



STARCROSS
community

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Sharings

Summer 2016

SISTER JULIE: ALWAYS HELPING, AT HOME AND ABROAD

If you've ever emailed or called Starcross, most likely you have talked to Sister Julie. It's no wonder that the California Legislature chose her as a Woman of the Year. She runs things in our office now, since our dear Sister Marti's recent death, while keeping up on the maintenance and care of our organic olive trees and our sustainably-grown garden, coordinating our young volunteers' schedules, and organizing our Farm Days. She's our



Julie and Teddy

resident olive oil connoisseur, garden guru, caretaker, chapel organist, mother, grandmother... and much, much more.



Julie and one of our young volunteers

Here at Starcross, she welcomes our young volunteers from all over the world into our home. Sister Julie ensures their safe travel to the farm, greets them upon arrival, orients them to Starcross, and makes herself available 24/7 to help them with anything they need. She shares with these volunteers her ample knowledge of the farm and her lifetime of stories about helping those less fortunate than herself. Sister Julie shows our volunteers the heart of Starcross, which makes Starcross *more* than just an organic olive farm.

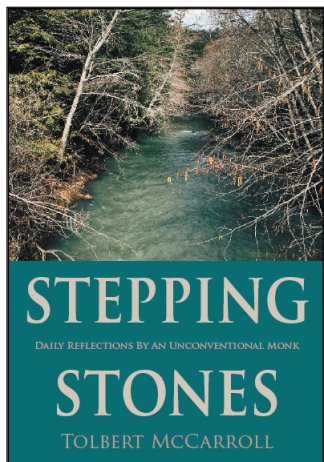
6,000 miles away in Uganda, she is also a major presence. She keeps in close contact with the 150 AIDS orphans we raised, providing them with advice on caring for children and the terminally ill, garnered from her years of experience with our adopted and foster children.

She is constantly in touch with our graduates who run the Tina Caring Association, an organization that reaches over 2,000 villagers a year with AIDS/HIV education and maternal health aid. This organization has been critical in providing much needed social service in a highly under-served area of Eastern Uganda. She also talks frequently with the current co-director of the House of Hope in Kampala, Teddy Namayanja.

Sister Julie keeps all this running smoothly and still has time to play with her three-year-old grandson Damien! And she always has a smile on her face!



AN EXCERPT FROM BROTHER TOBY'S NEW BOOK



10,000 Doors

Different people are going to pray in different ways and, as a result, there are many varieties of prayer. There is never one way that is best for all. It is said the Buddha announced there were 10,000 doors to meditation.

Many powerful personal and cultural influences are at work in the evolution of our spirituality. Choices in meditation and prayer depend more upon personal psychological inclinations, spiritual preferences, and cultural conditioning than on a person's theology.

The shape of the doors we use can explain differing prayer and meditation experiences. I can throw open great cathedral doors and see the light through stained glass. My neighbor sees the morning light through a crack in a broken window. There is only one sun, but the shape of our life experiences determines our awareness and understanding of what we see.

~

This excerpt is taken from Brother Toby's new book, Stepping Stones: Daily Reflections by an Unconventional Monk, available for purchase online at shop.starcross.org or by calling Starcross at (707) 886-1919. You can also buy the book or ebook on Amazon.com.

A TIME OF QUIET

Five o'clock: the end of a work day. We call it our "Contemplative Hour." It is a time of quiet, a time of peace, a time to embrace our varied spiritual paths.

Some of us gather together in the chapel for Vespers/Evensong to sing, listen to reflections, and sit in quiet meditation. Others meditate alone under the trees, go walking or running through the olive groves, write haiku, or simply watch the sunset. But, wherever we may be, we feel each other's spiritual support at this time of common prayer.

The ability to simply stop in today's crazy world is a welcomed gift.



VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

Visit our new and improved website: www.starcross.org. Now, you can easily sign up for our e-list, read Brother Toby's Friday Reflections, learn about haiku, and hear about current happenings at Starcross! You can also browse our books, olive oil, and holiday gifts at our updated online gift shop, shop.starcross.org.

A STARCROSS FOR EACH OF US

Starcross means different things to different people - and we like that! We encourage kind folk on every life path to join us in our work and in our life.



Many young people come stay with us, searching for something else, something different from the traditional career path. Many friends look to us when they feel something is missing in their own or in a loved one's life. Recently, a reader of Brother Toby's Friday Reflections reached out, seeking some kind words to help his elderly father work through the challenges of aging. This is far from unusual for us. We strive to respond to these calls for help, just as we strive to meet broader community needs. Young, old, rich, or poor, there is a Starcross here for each of us.

Often, our young volunteers come from overseas and find that there is much more than organic farming to learn here. Here are a few words from a young volunteer who spent three months with us:

"I will carry Starcross always in my heart and remember the simple lives of service and contemplation which the monks there have chosen to live... The atmosphere invites one to quiet their mind and consider their purpose on this Earth. This place provides an alternative to the hurried world; it is a place that helps us find our center."

~ Chris

CAN YOU LEND A HELPING HAND?

Here at Starcross, we are dedicated to living a simple life. We take no salaries and focus very little on our personal needs - so little, in fact, that Brother Toby wouldn't have new socks if I didn't go through his sock drawer myself and pick out the holey ones! Despite our efforts to be self-supporting through olive oil, book, and gift sales, we depend on contributions to continue our work. You can help in several ways:

You can make a donation by mailing the enclosed envelope, calling 1-800-960-1500, or donating securely online at www.starcross.org/donate-to-starcross.



You can remember Starcross through a provision in your will or trust, or as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy or IRA charitable contribution. Past bequests have enabled us to become more self-supporting. through planting our olive fields and opening our 1902 farmhouse to volunteers and spiritual residents.

Starcross Community is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) tax exempt organization. Contributions are tax deductible. Our Tax ID Number is 94-1687876.

You do not need to be wealthy to leave a gift to Starcross! Most of the bequests we receive are from people with modest means. **Anyone can leave a legacy gift. Anyone can make a difference for the future here!**

sister Julie

ESCAPE TO THE FARM

We often host Farm Days at Starcross: friends come and spend a few hours of working on seasonal projects, like bottling olive oil or picking blackberries, and then eat a family-style meal together. This is a time to reconnect with the earth and to get in touch with the simple spirituality of the land. Learn more by joining our e-list at www.starcross.org/join-our-list!



Picking blackberries



Bottling olive oil



Enjoying our farm-to-table lunch!

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STARCROSS MONASTIC COMMUNITY

is a small independent, autonomous, inter-spiritual community of lay-people living peaceful lives in the contemplative tradition and offering encouragement and affirmation to gentle folks on all spiritual paths.

Our home is in Sonoma County's coastal hills. We adopted and have been caregivers and advocates for children with unique gifts and needs, most of whom were born HIV positive. We also support individual children around the world and established HOUSES OF HOPE for children impacted by the AIDS pandemic in Romania and East Africa.