



Journal

November 2009



**STARCROSS
COMMUNITY**

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IS THERE ANYTHING WE OWE TO EACH OTHER?

I was sitting down to write about the changing beauties on the farm this month when I was brought the news of the slaughter at Fort Hood. It wasn't a time to focus on the Autumn foliage.

Of late it seems there are times when we are coming apart at the seams. We have been there before. I was 2 years old when some of the "New Deal" programs went into effect. My father thought they saved us from a revolution. I have come around to thinking he was right.

The first issue then, and now, is becoming aware of what we owe each other. An uncomfortable part of our present population would say "nothing." There was a recent gang-rape of a 15 year-old in the Bay Area. It went on for over 2 hours. There were many observers. No one intervened. They took pictures on their cell phones.

Fortunately, a much greater portion of our population believes we do owe something to each other. But there is a question as to how we handle the concern. Let the family take care of it? The Church? Government?

Recently our Holly "volunteered" me to speak at her college class on global non-profit leadership. Basically I think I was some sort of extra-credit. A few days before President Obama had said to a similar group at a Texas university:

Having come of age in serious times, you don't have a lot of patience for pettiness and bickering and the worn divisions of the past. Rather than arguing about whether, or how, we should do something, you'd rather just go out and get it done.

Frankly, I wondered if he was right about this sometimes overly self-centered generation. It turns out the president was correct. The issue of world hunger came up in class. The UN says one sixth of the world's population is under nourished. There were a lot of culinary students in the class. A lively exchange ensued. No one asked what we owed to the hungry. No one said it was some one else's responsibility. Their process was to become aware of the problem and marshal any and all assets to correct it. NOW! A few of the class want to get directly involved. I have been putting them in touch with groups in the field. I was impressed with them.

Veterans Day, November 11, was once called Armistice Day to commemorate the end of World War I. Before the 1918 armistice, November 11th was a day known in Europe as “Martinmas”, the feast day of Martin of Tours. Martin was a Roman soldier who, according to legend, one day encountered a naked beggar in a snowstorm. He cut his soldier’s cloak in half and gave part to the man in need. That night he had a dream and saw Jesus wearing the half-cloak. Martin became a symbol of the need for charity and hospitality in a cruel world.

I really think caring for each other at home and peace in the world do go together. Perhaps soldiers like Martin are a bit more aware of that.

Before dinner on the 11th we recite a Gaelic rune associated with Martinmas:

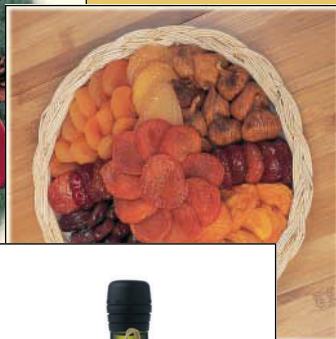
*I saw a stranger yesterday. I put food in the eating place -
Drink in the drinking place - Music in the listening place.
And in the blessed name of God, He blessed myself and my house,
My cattle and my dear ones.*

*And the lark said in her song:
"often, often, often goes the Christ in the stranger's guise."*

This is a good season to listen for the lark’s song.

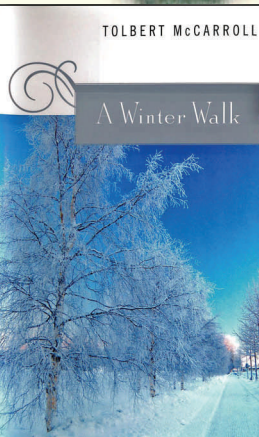
Your brother, *Toby*

WREATHS AND FRUIT AND OLIVE OIL . . . GIFTS, GIFTS, GIFTS



You should have received your Holiday gift flyer by now. Please consider giving gifts that also help others and are much appreciated by those who receive them.

The wreaths are beautiful, the fruit is delicious, the olive oil is GOLD MEDAL, and Brother Toby’s *A Winter Walk* is a lovely way for anyone to journey through December.



This book has become a part of many peoples spiritual path in December. More reader clubs, church classes, spiritual growth groups are using it this year than ever before and it is an annual experience in an increasing number of families who, like Bill Moyers see in Brother Toby “a kindred spirit.”

A good read anytime, it is especially relevant as daily December readings.

If you would like to order on line, our new program is *almost* flawless. The link is http://starcross.org/gift_shop.htm. Thank you for supporting us in these challenging times. We are truly grateful.

FOR A DAY BE PART OF THE ANCIENT STORY OF THE OLIVE!

Saturday, Nov. 21 9am-5pm



It's that time of year again. As the leaves turn colors, so do the olives. Gradually the dark green fruits brighten and develop a burgundy glow. It darkens covering the whole olive. Eventually it turns black. We harvest when the olives are a beautiful mix of colors. We're hoping for nice weather on Nov. 21st as our intrepid volunteers strap on their "belly buckets" and head for the fields.

The process goes like this. You reach into the tree and pull the branch toward you sliding your fingers along the stem as if you were milking a cow. The olives pop right off and land in the bucket at your waist. When the bucket starts getting heavy, you empty it into one of the bins set up in the row. The bins are continually picked up by a golf cart and trailer rig and hauled to the barn. They are



off loaded from the cart and voila! Within a couple of hours, the fresh oil appears.

Want to volunteer? Lunch provided. To register email Sister Julie sj@starcross.org or call the office for more information (707) 886-1919.

JANUARY IS AFRICA MONTH



Preparations are underway for an exciting time in Uganda this January. Sister Julie along with SKW board members Sandra Bodley and Charlene Powers, both nurses, will be visiting our House of Hope, the schools and the villages where our kids are to be found. But from the kids' point of view the best thing is the planned reunion picnic party. Having nearly 100 students at various schools with different schedules, it is not often they are all in one place at one time. Also, since the project began in 1998, many

young people have graduated and are now working and living independently. Thanks to the generosity of several friends, the party will be an opportunity for all of the "Old Boys and Old Girls" to meet again with their House of Hope extended family. The Americans have been warned, there will be dancing for all!

DINNER BEGINS IN THE GREENHOUSE!



The new little greenhouse takes on a special significance in these late autumn months. Brother Toby keeps planting salad materials, which are transplanted to a winter kitchen garden. He also has basil and other herbs. Pesto being a favorite dish around here, he guards his basil jealously from “frivolous use”! He also has some tomatoes and cucumbers for Thanksgiving and maybe beyond.

Every once in a while a police helicopter checks him out to make sure the greenhouse is not a pot factory!

This time of year the barn is the center of activities. Here a few days ago a circle of friends gathered to box up the dried fruit trays.

We have volunteer work days the first Saturday of each month (except January). If you would like to join us, we work from 10-4, and usually people bring a lunch.

If you are planning to come, please call the office at 707-886-1919.



If you are within range, head for the

STARCROSS CHRISTMAS FAIRE

Saturday Nov. 28. 9am-5pm

1902 Farmhouse and Barn

34500 Annapolis Road in Annapolis

Our premium wreaths. Sister Julies Gold Medal Olive Oil. Limited *Olio Nuovo*. Olive oil-tasting. Gourmet dried fruit trays. Sister Marti's Lavender Body Oil. Lavender bunches. Shaker culinary herbs and teas from our friends in Maine. A *Winter Walk* and other books by Brother Toby. Our Autumn Blend of apple butter and other goodies. You can wander the fields. People will be around to answer questions. For more information (and directions) call (707) 886-1919.