *for the glory of God!*

*Looking back over the last six months ... I am struck by all the little miracles that God has so kindly wrought on our behalf.*



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# Indeed, We Have A Deed!



**Mr. Monaghan, Sr Gertrude and Sr. Theresa chat informally before the signing of the deed.**

On September 12<sup>th</sup>, the feast of the Holy Name of Mary, Mr. Thomas Monaghan graciously signed the deed for the property at the new Ave Maria University site which will be the new home of Queen of Peace Monastery next year. Mr. Paul Roney, CFA for Mr. Monaghan, Mr. Mario Suarez, our architect, Mr. Vlad Rzyziw, engineer for the road, and other guests joined the Benedictine Sisters in celebrating this historic event.

We are truly grateful to Mr. Monaghan for the generous support he has given to our

monastery, which in turn has inspired (and will continue to inspire) others to step forward to help complete this project in a timely manner. God bless you, Mr. Monaghan and all those who have brought us this far!

## We've Gone Color!

*Well...perhaps I should clarify!*

*"We" nuns are still in the traditional black!...but as you can see, this issue of THE PELICAN comes to you in vivid color! Professional advice and the kindness of a printer who is generously donating our first color issue has convinced us to give it a try. If it meets with general acceptance, we will consider continuing publishing future issues of the newsletter in color. Your thoughts and opinions are therefore most welcome.*

**Below: Jim Colosimo, Vlad Rzyziw, Mario Suarez, Sr. Scholastica, Tom Monaghan, Sr. Gertrude, Sr. Theresa, and Paul Roney gather outside Mr. Monaghan's office to celebrate the historic event for Queen of Peace Monastery.**



# News & Updates

By Sr. Theresa Scheuren, O.S.B.



**Sr. Placida**

## Welcome Sister Placida & Denise Miller!

There is an old saying that all good things come to those who wait. We and all of you who have been praying for us have been waiting for God's answer to our prayers for new sisters. *Ecce!* Sr. Placida dos Santos, a professed Benedictine Sister from Petropolis, Brazil, arrived on September 13<sup>th</sup>. She and Sr. Gertrude have known each other since their days together at Santa Cecilia in Rome. Sr. Placida has generously agreed to stay with us for an indefinite period of time; while polishing her English, she is assisting us in the innumerable little ways involved in establishing a monastery for the glory of God in this small corner of the world. Thank you for coming, Sr. Placida!

Denise Miller arrived from Whidbey Island, WA, to join the community as a postulant on October 1<sup>st</sup>, the feast of St. Therese. Denise is a licensed marriage and family therapist who recently completed her



**Denise Miller**

Ph.D. in psychology. Denise provided counseling for many years to sailors, marines, soldiers and their family members, in various locations throughout the military – includ-

ing a 4-year stint in Germany. She is now learning the art of community life under the Rule of St. Benedict, including all the intricacies of singing the Office—always a challenge for the newcomers. Denise brings the number of our little band up to 5....a 5<sup>th</sup> star in our 5-star community!

## A Team Is a Team Is a Team!

Mr. Jim Colosimo, our volunteer fund raiser for the new monastery, has joined forces with Mr. Robert Allen to make an unbeatable team for QoP Monastery. Bob is a friend of Benedictines around the country and has assisted them in many successful fund raising projects. Bob and I worked together at St. Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, CA for many years, so we are old friends. We are delighted to have Bob's professional help in this important undertaking and we thank both Bob and Jim for their genuine interest in making this project a success! Ever upward, ever onward!



**Jim Colosimo welcomes Robert J. Allen to the development team.**

## Progress Is Being Made!

The engineering plans for construction of the road were submitted to the county for approval in mid-September. We are told that the first comments by the county will be made by mid-November, at which point we can submit the plans for the monastery itself. Shortly after that, bids will be taken for the construction of the monastery. There seem to be a million details and a million hoops to jump through, but we'll just keep jumping until everything is achieved. Please keep your prayers coming in, as they are a great source of support to us.

## Retreat in NM



**Christ in the Desert Monastery, NM, was the site of the Sisters' retreat in June.**

“Just Another Perfect Day in Paradise”...is the way that the Neapolitans of SW Florida describe life (for most of the year) in this part of the world. However, this summer we (Sisters Gertrude, Theresa, and Scholastica) experienced another part of this country that can also be classified as “Paradise.” In June, we traveled to the northwest corner of New Mexico to the monasteries of Christ in the Desert and Our Lady of the Desert. We were in for a lovely surprise in the vast and colorful landscape of gigantic mesa cliffs and desert scrubs, cut in two by the Chama river which mercifully adds movement and green edges to the desert starkness. The view of God's world from the two monasteries has to be among the most picturesque on planet earth, matched only by the wonderful hospitality shown us by Mother M. Benedicta and Abbot Philip and their respective communities. As retreatants, we spent the week in silence, solitude and prayer, joining either community for their Office, which included a walk under the starry sky at 4 AM as we made our way up to the chapel to sing Vigils, or during the day taking long walks to commune with God through the incredible beauty which met us at every turn. At the end of the week, we spent time with the two communities and began a spiritual friendship which we trust will grow over the years. Thank you, Lord!

