



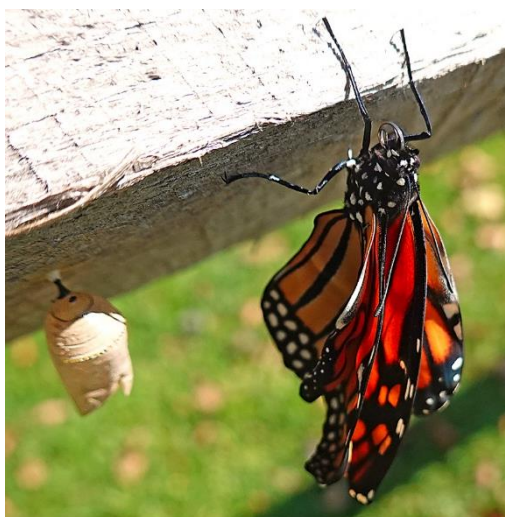
A Miracle Every Day

THERE HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE in the number of Monarch butterflies at the monastery this year. We'd like to think it has something to do with the new perennials that were planted by brother Alvaro last year which are part of the milkweed family and are very attractive to the Monarchs.

In September we noticed Monarch caterpillars chewing the leaves of the milkweed plants—their favorite food. Then chrysalises began to appear on surrounding shrubs and on our split-rail fence. Two of the chrysalises began to show signs of inner activity and we started to watch them daily. Eventually a newly emerged Monarch butterfly sat clinging to the fence rail right next to its empty chrysalis. It had just come out of its chrysalis and clung to the rail with its front legs. Within ten minutes it started to unfold its rear legs and then its wings. Soon it began to move its wings to let them dry in the gentle breeze. Finally, it extended and retracted its proboscis.

Returning to see it thirty minutes later—it was gone. As I walked from the fence into the backyard several Monarchs began fluttering around me. One came close to my face circling in front of me.

I whispered: "Thank you!" Thank you for letting me experience a miracle of life today. ■



The metamorphosis of the Monarch butterfly from its chrysalis