

Tree of Life 1955

Mat oil on wood 11'6" x 36'.

Mural in the former monastic refectory. The wall is divided by a central pillar into two bays. Prayer and work transform the world into a garden. On the right two monks are at work harvesting wheat and milling grain. In the sky St. Benedict's raven flies with the poisoned load across the disk of the sun. Rain clouds banished by sunshine move north leaving a rainbow in their wake – good weather for the harvest.

In the southern bay two monks work in the vineyard, one cutting clusters of grapes while the other is treading the wine press.

In the center of the garden the Tree of Life is growing; its cruciform branches reaching out into both bays. On the tree five clusters of golden fruit symbolize the wounds of the Crucified. Two monks in choir robes on either side of the tree offer the fruits of their labour, unleavened bread on a paten and wine in a chalice. These are the elements to be consecrated in the eucharistic prayer. The peacock under the tree, sign of eternal life, carries in its beak a scroll with the words *Arbor Vitae –Tree of Life*.

This monastic garden appears to be surrounded by the sea recalling Psalm 24:

“The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples,
It is he who set it on the seas,
On the waters he made it firm.”