## California Soujourn

After our retreat, Sister Gertrude and I headed to California to visit family and friends,

which included making several presentations on the history of monasticism to groups of friends in Orange, San Leandro, San Diego, Oceanside, and Coronado. Among my highlights was visiting my “home” monasteries of St. Lucy's Priory and St. Andrew's Abbey.

Sr. Gertrude's highlight was the reception into the Church of 90-year-old Virginia Davidson, the mother (and mother-in-law) of her dear friends Bill and Carolyn Davidson, in which she played a small but dramatic part on the penultimate day of her visit to San Diego. It all started with a surprise (but long hoped-for) affirmation at the breakfast table that she wanted to become Catholic. Eight hours later (and on the feast of the Sacred Heart), she was received into the Church and made her first communion. Who says God doesn't work fast? For both of us, everything about the trip was thoroughly enjoyable and we returned to Florida refreshed for a new year of work.



**Virginia Davidson smells the bouquet of flowers presented to her by her son and daughter-in-law, Bill and Carolyn Davidson, in honor of her first communion.**

## Welcome Bishop Dewane & Abbot Francis!

On July 25th Bishop Frank Dewane was ordained as the coadjutor bishop of the Venice diocese to which we belong. The celebration was doubly special for us because Abbot Francis Benedict, OSB of St. Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, CA stopped to visit us on his way to the ordination of his friend.

Abbot Francis came with several members of the Bishop's family whom he knows well

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# News & Updates

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**Sister Scholastica, Bishop Frank Dewane, and Sr. Gertrude at the co-adjutor's consecration in Venice, FL.**

and who were naturally in town for the ordination. We were delighted to see him, to have the opportunity to have him celebrate Mass in our chapel and to acquaint him with the interim campus of Ave Maria University.



**Sister Scholastica, Abbot Francis Benedict, Sr. Theresa and Sr. Gertrude enjoying a visit on the eve of the new bishop's consecration.**

## Queen of Peace Launches Oblate Novitiate Program

Sr. Theresa began the Oblate program two years ago when she was approached by several women who were attracted to monastic spirituality and asked how they might use it to enrich their spiritual lives. She met with them every month for an hour to discuss the riches of the life and how they might apply these to their Christian vocations in the world. They have become extensions of Queen of Peace Monastery in our area. Another faithful attendee to the meetings is Priscilla McCaffrey who is an Oblate of Clear Creek Abbey in OK. Since the Oblates have been so faithful to their

commitment, we decided recently to admit them to candidacy and invest them as Benedictine Oblate novices. Please join us in congratulating them! If you are interested in our Oblate Program, please contact Sr. Theresa or Sr. Gertrude.



**Our Oblate Novices: Ile-Marie Sanchez, Susana Cleves, and Eleanor Trevison, at their recent investiture ceremony.**

## Health Watch for Sr. Theresa

The past 6 months have seen a decrease of energy for our dear Sr. Theresa. After our retreat in NM and our sprint to So. California in June, Sr. Theresa returned happy, but totally exhausted. Her tumors continue to grow and zap much of her usual vigor and zesty energy. Her big day's achievement is to get to daily Mass. The doctors say that the cancer will eventually find its way to a vital organ, at which point she can prepare herself for the Good Lord Jesus' call to come home.

One of the University students is reading her the book, *Love is Stronger than Death* by Peter Kreeft. It treats death as the enemy, the stranger, the friend, the mother and the lover. There are millions of wonderful insights on the meaning of an everyday reality. Sr. Theresa has also had quite a few good friends come to visit her since July, which always instills new vigor and life into our extroverted sister! Thank you, her dear friends, who stay in touch with her by phone, mail, and personal visits!

# EVAGRIUS ON ANGER

By Sr. Gertrude Gillette, O.S.B.

In the last issue of THE PELICAN, we shared Evagrius' concept of the *logismoi*, or the 8 evil thoughts which inflict us as temptations, or in their more rooted forms, as vices to be uprooted. Now we turn specifically to what he says about the vice of anger.

## *Anger: what it is*

Evagrius employs several terms for anger which translators usually represent in English by anger, wrath, indignation, rancor, the irascible, and the incentive power. Evagrius himself defines anger in this way: "Anger (*orgē*) is the sharpest passion. It is said to be a boiling up and movement of indignation (*thumos*) against one who has given injury, or is perceived as having done so."

He also says that an angry man is one who "stores up injuries and resentments." By its nature, anger is destructive: like fire among chaff in one's bosom, a ferocious beast, a wild boar, a viper's offspring which consumes the heart which gives it birth. It is a dangerous state which causes the monk to fall mightily, and to be banished by God himself. And one of the main characteristics of anger is that it irritates or agitates the soul, destroying its peace.

