

## Current Projects

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**Kathleen Norris, ObISB** writes about recent publications (see p. 3) and adds: "My big news is that I am co-editing (with Gareth Higgins, a film reviewer and columnist for "Sojourners) a bi-weekly e-newsletter on cinema and literature. Info on subscriptions is at [SoulTelegram.com](http://SoulTelegram.com). My future contributions will include essays on Emily Dickinson in film, and a look at the Hungarian director Bela Tarr as a contemporary prophet...

it is so exciting for me to have this new venture at my age (73)!"

**Samuel Torvend, Ph.D., ObISB**, revised his undergraduate courses in monastic history for online teaching during the January and Spring Terms, 2021. With good inspiration from Fr. Michael Peterson, OSB, (Saint John's Abbey), his students traced the educational, medical, and social assistance initiatives from the *Rule* to their impact on early medieval society. •Work on his sabbatical book project - early Benedictine engagement with the natural environment - continues in his anthropological and ecological analysis of Benedict's time in Subiaco. He co-edited and contributed a chapter on liturgical orientation toward care for creation in, *In Spirit & Truth: A*

*New Vision of Episcopal Worship* (Church Publishing, 2020), completed *For the Life of the World: The Essentials of Episcopal Worship* (Church Publishing, forthcoming, 2021), and published a review of Sean Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Seeing and Reading* in *Review of Biblical Literature* (01/2021).

**Demetrio S. Yocum, Ph.D.**, of the University of Notre Dame, shared this announcement. "Cistercian Worlds" is a two-day conference being held July 1-2, 2021 online and hosted by the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of York in England. The conference "aims to offer a forum for researchers to build upon existing modes of scholarship and bring together discussions currently occurring across disciplines. How did an initial shared world-view create many different Cistercian 'worlds'? What were the boundaries – real or imagined – of these spheres? Who composed them? In which ways did they extend, shrink, overlap and evolve? What approaches can be used to study them? The two keynote speakers are Professors Emilia Jamroziak and Constance Mews." The conference will conclude with a roundtable discussion including Professors Emilia Jamroziak, Janet Burton,

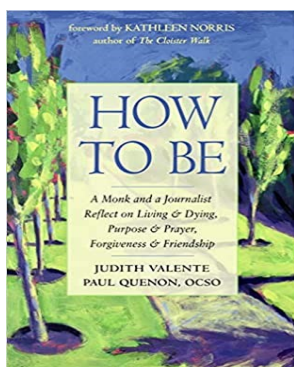
Martha Newman and conference participants. <https://www.york.ac.uk/medieval-studies/events/archive/events/cistercian-worlds/>

**Donald Richmond, DD ObISB** of Saint Andrew's Abbey, Valyermo, reports the following. He is "1. Working on establishing a national "Society" in the Wesleyan Tradition with SEEDBED. Various suggestions, upon request, submitted." He has "2. articles on Anglican identity released in *Taste and See* (Anglicans for Renewal, Canada) and pending in *Forward in Christ*." in addition to "3. an article on the Preacher as Poet released in *Forward in Christ*," and an "4. article on Liturgical Preaching, pending release in *The Deacon*, and one on Lutheran Identity in the *Lutheran Forum*."



## CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.

**Judith Valente, ObISB** of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, was co-chair of the "Being Benedictine in the 21st Century: Spiritual Seekers in Conversation" conference held May 28-30, and gave the opening reflection, "Finding Our Place in the Great Benedictine Narrative." •She co-led a workshop with Brother Paul Quenon, OCSO, at the 17th General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society on "Thomas Merton and the Spiritual Practice of Letterwriting." •She will also give the Tuesdays with Merton monthly lecture in August on, "Why We Will Still Need/Read Thomas Merton." •Her new book with Brother Paul Quenon, titled *How to Be: A Monk and a Journalist Reflect on Living and Dying, Purpose and Prayer, and Forgiveness and Friendship* (Hampton Roads Publishers) will be out in November. •She is the newly elected vice president of the International Thomas Merton Society.



**Hugh Feiss, OSB** writes: "I have sent to the publisher a diplomatic edition and translation of Richard of St. Victor's *De extermination mali et promotione boni*, and am following that up with a translation of his Sermon on Palm Sunday, which I will try to publish, though I don't know where. Both are in preparation for a monograph on Richard's theology of the Christian life, should I live long enough to complete it.

•I have some articles forthcoming (if all goes as planned) in ABR: June, 2021, a version of my talk at the ABA Convention; in December, 2021, 'Humility in the Life and Teaching of St. Hildegard'; and perhaps March 2022, 'The History of Benedictine Libraries.' •I have in mind a paper for the online 2022 International Congress of Medieval Studies, for the ABA sponsored section on how medieval Benedictine monasteries coped with crises (plague, war, internal dissent and so forth). I hope others in the ABA community will consider submitting a paper also.

