

# CHRONICLE – May to November, 2016

## MAY/JUNE

From May 30<sup>th</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> we welcomed Damon Anderson of Swanzey, NH, Cary Howie of Ithaca, NY, and Daniel Frank of Sunderland, VT into the seven-day Monastic Living Experience that we host twice yearly.



l to r, Daniel, Cary and Damon

## JULY

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, the Saturday of St. Benedict's weekend, Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge of the Charlotte, Vermont Congregational Church gave a faith-inspired and challenging presentation addressing the escalating rash of gun violence that has been gravely wounding our nation and society. The focus of her talk was: "Responding to Gun Violence as Recipients of God's Grace." Upwards of a hundred people, who had come to celebrate St. Benedict's Day with us on Sunday, filled our Visitors' Center for the afternoon presentation.



Rev. Susan Cooke Kittredge

## SEPTEMBER

Brother Richard participated in the world-wide Congress of Benedictine Abbots, Abbesses, Priors and Prioresses in Rome which was in session from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>. The Congress of leadership persons from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Americas meets every four years to take a pulse of monastic life as it is lived today and to look forward to the challenges and prophetic witness that we are called to live in the years ahead. The North American abbot of Conception Abbey in Missouri, Gregory Polan, was elected the new Abbot Primate for a four year term. He succeeds Abbot Notker Wolf of the German monastery of St. Ottilien who has offered inspired leadership for twelve years.



Brother Richard with Pope Francis

## OCTOBER

With much joy we welcomed three of the Trinitarian Nuns of Suesa, Cantabria, Spain who were able to be with us for twelve days from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 11<sup>th</sup>. This is the fifth encounter between our two communities over a period of six years. Sisters María (Prioress), Esther, and Yolanda came for a time of inter-community exchange and sharing of experiences that foster our common desire for authentic



l to r, Sister Esther, Sister María, and Sister Yolanda with the brothers

monastic dialogue among small monasteries of women and men. On Saturday, October 8<sup>th</sup> the Sisters hosted an informal gathering of seventy-five friends and neighbors in our Visitors' Center which began with sharing "churros" (a Cantabrian fried pastry) and Spanish hot chocolate both prepared by the Sisters.

Brother Richard and brother Placid represented our community at the semi-annual meeting of Benedictine and Cistercian monks and nuns from the New England region. The nuns of St. Scholastica Priory in Petersham, MA hosted representatives of the eight monasteries who were able to attend.

## NOVEMBER

The annual retreat for the board members of Dismas of Vermont took place the second weekend of November. We brothers hosted the twenty-five board members in our guesthouses and Visitors' Center. The outreach of Dismas plays a selfless and remarkable role in offering alternative avenues into the future for persons leaving incarceration from Vermont correctional facilities. The four Dismas Houses in the state, along with their staff, residents, and committed volunteers, are dedicated "to reconciling former prisoners with society and society to former prisoners, through the development of supportive communities in a family setting".

On November 16<sup>th</sup> our Sister Fidelina Monzalvo from Cuernavaca, Mexico came to be with us for a two week visit. Sister Fidelina was the first Mexican Benedictine sister that we met on our first visit to Mexico in 1976 when God's grace brought us together in what has become an enduring friendship of over forty years. It was a joy to welcome her to Weston once again. A woman with considerable leadership skills and a compassionate heart she has served two six year terms as prioress over the years as well as offering guidance and support in other capacities within the congregation of 180 sisters. Sister Fidelina was prioress when our two communities chose to establish and build the Centro Guadalupe in Cuernavaca, Mexico in 1983. The retreat center hosts groups of North Americans seeking to experience the living faith and day-to-day realities of people the sisters serve and have befriended. It is also a place of retreat and encounter for various ecclesial and Church base-community groups that value the sisters' hallmark hospitality and gospel witness. ■



Sister Fidelina