

January 2025 Newsletter

ABA MONASTIC
RESEARCHERS



Edited by Greg Peters, ObISB



Current Projects:

Ephrem Hollerman, OSB

reports that along with progress on a book project on Mother Benedicta Riepp, OSB, the foundress of Benedictine women in North America, she continues to write regularly for Give Us This Day (Liturgical Press), and has a forthcoming book review which will appear in the *American Benedictine Review*.

Jacob Riyeff, ObISB visited Stanbrook Abbey in England in October '24 to offer two talks on the community's co-foundress Dame Gertrude More for the celebration of their fourth centenary. He is currently preparing an edition of Dame Gertrude's spiritual diary, *A Lover's Confessions*, with Dr. Emily Ransom. Jacob's second collection of poetry, *Be Radiant*, appeared from Fernwood Press in October '24, and his book *Contemplate: Toward an Expansive Heart* (on how the early western monastic tradition can help us see contemplation's importance in our neoliberal, consumerist society) is

forthcoming from Monkfish later this year. He is also completing an edition of the poems of an early Milwaukee poet, Bernard Isaac Durward. His last essay of 2024 discusses the "vanity" in the generative 'ai' moment in higher education, and his translation of the Old High German "Christ and the Samaritan Woman," likely composed in a southern German monastery in the 9th century, just appeared from *New Verse Review*.

Riitta Hujanen, is working as a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (CITER) at the Catholic University of Portugal in a project titled "Temporality, Liminality, and Literature: Carthusian Perspectives". This is a two-year project (02/2024 - 01/2026).

Laura Swan, OSB writes, "I continue work on our history: a scholarly version and a folksy version. I'm working on getting *Engaging Benedict* available as an e-book."

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Contributors:

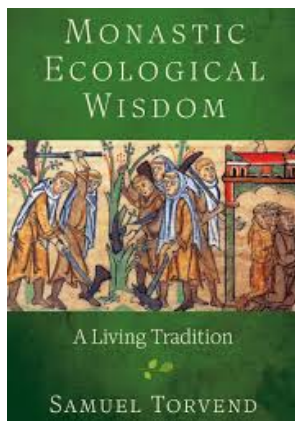
Ephrem Hollerman
Jacob Riyeff
Riitta Hujanen
Laura Swan
Joanna Burley
Samuel Torvend
Aaron Raverty
Julia Upton
Jeana Visel
Greg Peters

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Samuel Torvend, OlsB writes, "My book manuscript is now in the moving-toward-publication process with the Liturgical Press: *Jesus in Nature: A Monastic Christology*. This work, flowing from *Monastic Ecological Wisdom: A Living Tradition* (2023), focuses on Benedict, the Venerable Bede, Walafrid Strabo, and Hildegard of Bingen who, from different perspectives, write of Christ with the creation. We hope *Jesus in Nature* will be released prior to September 1, 2025, designated by Pope Francis as a "Day of Prayer for All Creation." The second chapter of *Jesus in Nature*, devoted to the study of Jesus' interaction with the natural world as presented in the gospels, was discussed by members of the Ecology and Liturgy Seminar of the North American Academy of Liturgy in January 2025. In March 2025, I will be in England for research concerning Anglo-Saxon monastic spirituality, visiting monastic sites from Northumberland to Kent as well as spending time in Lambeth Palace Library, London. As the newly-appointed priest associate for adult formation at St. Paul's Seattle, I am delighted to be serving in a parish that warmly embraces the riches of the monastic tradition present in English spirituality."



Aaron Raverty, OSB, reports two publications from the Abbey Banner: "The Indian Industrial School" and "Nicholas Black Elk."

The Saint John's Indian Industrial School for Ojibwe boys, most of whom were from the White Earth Nation in northern Minnesota, operated on the grounds of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota, between 1885 and 1896. Staffed by monks and other adults, the government-mandated school offered educational and job resources, but it was clearly traumatizing for many of the boys and their families. This article presents background, historical context, and ongoing efforts toward repatriation, reparation, and the healing of intergenerational dislocation according to the demands of social justice.

