

FROM: "Abbot Michael John" <abmichael-john@holythoughts.org>
DATE: Mon, 19 Feb 2007 15:16:01 -0600
TO: "Tom Lunt" <Lunttom@aol.com>, "Brother Daniel-Joseph Schroeder" <dschroeder003@new.rr.com>, "Brother David-Vincent Cotton" <RCotton@Krollworldwide.com>
SUBJECT: Reflection, Analysis and Prayerful hope for a new spiritual home
Dear Tom, Br(s) Daniel-Joseph and David-Vincent,

Peace and greetings to all.

First, I want to thank you "all", but especially Tom for the initial work done on identifying possible resources for grants. This looks very hopeful and promising!

Before giving a "charge or mission" regarding your committee work, I want to clarify a couple of things. These will fall under a number of subtitles.

Time:

It has been said: We have more time than money! At this point this is true. We need to take all the time needed to properly assess the potential and viability of building a new Abbey. I have stated in the past that I would like to see something on site in three to four years. This may be possible, and it may not. It will take what ever time it takes for us to properly prepare and move forward.

Convocation:

Because the time-frame may have to be moved out in terms of years before construction can begin, we will continue to have two convocations each year. I know this has been worrisome for me and others.....not having a second convocation each year.

Dedicated monies to the Abbey starting in 2008:

At the last convocation I made a motion to move to one convocation a year starting in 2008 and monies that would have been spent on the second convocation be sent to the Abbey to be placed in a special interest bearing account. This was passed by Chapter.

Because of the work that will need to be done and the uncertainty of how long it will take, I now ask that this motion be set aside and be brought before the Council and Chapter as an agenda item for this convocation.

The need for a Motherhouse:

This is not an option for Benedictines. While it is true that the majority of the community for varying reasons has decided not to live at the Abbey by choice, I do know of a growing number of members who if their circumstances were different and had not obliged themselves to other commitments, would very much like to live at the Abbey.

It is hopefully clear in our foundation documents that we all have responsibility to

support, sustain and continue to make viable the continued existence of the Abbey. We are a community who is no longer bound by brick and mortar in terms of location, but we are grounded in the principles of Benedict and this includes having a motherhouse that all can call their "spiritual home."

"Our" Mission Statement reads as follows:

"The Companions of St. Luke through the faithful living of: The Divine Offices, Benedictine vows, and Hospitality..... Employing a ministry of prayer, teaching, preaching and giving of retreats....Commit it's resources to the Church for the spreading of the Gospel through the use and wisdom of Benedictine Spirituality."

This Mission Statement is "ours" wherever we find ourselves, but particularly true at the Abbey because of its very presence. Over the last 7 years more people have arrived at our door-step and have been for ever changed because of it. There is an intensity created by critical mass that can not be denied. This has been true for non-members of the community, but especially for those members of our household who have been fortunate to visit their "spiritual home."

We have an obligation as one of only two Abbeys in the Episcopal Church to make sure that peoples in the tri-state area have a place to come to. More and more now, we have aspirants wanting to visit the Abbey before making a decision to become one of us. We have more people wanting to stay longer periods of time.

My hope, your hope:

I am convinced that "our" people need to be able to come home and celebrate our Anglican traditions as complete and as full as possible. Conception Abbey has been a "temporary place" for us to gather, but it is not ours and not our Spiritual home. We are limited on what we can do because of Roman sensitivities.

The size of the Abbey:

At convocation, I proposed that the Abbey be a two story building. The top floor be used by monastics and the first floor by guests. This building and those already on site, would accommodate our current numbers for convocation. But I believe it was Tom Lunt who suggested that it be larger, because we are growing. It is hard to argue against this logic as "we continue to grow." Therefore, I started over and designed a building that had three floors. Based on that drawing we had a local artist give us a rendering of what it might look like. I am attaching this rendering to this email.

Tom suggests in his latest memo that we might look at a "progressive" approach to building the Abbey. We build when we have the monies and then move to the next stage. There is much merit in this approach.

The last 15 years:

The last 15 years has been ones center on building a good foundation. The founding of the Community, IRS recognition, national church recognition, consecration, inclusion in the Church Annual, upcoming recognition of our community through a publication of Anglican Religious Communities coming out of Canterbury, development of our founding documents (customary and constitution) and varying formation programs

which have many communities in awe of our vision and growth.

Now it is time to turn our attention to our weakest link as a Benedictine community, and that is a proper "spiritual home."

Mission and Vision:

I charge the Committee with the responsibility of identifying constructive, positive, and stewardship sensitive avenues that will: continue to build on the progressive nature of the last 15 years, complement the unique "character and charism" of our Benedictine Community, bring us closer to the goals of our Mission Statement, and ultimately provide seasoned and responsible steps toward the ultimate goal of a "spiritual home" for our Community and church at large.

I believe that the steps you have taken and the work that Tom has already produced is well on its way to identifying possible avenues for funding.

I ask that one of you (maybe more) present to Convocation your initial findings.

I pray that this has helped bring some focus to our discussion.

With affection..... Abba

[Abbey rendering - Susie Kropa.pdf \(Binary attachment\)](#)

