



Brothers preparing the garden in springtime.

Stability and Change

- *brother Columba*

WHEN VISITORS FIRST ARRIVE AT THE PRIORY THEY are frequently surprised by the number of activities and varieties of work that engage the brothers. Both continuity and change have characterized work at the Priory since the days of our founding. Abbot Leo instructed the Community to follow as closely as possible the teaching of the Rule of Benedict. The Rule simply states that “Monks should live by the work of their hands.” As a monastic community, the brothers are committed to Obedience, Stability, and Common Life (*Conversatio Morum*). A first impression might be that Stability means ‘no change’!

In fact, the commitment to Stability has made it possible for the brothers to embrace the variety and changes of work opportunities discovered in the place where we live, the brothers we live with, and the friends who surround us. The changing seasons, our wilderness environment, and creative hands of brothers and friends have made it possible to live “by the work of our hands”, as the Rule of Benedict requires, flexibly and creatively.

Working on the land, in the garden and forest, practicing the crafts of pottery, woodworking, calligraphy, tending the sheep, chickens, rabbits, bees and pigs, caring for the guest houses and welcoming guests and creating music to celebrate this great variety of work in prayer – all these indicate change facilitated by a Stability that is faithfulness to this place and community. ■