



## **SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT**

The **Starcross Resident** concept has been on our minds and in our planning for years. Now the time has come to put it into operation. It is a very simple idea and also a bit radical.

The core of Starcross has always been people living in community under lifetime traditional monastic vows. This is an ancient model, but we don't think it should necessarily be the exclusive model of monastic life at Starcross in the future. It has worked very well for me, Sister Marti, Brother Toby, and others. This is what we are used to and what

will continue to be our lifestyle. But we also need another circle of dedicated people who know something of the essence of Starcross – folks who have walked and are walking separate but parallel spiritual paths to ours. It is a way of joining our life experience with yours.

This Resident concept is a work in progress, and our approach is very flexible. At this time, we see a Resident as living at Starcross for various intervals, helping with whatever needs to be done that they are suited for, and participating in the spiritual practices of the community to the extent they wish to.

We are interested not only in individuals, but also in couples because there are times (many meals, evenings, etc) when it is important for some of us to be separate. Residents need their own relationships and special times of nourishment as well.

So, what are we talking about? Depending on a person's capabilities, they would participate in a very broad spectrum of practical activities, fields and garden, or office, or communications, etc. – helping to make the world a bit better and this place on Earth a perpetual sanctuary for people and nature.

It is hoped that Spiritual Residents would choose to participate with us in the chapel at some times of common prayer and meditation, such as the evening Vespers and our Sunday service. But there are many other informal opportunities for spiritual contact, and daily times for individual reflection and meditation. There is nothing like an olive grove to turn on a person's inner lights!

As they gain experience, Spiritual Residents would participate in meaningful ways in the unfolding of the future of Starcross. We are hoping for a few spiritual pioneers in several categories. The first would be those who would be here most or all of the week. We could try it out for a month or so to see how it was working for everyone. We understand that each person or couple is different and there might be a need to consider a modest stipend, health insurance, etc. The second

category would be for weekend Residents who would, for example, be here from Friday evening until Sunday evening. Again, we would try this for a month to see how it was working. Finally, there would be residents who would be here just at certain times of year, like summer time.

Should this Spiritual Resident concept interest you, simply send an email to [community@starcross.org](mailto:community@starcross.org) and put “Spiritual Resident” in the subject line. Tell us a little about yourself and what draws you to consider something like this. The email will be passed on to me and I will contact you by phone or email – remember, at this stage, the process is extremely flexible! Thank you for thinking about it.

Wishing you, those you love, and this world we all inhabit every blessing and peace,

***Sister Julie***

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Starcross Monastic Community, [www.starcross.org](http://www.starcross.org), [community@starcross.org](mailto:community@starcross.org) , 707-886-1919

*“Starcross Olive Grove” by M. Schwalbenberg-Pena © 2009*

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We’ve been asked “What is expected of a spiritual resident?”

This is a reasonable question but a bit difficult to answer because each situation is unique.

A resident will live at the farmhouse. Other workers will be there. There is a quiet atmosphere respecting privacy. Of course, people can choose to cook and eat together and socialize if they wish.

Every day there will be 4 hours of work assigned, usually manual labor on the farm. The rest of the day is unstructured. If we are especially busy, the option of working extra time for pay may be offered.

It is expected that the resident will spend time each day in individual spiritual pursuits - reading, walking, meditation, writing haiku, art, yoga, etc. The resident is welcome to join Brother Toby and Sister Julie for daily Vespers in the chapel and for the Sunday morning service but this is not required. The resident can check books out of our library.

A resident will meet periodically with Brother Toby with the idea of moving forward with some kind of spiritual plan of life coming out of the discussions as well as experiences. Usually people come with a clean slate. However, if they are already working on a plan and it is valuable to them, then the discussions will take off from there.

What evolves is wide open. Some people stay for a year or more and maintain an ongoing relationship with Starcross. Some are here several months. They recharge their batteries and move on. Some find it does not meet their needs. This is not a “heady” or cerebral program. The life and the land are the guru.