

Current Projects

Collen Maura McGrane, OSB, writes: “In preparation for the virtual Medieval Congress I have been exploring the texts of Benedict of Aniane, Smaragdus, and Hildegard on the fourth step of humility. Thus far, I have surprisingly discovered that the texts are all strikingly different in their approach and sources. I am working to come up with a brief synthesis that will highlight some of these divergences.”

Hugh Feiss, OSB, reports that *A Benedictine Reader 2:1530-1930*, to be published by The Liturgical Press for Cistercian Publications, is at the editorial stage and should go to the publisher before the summer. He further writes:

“I contributed to Victorine Texts in Translation, vol. 9, which is at the publishers. There is only one volume still to finish. It has been a ten-year project, guided by an editorial board. I am the managing editor. I also finished a diplomatic edition and translation of Richard of St. Victor’s *On the Extermination of Evil and the Promotion of Good*, and it is now at the publisher also (who could be against a book with that aim?) And currently, I am finishing an introduction for Ronald Pepin’s translation of Caesarius of Heisterbach, O.Cist., *Dialogue on Miracles*, (ca. 1122), a mammoth exem-

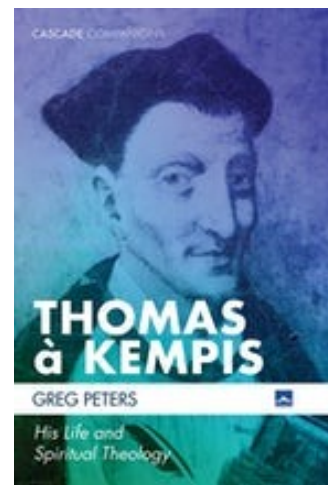
plar collection. I have learned a great deal in the process.”

Greg Peters, ObISB, recently published *Thomas à Kempis: His Life and Spiritual Theology* (Cascade Books) and is gearing up to host the 2021 James Lloyd Breck Conference on Monasticism and the Church, at Nashotah House Theological Seminary from June 24-25. Conference details and registration can be found at <https://nashotah.edu/breckconference>.

Jeanna Visel, OSB, recently received a Calvin Worship Institute grant to bring iconographer Marek Czarnecki to St. Meinrad four times over the next year, to serve as artist in residence while working on icons for a portable iconostasis for the school chapel. She writes: “It will allow me and a colleague to go to Marek’s studio in Connecticut for a week in the summer to do more focused tutorial work with iconography.”

•For the Atchison Conversations in January (held online), I gave a paper on the development of liturgical screens in the East and West. •I am also preparing a book review of Luigi Gioglio’s *Saint Benedict’s Wisdom* for *ABR*, and working with the ABA Board and the Lumen Christi Institute

on possible collaborative ventures. I have several writing projects on the horizon: a book chapter on animals in icons, and an essay on Saint Hildegard.



Mark Graceffo, ObISB, of the Newark Abbey in New Jersey, tells us that “about two years ago, before I started attending ABA meetings, I wrote an article titled, “Patanjali’s Kriya Yoga in the Rule of Saint Benedict,” which was published in *Spirituality Studies*. It’s certainly not hot off the press but perhaps someone might find it interesting.” He will send you a pdf file of the article if you contact him: graceffomark@gmail.com



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Change of Venue

The 2020 'Being Benedictine in the 21st Century Conference and Conversation,' co-chaired by Atchison Oblate Judith Valente and Erie Benedictine Linda Romey, OSB, rescheduled for May 28-30, 2021, will now take place virtually. The rationale for the gathering, as well as recordings of Zoom presentations by participants (including Kathleen Norris, Oblate, Judith Sutura, OSB, Jerome Kodell, OSB and others) is available at beingbenedictine.org. Sign up to receive email notification of coming conversations including one with monastic writer Tom Piazza on March 20, and "Nuns & Nones" coordinator Katie Gordon, on May 1. Both conversations will lead us deeper into the topic of living Benedictine life today. (Notice from Linda Romey, OSB)

Important Request

from Colleen Maura, McGrane, OSB, editor of *The American Benedictine Review*

 Please submit articles to be considered for publication in ABR. Guidelines for submission are available at www.americanbenedictinereview.org/submissions

Jacob Riyeff, ObISB, writes: "Aside from teaching, I've been focusing on creative writing lately, with several poems coming out and in production at different journals and my first translation of Old Norse appearing. But more specifically in the monastic vein: I've recently submitted three book reviews on relevant titles; a liturgical reflection of mine, "Advent—the Long Surprise" appeared on *Dappled Things'* blog; and my new book *The Saint Benedict Prayer Book* (a collection of little offices, commemorations, and litanies from various Benedictine sources) is in final production with Paraclete Press and will be out this summer. Work continues on the Blossius digest and the book on contemplation in the Benedictine tradition."