Nicholas Black Elk (c.1863–1950), a Native American Oglala Lakota healer (coming from a lineage of Lakota healers), experienced a traditional upbringing in South Dakota. Poet and amateur historian/ethnographer John Neihardt recorded his autobiography, *Black Elk Speaks*, in 1932. Black Elk fought in the Battle of Little Big Horn (1876) and Wounded Knee Creek (1890), embracing the Ghost Dance (1889–90). Baptized as a Christian in 1904, he became an outstanding Catholic catechist with a unique gift for harmonizing different cultural features, faithful to the end as both a Lakota and a Christian. In 2017 the Vatican authorized Nicholas Black Elk's cause for canonization, and he was named a Servant of God.

Joanna Burley, OSB states she is honored to have had an article published in the ABR December 2024 issue: "Amma Theodora Revisited: Wisdom for the Twenty-First Century."

Julia Upton, RSM, states, "I gave a presentation for the Liturgy and Cultures seminar at the North American Academy of Liturgy at Valparaiso University in January 2025. On February 1, 2025 I will give the keynote address at the diocesan celebration of the Year of Consecrated Life, "Packing for the Pilgrimage of Hope." I am preparing a paper for an International Conference on "Bible, Life, and Worship: The Liturgical and Biblical Movement in the German Speaking Area and the US in Comparison" in Trier and Maria Laach, Germany, June 2-5, 2025. My invited presentation is "H. A. Reinhold: A Pastor from Hamburg Impacts the Liturgical Life of the US." This semester I'm also teaching a graduate course Introduction to Sacramental Theology at St. John's University."

Jeana Visel, OSB plans to work on an article on the future of women's Benedictine monastic life and is pursuing a certificate in icon painting through the Writing the Light program associated with St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, working with Greek iconographer George Kordis. While most of the classes are online, some residencies are required, and she attended her first in Crete in August. She states that "It was wonderful exploring some of these ancient sacred images in their original contexts." Additionally, she has been asked to speak at Monastic Institute this summer on sacred images and the Word in the coming months.

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Greg Peters, ObISB, continues work on his book *Monastic Theology as Theological Method: The Superiority of the Monastery to the University*, scheduled for publication with Eerdmans Publishing in 2026. His article "The 'Reanimation Principle' of Edward Bouverie Pusey: The Re-Establishment of Monasticism in the Church of England" is forthcoming in *Anglican and Episcopal History*. He has also recently been named a Visiting Scholar at Wycliffe Hall in the University of Oxford.



Publications:

Riyeff, Jacob, ObISB. "So, a Chatbot Did Your Homework." *Plough*. plough.com, August 23, 2024.
--- *Be Radiant*. Newburg, OR: Fernwood, 2024.
--- "Christ and the Samaritan Woman." *New Verse Review* 2.1 (Winter 2025).

Huhanen, Riitta. *Monastic Perspectives on Temporality: Time is a Mirage*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-34808-2>.

Peters, Greg, ObISB. Book Review: *John Cassian and the Creation of Monastic Subjectivity* by Joshua Schachterle. Sheffield, UK/Bristol, CT: Equinox, 2023 in *American Benedictine Review* 75:4 (December 2024): 459-461.
--- Book Review: *In the Footsteps of the Lord: The Teaching of Abba Isaiah of Scetis* by John Chrysavgis and Luke Penkett. Oxford: SLG Press, 2024 in *American Benedictine Review* 75:3 (September 2024): 344-346.
--- Book Review: *The Sayings and Stories of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Volume 2: TH – Ō (Thêta – Ōméga)* by Tim Vivian. Collegeville: Cistercian Publications, 2023 in *American Benedictine Review* 75:3 (September 2024): 349-351.

Raverty, Aaron, OSB. "The Indian Industrial School." *Abbey Banner* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2024): 14-16.
--- "Nicholas Black Elk." *Abbey Banner* 24, no. 3 (Winter 2024-25): 14-16.

Julia Upton. Book Review: *Women in Church Ministries: Reform Movements in Ecumenism*. Edited by Margit Eckholt et al. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2021 in *Worship* 99 (January 2025): 87-88.
--- Book Review: *Liturgical Feasts and Seasons: Novitiate Conferences on Scripture and Liturgy 3*. Thomas Merton. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2022 in *American Benedictine Review* 75:3 (September 2024): 351-354.
--- Book Review: *Religion, Race, and COVID-19: Confronting White Supremacy in the Pandemic*. Stacy M. Floyd-Thomas. Pray Tell Blog [<https://praytelltellblog.com/index.php/2024/09/22/brief-book-review-religion-race-and-covid-19/>] September 23, 2024.
