

BROTHER VISITOR'S NEWSLETTER

31 December 2024



Our SFNO Vocation team and Contacts on the Advent Retreat in sunny Scottsdale recently

PRAYERS REQUESTED FOR

- The blessings of peace and health in the new year;
- The grace of the Christmas season;
- Safety, rest and refreshment for staff and students;
- Needs of our community directors;
- Healing for Chris Brady, Ron Gallagher, Bill Hughes, Paul-André and Walter Durham;
- Those in hospice care;
- Healing and justice for survivors of abuse and those accused;
- Our young Brothers;
- Those discerning a religious vocation.



John O'Neill and Melvin Pelton caught the Christmas cheer and spirit

My travels and assorted news...

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at MLS with garland strung across the rafters of our covered walkways. Bright trees inside and outside light up the darkness. After many misty days of rain, the sun has come out to reveal vineyards verdant with moss and grass. It's a crisp New Years.

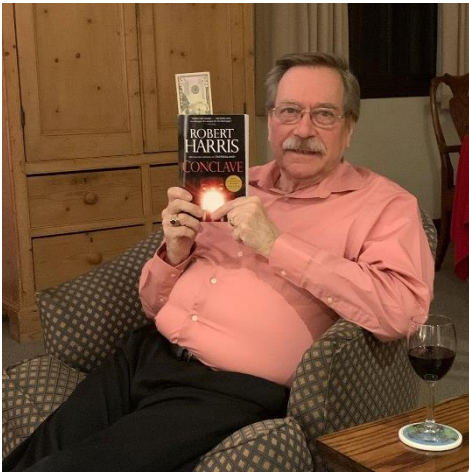
Leading up to Christmas, **Paul-André Durham**, **John O'Neill**, and I assisted **Stanislaus Campbell** in preparing the main chapel for our Christmas season celebrations. We hung banners, arranged 40 poinsettias, and set up the manger. Now I have an appreciation for all the behind-the-scenes effort that goes into creating a beautiful and inspiring space. The evening began with carols at 8:30 pm followed by liturgy at 9:00 pm. The chapel was filled with many families. After Mass, the Brothers hosted a reception with hot drinks and Xmas cookies for the congregation. Many commented that coming to Christmas Eve Mass at the Mont is a longstanding family tradition.

On Christmas morning, we enjoyed a special breakfast and joined the HFC for a sumptuous Christmas prime rib lunch!

*“My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the LORD.
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”* PS 84:2

The Founder ends his *Meditations* for the year with three days of self-reflection; challenging us to consider our relationship with God, our Brothers, and our students. DLS wrote there is little union sometimes in community because *“some wish to place themselves above others”* (91.2). He reminded us that the greatest of us must be the least by putting others first. In a forceful passage, he points to Paul's message about supporting others in charity. *“Pay attention to this word, support, it shows that we must suffer from one another. Bear one another's burdens... willingly and charitably”* (91.2).

My own experience is that a secret to communal life is the grace of letting go. It's helpful to recall that it's not our job to change the other person. We control only ourselves. We can choose to drag around the heavy chains of pent up resentments and accusations against others or we can start the new year with letting down this false burden. May this be our prayer for the new year. Our Founder warned, *“If we lose community, we lose everything. Preserve it with care, therefore, if you want your community to survive.”*



Donald Johanson enjoying his Christmas gifts at his new community in Napa!

Miscellaneous...

Chris Brady had successful cataract surgery on the day after Christmas. Recovery has gone well and he's simultaneously preparing for surgery on the second eye this coming Thursday. Kudos to Denise Mancuso who prepared him a timetable for taking various eye drops for two weeks! **Ron Gallagher's** younger sister, Sharon, from southern CA, came to visit him last weekend. She shared many memories of visiting with the Brothers over the years. **Melvin Pelton's** great-niece came by and took him out to Napa Noodles. They had a nice time together. **Paul-André Durham** traveled to Los Angeles to visit his brother, Walter. **Martin Vu** is in Orange County visiting with family over Christmas. **Matthew Chiantella** and **Halen Gamino** are spending time with their families. An exhausted **Donald Johanson** arrived in Napa last week. He's been busy setting up his new office in the Finance Department, trying to adjust his body clock, and practicing his English.



The Provincialate community hosted all DLSI staff for their annual Christmas reception; Robert O checking on guests



Paul-André Durham prepared the chapel for our Christmas Eve liturgy



John Mai spoke about his book, *Escape From Vietnam*, in New Orleans



Brian Dybowski and me relishing desserts at the annual Mont La Salle Christmas Party



CNA's Brenda Cabrera, Ana Gonzalez, and Rosa Rojas prepared a feast for HFC



Valery An came from San Jose to visit with Richard O, Lawrence H, and Ricardo P

“Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” Colossians 3:17

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