



STARCROSS
community

34500 Annapolis Road
Annapolis, California 95412
(707) 886-1919 • Fax (707) 886-1921
e-mail: community@starcross.org
Website: www.starcross.org

Sharings

Spring 2011

Brother Toby: ENTERING THE DIGITAL AGE — very slowly

When I was a young boy I walked along a dusty road to school. There was a General Store at the crossroad. On the store's porch there were always some old folks sitting and watching those going by. I had the feeling they had something to do with seeing that everything moved along in town. I hope that was right because now I am an old guy sitting at a crossroad and privileged to see something of many people's life journeys. But the crossroad is not in a small town. It is in a country called "Cyberspace" and I don't speak the language very well!

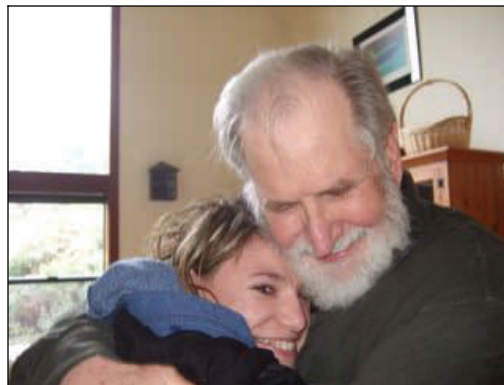
From February until Easter I sent little spiritual stepping stones from time-to-time to those who have given us their email address. The response has been quite positive, for which I am grateful. And, people have often spontaneously responded with something from their own journey and dreams. I will try to repeat this 3 or so times a year.

By request, we are also: (1) mastering the technology to put videos from Starcross on YouTube, showing seasonal changes, reflecting the relationship of nature to spiritual growth etc. (2) Using our website to explore specific topics (e.g. *Striving for Balance and Simplicity*, *Living with the Unexpected*, etc.) as presentations or interactive circles. (3) Also using the website for helpful matters in a new section called "Mindful Gadgets." The first one, "On Haiku", is already up at <http://www.starcross.org/pdfs/gadgets-haiku.pdf>.

From my experience in "Cyberspace" so far I think there are some spiritual issues for all of us in facing the challenges of present-day life. It is hard to put into words but I will try.

It is not dogma but growth that matters. We are all surrounded by people unfolding each in his or her own way — and when the time and conditions are right for them. It is an unfolding that should not be hindered by ideology. Both doubt and certainty are necessary about anything that will truly enrich our journey. There is a process to spiritual growth. We need to listen, to support, to affirm. But how does anyone find a direction? It is experience, not a belief or creed, that provides a spiritual compass. We could spend a lifetime exploring the experience of a single sunset. And, in that exploration is guidance about the next step to take.

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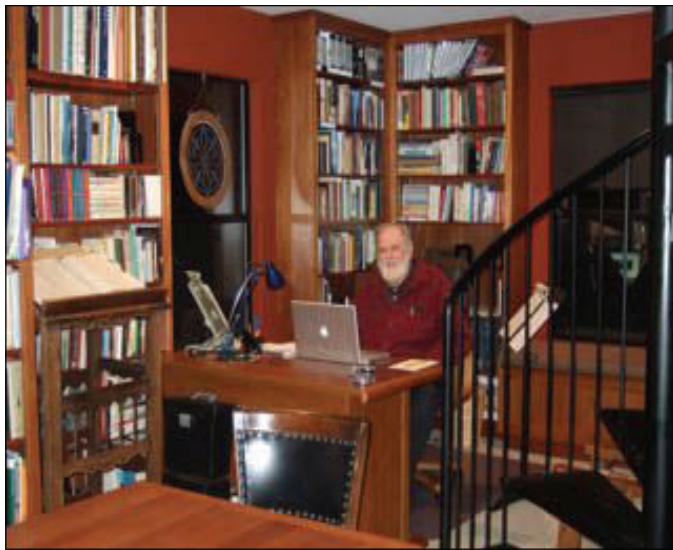
Brother Toby first met Loredana in a bleak Romanian ward for abandoned babies with AIDS. Her smile charmed him then and it still does now. Here they are 20 years later celebrating his 80th birthday.

(Continued from Page 1)

Observations like these only take on meaning within the actual circumstances of your life and my life.

You can help us in three ways. (1) Give us ideas about how we could be more supportive in your life adventure. (2) If you have an email address we would be very happy if you would send it to us. We never share our list with anyone. Just send us an email at community@starcross.org. Only 10% of our friends have sent us their emails and for a lot of reasons (including costs) we would really like to have more on the elist. (3) Be patient with us.

An Amish woman once told me she lives one step behind the latest fashions. Once she used buttons not zippers. Then when velcro came along she started using zippers. Our approach to things digital is something like that – well maybe 3 or 4 steps behind. But we are working on it!



INVESTING IN THE FUTURE — with help.

Almost every major advance in the story of Starcross has been possible because of bequests from far-sighted friends. Please consider putting us in your will. Here is some sample language that you might find helpful.

“I give, devise and bequeath to Starcross Monastic Community, a nonprofit corporation of the State of California, located at 34500 Annapolis Road, Annapolis, CA 95412, the sum of \$ _____ from (OR _____% of) my estate.”

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GRADUATE!

When we met Jackson in 1998, he was living with many siblings and cousins in his grandmother’s tiny mud hut in a fishing village on Lake Victoria. Their parents had died of AIDS. There was not food or clothing for the children, and certainly no money for school fees. Jackson, a personable little boy, worked hard to develop his artistic gifts and now teaches high school art in Uganda. Like others from the House of Hope, Jackson now supports the education of needy children in his extended family. For more information on Starcross Kin Worldwide’s program for AIDS orphans, contact Sister Julie, sj@starcross.org or 1-800-960-1500.