Judith Valente, ObISB, of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, writes that she "was honored to be one of the presenters at a retreat on January 31 commemorating the 106th birthday of Thomas Merton. The Theme of the retreat was "Heart Speaks To Heart: Thomas Merton's Witness To Friendship." Judith and Brother Paul Quenon, OCSO of the Abbey of Gethsemani spoke about Merton's letters and read excerpts from their new book due to be published this November entitled "How To Be: A Monk & A

Journalist Reflect on Living & Dying, Purpose and Prayer, Forgiveness & Friendship," with a Foreword by Oblate and author Kathleen Norris." •Judith also guided the online Advent retreat this year for St. Mary Monastery in Rock Island, IL and led online retreats on "The Art of Pausing: Embracing the Current Moment" for Mepkin Abbey in S.C. and the Chicago Cenacle Retreat Center. •She will also guide an online day of recollection for Oblates at St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, VA on March 13 and will lead an online retreat March 26-27 on "Thomas Merton & Dorothy Day: Wisdom for Crisis Times" for the Sophia Spirituality Center in Atchison, Kansas.

Linda Romey, OSB, reports on a couple of initiatives: She has contributed a reflection for the 2021 LCWR Reflection Book, "Navigating Uncharted Waters." <https://lcwr.org/item/reflection-books/2021>

• In her role as her community's web developer/designer and marketer, she is involved in a project undertaken by Benedictine Communicators to launch a video promoting Benedictine life and values. She writes: "Under the leadership of Siobhan O'Neill Meluso, Communications Coordinator for the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago, a group of communicators from Benedictine women's



monasteries have produced a video, "Benedictine Values, Modern Monasticism," that illustrates ten Benedictine values with photographs provided by 21 monasteries. 'When the pandemic began, I proposed the idea of a collaborative effort between Benedictine communities," explained Mary Anne Oehler, Communications and Development Director for the Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, TX. 'The seed was planted and support for this project grew. Through the efforts of many we are now able to highlight Benedictine life through this video. We have so much to offer the world, what better way to share our story.' Although Siobhan has been convening the group of communications personnel for a little over a year, this is the first joint project. Judith Sutura, OSB, a Benedictine scholar and historian from Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, KS, was instrumental in preparing the script once the group determined the values they would highlight. The technical expertise

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of Amanda Hackett, Communications Coordinator, Sisters of the Order of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN, and Susan Damon, Development Associate, Benedictine Sisters of Boerne, TX, took the submitted photos, added Sister Judith's narration and an instrumental track of the handbell choir of the Sisters of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN, arranged by Christine Mandelfeld, OSB © 1997, and created the final product. Other committee members were Jan Gull, Sisters of St. Benedict at St. Mary Monastery, Rock Island, IL, and Linda Romey, OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Erie, PA. The premiere of the video will take place during Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14. It will then be available on the websites of many Benedictine women's communities. You can view it on YouTube:

<https://bit.ly/2ZYm6Za> AND www.catholicsistersweek.org Watch it on March 8!

Edith Bogue, OSB, writes: "I presented 'Renewing Retreat: Annual Retreat in the Life of the Monastic Community' at the Generative Communities Colloquium XIII in January. A lively discussion of both possibilities and stagnation in our practice of retreat ensued. This paper was the first step in a larger project exploring emerging and potential models of retreat, both within religious communities and as external ministry. I am eager to hear ideas, opinions, and wild dreams from people who give monastic retreats, arrange for them, or have participated in one. Contact me and

and we'll connect from there."

edithosb@gmail.com

Tom Piazza writes that in addition to his article published in the December issue of *ABR*, another article on "Monastic Possibilities" will appear in the June issue. He goes on to say: "Still in progress is an article on the metaphors used to describe the monastic life. Also in progress is a study on membership trends in the Benedictine Confederation from 1880 to 2020. He is also preparing for a presentation in March for the "Being Benedictine" series of online conversations.

Daniel McCarthy, OSB will be teaching a new course at Sant' Anselmo in Rome in the fall of 2021—"Latin in English." He writes: "I encourage monastics from the English-speaking world who would like to dedicate themselves to studying Latin for an entire academic year here at S'A to come and join my class beginning October 2021. I have created this web-page for the course from which you are free to gather information.

<https://danielmccarthyosb.com/latin/> The Latin program will follow the system developed by Reginald Foster as presented in the *Ossa Latinitatis Sola: The Mere Bones of Latin* and its newly published companion volume *Ossium Carnes Multae: The Bones Meats Abundant*.