•*The Benedictine Reader 1530-1930*, should be at the publishers by July 1. Several ABA members have contributed chapters." **Anthony Maranise, M.A., ObISB** (Oblate, St. Bernard Abbey - Cullman, Alabama) recently published his paper entitled, "Playing by The Rule: Exploring Sport Metaphors

in The Rule of Saint Benedict," in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary Sciences* (May issue). As an open access journal, interested parties may view, download, and read Anthony's paper by visiting the following link: <http://journalofinterdisciplinarysciences.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2-Playing-by-The-Rule-Examining-sports-metaphors-in-The-Rule-of-Saint-Benedict.pdf>. Alternatively, you may visit [www.journalofinterdisciplinarysciences.com](http://www.journalofinterdisciplinarysciences.com) and scroll down the page to the current issue to locate Anthony's paper.

**Aaron Raverty, OSB**, writes about his article on the Collegeville Liturgical Press in *Abbey Banner* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 14–16: "Founded in 1926 as an apostolate of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota by Benedictine Fr. Virgil Michel, OSB, Liturgical Press was unique among publishing houses of its time. From modest beginnings, Liturgical Press has since blossomed into a premier Catholic publisher, expanding its original mission of educating the faithful and serving the universal Church through an array of titles in various media, edifying the People of God with quality Christian resources."

**Judith Sutura, OSB's** inclusive translation with commentary on *The Rule of Benedict* was published



**Virgil Michel, OSB**  
Founder of the Liturgical Press, Collegeville, MN

in April and she reports that it "has had amazing reviews and orders. It's available as the inclusive translation of the *Rule* only and as a volume that includes both *Rule* and daily commentary. My goal was to offer something that would help students and others unfamiliar with the *Rule* by having a paragraph that explains the particular chapter in the context of St. Benedict's world. The second paragraph then considers what this might have to do with contemporary life, so that any oblate or monastic will have something to think about as well. Since we [monastics] read the *Rule* 3 times a year, each reflection is followed by 3 questions for reflection. I've heard that some communities have already begun using this version for their daily public reading. I'm thrilled and humbled to have been able to do this service."

**Jacob Rieff, OBlSB** writes “Some publications, including *The Saint Benedict Prayer Book* will be coming out this summer and into the fall. But otherwise I’m at work on two projects, one editing the selected poems of an early Catholic Milwaukee poet, and the meditations of Dame Gertrude More. Paraclete Press (the prayer book’s publisher) is hoping to get a webinar together this summer with mef, another Paraclete author working on St. Benedict, and Abbot Primate Gregory Pollan— anyone interested can keep an eye on Paraclete’s website!”

**Julia Upton, RSM, OBlSB,** writes: “ Between 2 knee replacement surgeries in the past 6 months I’ve managed to keep busy and out of trouble. [I have given several Zoom presentations] for the religious of the dioceses of Brooklyn, Rockville Center, and St. John’s University’s Center for Church and Society entitled, “Saint Joseph: Choices of a Just Man; for the Mercy International Association, “The Great Stop: Spirituality and the COVID-19 Pandemic,” and for Carlow University, “Enhancing Well-Being Throughout the Life-Cycle.”

**Timothy Joyce, OSB,** writes that “a month ago I started writing a blog to appear on our abbey webpage every two weeks. Topics have dealt with the church, its future, the place of the monastery, and spirituality. The response of the People of God has been quite surprising and steady. Some write long, reflective, critical and concerned responses. They worry about the church, vocations, and their own spiritual lives. It has been inspiring. <https://www.glastonburyabbey.org/index.php/mass-prayer-times/monastic-scribe/> **Tom Piazza** has published an article on “Monastic

Possibilities” in the June issue of the *ABR* (see p.3 ). “In progress is a study of membership trends in the Benedictine Confederation from 1880 to 2020. Also still in progress is an article on the metaphors used to describe the monastic life and how they may need to be updated in order to be more understandable to younger people today.”

**Jeana Visel, OSB,** is working on a chapter on the music of St. Hildegard for a volume being pulled together by the Evansville Philharmonic. She hopes to use this research to develop a more academic article on Hildegard as well.

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Felss, Hugh, OSB.** “Benedictine Time Travel: Going Back to Envisage Possible Futures.” *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 197-210.

Book Review: *Per una pastorale ancorata all’altare, L’opera teologico-liturgica du Mariano Magrassi nella Chiesa italiana post-conciliare* by Mario Castellano. *Scala Theologiae* 1, 2020, in *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 225-227.