From its place among the *logismoi* and the definitions above, one would presume that there would be little good in anger. The nature of anger is however more complicated. Evagrius teaches that the soul has three "parts:" the concupiscible, from which flows desires of all sorts; the irascible, the seat of anger and courage; and the rational part, from which flows the soul's ability to conceptualize, make judgments and will.

Thus the irascible part (*thumos*) far from being evil, is a necessary dimension of the human make-up. As such, it is an "incentive

power" which shows its positive nature: a capacity which enables a person to stir up a degree of energizing power in order to face and overcome some perceived obstacle. When this energizing power is exercised as a virtue it is synonymous with *courage*. The perceived obstacle or danger often looms "large" and threatening, and so the incentive power as it were expands the inner soul and instills into it a kind of exaggerated "largeness" in order to go against the danger feeling that it is a quasi "match" for the ensuing struggle.

*Although correction may be justified the use of anger in correction is not. Do not react in anger against a disciple who has sinned for it is not good to wound yourself for the sake of healing another.*

Since for Evagrius the real battle takes place in the spiritual realm, it is "according to nature" for the monk to use his irascible faculties or incentive power in his struggle against the vices. Thus anger is to be used for good and has a positive value as such. "Anger (*thumos*) is given us to fight against the demons." The same appreciation for this type of anger also allows our desert monk to make sense of a line from Psalm 4:

Our incentive power (*thumos*) is also a good defense against this demon [of impurity]. When it is directed against evil thoughts of this kind, such power fills the demon with fear and destroys his designs. And this is the meaning of the text: "Be angry and sin not" (Ps. 4:4). It is useful to apply to the soul this medicine [of anger] in temptation.

Thus Evagrius teaches that we should distance ourselves from the evil suggestions which enter our minds and to realize who or what is presenting them to us. Then we can turn our anger on the evil spirits and rebuke them (in terms from our own day): "You can take that suggestion back to hell with you!" (Or some such words).

Because of its ability to be used for good or evil, Evagrius compares the incentive power

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## Will or Living Trust

*“Be strong and courageous, all you who hope in the Lord.” Ps. 31:24*

**By Robert J. Allen**

Planning is an act of Christian stewardship and it is one way you can respond to God’s gift to you. As we approach the season of Advent, a season of Hope, we should ask ourselves two questions: What do I own? And what owns me? *A great peace of mind comes from realizing that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to save us.* This is the reason he came, not to judge us, but in his love to save us.

We are faced with two basic unknowns: When will we die? And will we become incapacitated? As good stewards, we are

expected to act responsibly by creating a WILL or in some situations, a Living Trust.

Everything we have is a gift from God. *We should be good stewards of these many gifts which he has entrusted to us—including our material wealth—and make arrangements to care for our estate. In this way, we assure those we love as well as those charities we are passionate about that the fruits of our hard work and good stewardship will be passed on as we intend they should be.*

Act today, seek competent legal advice, and move forward in your activities to provide for others. Be good stewards. *You will then hear the Lord say: “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the glory of your Lord.”*

## EVAGRIUS ON ANGER

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(*thumos*) to a watchdog. As a virtue, a power under our control, anger is a kind of watchdog, trained to attack the wolves (demons). But if the power in anger is misused and turned on other men, then the dog becomes destructive: “So we must keep this watchdog under careful control, training him to destroy only the wolves and not to devour the sheep and to show the greatest gentleness towards all men.”

Now if demons are the proper object of anger, our fellow brothers and sisters certainly are not. To direct anger against them is a total misuse of the incentive power. The demons are the ones who suggest that the anger which has been given us precisely to be used against them be turned instead on our fellow man. Evagrius’ language is even stronger: The demons “force the indignation against its nature to fight human beings...making it (*thumos*) a traitor to the virtues.” This passage I think makes it quite clear that *thumos* can be used for good or ill, depending on its object. What is important is that Evagrius thinks that it is never appropriate to use anger against another human being. He believes that one can always find some way to speak or act which avoids showing anger.

A corollary to the idea that anger should

not be used against our brothers and sisters is found in the teaching on correction. Although correction may be justified, the use of anger in correction is not.

Do not react in anger against a disciple who has sinned, for it is not good to wound yourself for the sake of healing another; but correct him for the good with patience. For a physician heals the disease, but is not irritable towards someone who is un-willingly sick. When a physician applies the knife, he does so without anger; so when a teacher rebukes, let him not mix anger with the rebuke.

Thus we have learned that anger (*thumos*) is a power within us to be used for good or evil. When used in the battle for virtue, it has a positive value. But when directed towards human beings, even to correct them, it is a misdirection of the power and is therefore evil. Whether anger is a mere *logismos* (suggestion or temptation) or has already taken root in the soul and has become a vice, depends on whether the monk is successful or not in overcoming the initial evil suggestions. As we have seen, knowing the origin of the *logismoi* is beneficial in preventing them from developing [rather than going any] further. In the next issue, we will discuss Evagrius’ perception on how anger arises and then present some of his remedies for healing it.