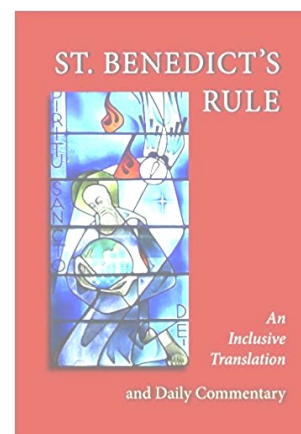
Raymond Studzinski, OSB, reports "that in the midst of lots of administrative responsibilities I did manage to finish an essay on Guigo II for a volume being prepared on the Carthusians: "Guigo II: A Master Teacher," In *Carthusian Monasticism: History, Society, Texts*, edited by Stephen Molvarec, SJ, and Demetrio Yocum. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications (forthcoming). I am not sure when that volume will appear. My next project is to produce an essay on monastic/spiritual formation which illuminates traditional presentations of monastic practices in terms of their transformative impact by drawing on recent research in neuroscience.

Aaron Raverty, OSB writes about his article in the *Abbey Banner* of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville: "The Gertken Family" 20: 3 (Winter 2020/2021): 14-17.) "The Gertken family, originally from

Richmond, Minnesota, lays claim to the nearly unprecedented distinction of eleven siblings embarking on consecrated life in the Order of Saint Benedict (Benedictines)—four as monastic priests of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, and seven as monastic sisters of Saint Benedict's Monastery, Saint Joseph, Minnesota—spanning the late nineteenth through the early twenty-first centuries."

A New Book

By Judith Sutera, OSB



Agatha Gertken, 1905-1986 (center right behind her mother), the baby of the family, was the only child who pursued her vocation outside of the monastery

Branigan, Renee, OSB. Book Review: *Balaam's Donkey: Random Ruminations for Every Day of the Year*, by Michael Casey, OCSO. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2018, in *ABR* 71:4 (December 2020), 458-459.

Feiss, Hugh, OSB. Book Review: *Various Sermons*, by Bernard of Clairvaux. Trans. Grace Remington, OCSO. Collegeville, MN: Cistercian Publications, 2020, in *ABR* 71:4 (December 2020), 467-468.

Frigge, Marielle, OSB. Book Review: *Even Though I Walk: One Woman's Journey of Prayer in the Shadow of Death*. Correspondence of Magda Heras and Ignasi Fossas. Trans. Elaine M. Lilly. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2019, in *ABR* 71:4 (December 2020), 463-465.

Piazza, Thomas, "Membership Trends for Benedictine Monks in Africa," *ABR* 71:4 (December 2020), 373-386.

Richmond, Donald P., OBlSB. "Art and Virtue," Saint Andrew's Abbey, *Valyermo [Benedictine] Chronicle*, Fall, 2020.

_____ "COVID Correctives." *Forward in Christ*, Fall 2020.

_____ "Diaconal Evangelism." *The Deacon, Our Sunday Visitor*, January / February 2020.

_____ "We Would See Jesus" (Advent Reflections). *Taste and See*, Canada: Anglican Renewal Ministries, December 2020.

Riyeff, Jacob. *The Saint Benedict Prayer Book*. Paraclete Press, 2021. (Forthcoming)

_____ Book Review: Eriksen, Janet Schrunk, *Reading Old English Biblical Poetry. Religion & Literature* (Forthcoming).

_____ Book Review: *Late Anglo-Saxon Prayer in Practice: Before the Books of Hours*, by Kate H. Howard. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2020, in *ABR* 72:1 (March 2021), 111-114.

_____ Book Review: Vivian, Tim. *Other Voices, Other Rooms and Poems Written in a Time of Plague. American Benedictine Review* (Forthcoming).

Sutera, Judith, OSB. *St. Benedict's Rule: An Inclusive Translation and Daily Commentary*. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press (Forthcoming, April 15, 2021).

Swan, Laura, OSB. Book Review: *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile* by Victoria van Hying. Oxford University Press, 2019, in *Magistra* 26:2 (Winter 2020), 95-96.

_____ Book Review: *Women Intellectuals and Leaders in the Middle Ages*. Edited by Katherine Kerby-Fulton et al. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2020, in *Magistra* 26:2 (Winter 2020), 96-97.

Visel, Jeanna, OSB. "Engaging the Tradition: Monastic Customaries as Memories of Ecclesial Identity." *ABR* 72:1 (March 2021), 49-

Notice

Next MR Newsletter, June 2021
Compiled and edited
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Comments/suggestions welcomed
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2022 ABA Convention

GIVE ME A WORD
July 7-9
St. Benedict Center
Schuyler, Nebraska