PLEASE HELP! We count on the help of our friends for most of our support, as we gradually increase our income from self-help, such as olive oil and Christmas gifts. This year the return from the fund appeal was not as much as we had hoped, so if you are able to respond and have not yet done so, please consider making a contribution. We are very grateful for the support we receive, which allows us to do what we can for others and to maintain this sacred space of Starcross.





THE OLIVE OIL IS READY!

*ORGANIC,
HEALTHY &
DELICIOUS!*

Sister Julie's 2010-2011 ORGANIC Extra Virgin Olive Oil is bottled and ready for sale! Obtaining

organic certification is very hard but it is the best way to provide objective proof that this oil was grown with the utmost care for gourmet taste, for health, and for the environment.

Our olives are hand harvested and cold pressed within hours in the Starcross barn. We've already won our third gold medal and second Best of Class award. Our Tuscan blend oil is robust with intense olive fruit flavor.

How healthy is our olive oil? Polyphenols are the antioxidants found in olive oil. We had polyphenol testing for the first time this year and got this statement from the lab: "The polyphenol content of this oil is over 600 ppm which is excellent. Therefore, this oil is in the range of the very best quality olive oils..."

Our oil is developing a loyal following and we can barely keep up with the demand. We may sell out again this year, but every year the trees grow and produce more.

To Order *Notes From the Song of Life* or Sister Julie's Olive Oil call 1-800-960-1500 or order online at www.starcross.org. Or, if you would rather send a check, *NOTES* is \$14.95 + \$1.35 tax + \$5 shipping = \$21.30. Olive Oil is \$24.50 per 375ml bottle, + \$8 shipping = \$32.50. Shipping costs are less for multiple bottles — call for prices. 10% discount for a case.

NOTES FROM THE SONG OF LIFE *A Spiritual Classic Again Available*

I've known Brother Toby McCarroll for many years. Some of you who are more recently acquainted with his writing probably have the image of a wise, peaceful man who speaks gently of lessons learned from nature and experience. A mellow man who smiles often; a sage who finds joy and meaning all around him. This is the Brother Toby of *SEASONS* and *A WINTER WALK*. This is NOT the voice you'll hear in *NOTES FROM THE SONG OF LIFE!*

Thirty-five years ago, Tolbert McCarroll was facilitating human potential workshops in San Francisco. It was a vibrant scene. His classes were full of idealistic young people like me (well, I was young then) who needed firm guidance and grounding. He could be hard-hitting. As former governor of New York Mario Cuomo put it, Toby is "both tough and comforting."

His words were direct, challenging us all to live our lives as if they really mattered, to hold on to the important things and let the rest go, to look honestly at ourselves and make the decisions our better natures deserve, to be the very best we could be. That advice is timeless, as valid now as when *NOTES* first appeared.

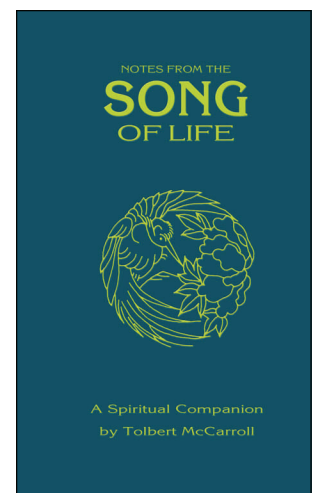
I am so glad the anniversary edition of *NOTES FROM THE SONG OF LIFE* is out at last. I love this book. Like many others, I have read it literally hundreds of times. But like a true classic, it never gets old.

Sister Julie

NOTES FROM THE
SONG OF LIFE
A Spiritual Companion

*Thirty-fifth Anniversary
Edition*

30 concise reflections
on fundamental steps on
the path through life



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Annapolis, Ca. 95412

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SPRING NEWSLETTER 2011

FINDING THE SACRED IN THE SEASONS

This is an invitation to one of our new quarterly gatherings designed for friends to use the space and experience of the Starcross Community to move along their spiritual paths. This is an “inter-path” experience recognizing that in the process of growth people are in many places at different times. All are welcome here wherever they are on any path.

WHAT: A flowing agenda facilitated by Brother Toby which includes; time alone (we ask that you not use cell phones, or the internet, etc.), simple chapel times, walks, presentations, awareness, meals, rest, and so on.

There are still openings for guests at the summer (**July 29-31**) and autumn (**October 14-16**) gatherings. There is no charge for these events. Donations to help cover expenses are appreciated. To sign up or get more information, contact Sister Julie, sj@stacross.org or 1-800-960-1500.

Here are some comments from guests attending the Spring gathering. “I love spending time at Starcross, I love the beauty and simplicity of the surroundings and of the community’s life style. I look forward to time for reflection, guidance and quiet.” And “I find Starcross a breath of fresh air in a very confusing and chaotic world.”

We are looking forward to sharing Starcross with you!

IN REMEMBRANCE



Our various memorial practices evolved out of our own experience of losing children and community members. We are glad to offer these simple acts of remembrance to friends in the hope that they bring some comfort and consolation.

VESPERS MEMORIAL BOOKS – At the evening Vespers service we read out the name and brief statement about the persons to be remembered on the anniversary of their birth or death. Simply send us the name, dates, and a sentence or two. There is no cost, of course.

OLIVE TREE DEDICATIONS – You can dedicate an olive tree in memory. There is a sign at the base of the tree, a living reminder of that person. We suggest a donation of \$100 to cover the cost of planting and maintaining the tree.

MEMORIAL GIFTS – Gifts to Starcross in honor of people are acknowledged with a card to the donor and to the family.

To arrange a memorial, simply contact Sister Marti at 1-800-960-1500 or sm@stacross.org.