



Brother Victor Kenney, currently on leave from Mt. Saviour, was among those responsible for tagging the ears of recently born lambs. Here, he records a tag number.



Brother Luke Pape and Brother Bruno Lane exchange the sign of peace during Mass.



Jeff Gouling/Courier-Journal

When ewes die or reject their offspring, Mt. Saviour's shepherds raise the orphaned lambs, give them away or sell them. Here, Brother Victor helps members of a local family carry newly adopted lambs to their car.

heads out to the fields in the early

On a long day's journey into monastic life

tin. "We're learning in some way that the acceptance of certain limits will set us free." The obedience to the varied rhythms of this structured life — rhythms of prayer and work, of bells and song, of seasonal change, of language and silence — promotes discipline and balance, as well as a freedom many people might not welcome: the freedom from self-will, a freedom of grace toward which the monk is always striving. "There's a difference between *willfulness* and *will-ness* to go along with God, creation, other people and to be one with them, in a sense," remarks Father Martin. After Vigils, for example, the monks return willingly to their private quarters to read and meditate. Some, he says, might doze or daydream, as I find myself doing as I wait for the appointed hour for Lauds on a morning when for me is insufficient sleep — and I consider myself a morning person. The apparent regimentation of monastic life might well mirror the strictures of life in the "real world," I reflect. Few of us on the outside, however, are free of the temporal limitations of work and family.

Terce

After, after breakfast and 9 a.m. Mass (also known as Terce — the third hour), I wait in Mt. Saviour's portico to speak with Brother Luke, whose daytime job is running the monastery's bookstore. He has promised to show me the studio where he now is able to spend two to three days a week working on his exquisite watercolor landscapes and occasional renderings of religious subjects. Brother Luke, 77, a native of Toronto, found his vocation relatively late in life at 42, after studying architecture and interior design, serving in the Canadian Army Medical Corps during World War II, working in sales,

designing stage sets, performing with a ballet troupe in Ontario and playing a role in founding the National Ballet of Canada. Over the years, Brother Luke has seen the community's numbers shrink significantly. "When we moved into these buildings in the middle '60s," he observes of the monastery's physical expansion, "there were 37 in the community." Now, only 13 monks live at Mt. Saviour, including Brother Stephen Galban, who inhabits a hermitage on the property by special permission of the prior. The monastery made what is known as a "foundation," a branch called Christ in the Desert, northwest of Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1964; the foundation has since become an independent priory. A second foundation in Montreal is now home for six monks affiliated with Mt. Saviour. While the decline in vocations has affected all forms of religious life, Father Martin speaks positively of the effects of Vatican II on monastic life. "It hasn't changed basically since the sixth century," he explains. "It remains a search for God. But the context in which the life is lived has changed radically." He cites the vernacular liturgy and *lectio*, a greater tendency to give responsibility to individual monks, larger numbers of lay people among the monastery's guests, and the tendency of the Church — and, by extension, the monastery — to be open to the world and reflective of its needs. Vatican II, Father Martin feels, had little to do with the general decrease in Benedictine vocations, which began to drop off 10 years before the end of the council. The decline in the number of community members has significantly affected the monastery's ability to engage in manual labor, however.

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