**Forman, Mary, OSB.** Book Review: *This Is My Body: Eucharistic Theology and Anthropology in the Writings of Gertrude the Great of Helfta* by Ella Johnson. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press/Cistercian Publications, 2020, in *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 228-229.

**Norris, Kathleen, OBlSB,** “We Have To Be Willing To Begin Again,” *Christian Century* (April 27) 2021.

Book Review: *The Wild Silence* by Raynor Winn. New York: Penguin Random House, 2020, in *The New York Times Book Review*, June 6, 2021.

**Peters, Greg, OBlSB,** *Becoming a Community of Disciples: Guidelines from Abbot Benedict and Bishop Basil* . Samuel Morris Publications/Sacred Roots, 2021.

Book Review: *Desert Daughters, Desert Sons: Rethinking the Christian Desert Tradition* by Rachel Wheeler. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2020, in *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 233-235.

“Poetic Precursors and a Postscript to Bernard of Clairvaux’s *Apologia ad Guilelmum abbatem*,” *Tjurunga* 95 (2021): 62-72.

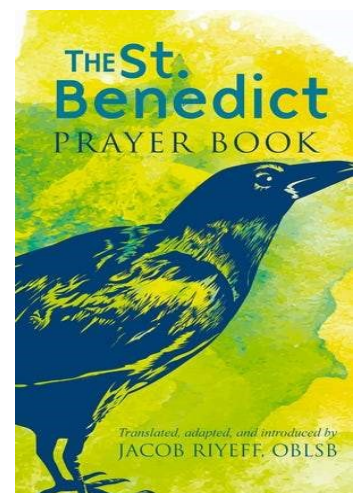
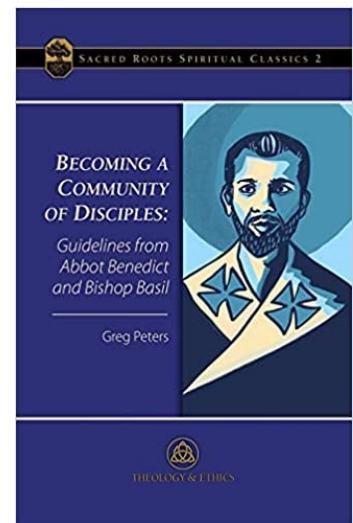
**Piazza, Thomas.** “Monastic Possibilities,” *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 197-210.

**Purcell, Antoinette, OSB.** Book Review: *Musings: A Benedictine on Christian Life* by Don Talafous, OSB. Collegeville, MN: the Liturgical Press, 2019, in *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 227-228.

**Raverty, Aaron, OSB.** “Liturgical Press.” *Abbey Banner* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 14–16.

**Jacob Rieff, OBlSB.** *The St. Benedict Prayer Book*. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, 2021.

Book Review: *Other Voices, Other Rooms, and Poems Written in a Time of Plague: Reflections on Scripture* by Tim Vivian. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, both published in 2020, in *ABR* 72:2 (June 2021), 235-240.



### **Sutera, Judith, OSB.**

*St. Benedict's Rule: An Inclusive Translation and Daily Commentary.* Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2021.

**Upton, Julie, RSM,** "Happily Ever After," *Health Progress* 102/1 (Winter 2021), 13-16.

**Valente, Judith, OIBSB.** Poem: "Light Through Stained Glass, St. Placid Priory." *Benedictines* 74:1 (Spring/Summer 2021), 19.

## Presentations

● Three of the four presentations at the ABA section of the 56<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, May 10-15, 2021, were given by our colleagues in the ABA monastic researchers section. The Congress was held online and the ABA-sponsored session was devoted to humility and medieval Benedictines.

**Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB,** contrasted how two Carolingian commentaries on Benedict's *Rule* interpreted the fourth degree in chapter seven of the *Rule*. Smaragdus interprets the *Rule* to say that when one is confronted with hard and difficult things one should embrace patience, whereas Hildemar says one should embrace hard things lovingly as a preparation for martyrdom. Each interpretation cautions the reader to follow the example of Christ and not to react blindly to difficulties.

**Jacob Rieff, OIBSB,** Marquette University, spoke about the 10<sup>th</sup>-century, Old English poem, *Vainglory*, which expresses the biblical idea of reversal whereby the humble are exalted. Giving this theme an eschatological orientation, the poem tells of a proud person at a raucous feast and contrasts his fate with that of a humble person.

**Hugh Feiss, OSB,** discussed humility in the writings of Hildegard of Bingen, who sees humility as the queen and mother of all the virtues. Humility is an acknowledgement of the gratuity of existence that expresses itself in obedience, gratitude, and praise. Humility is an attribute of God expressed in the life of Christ. Hildegard was humble in her words and deeds and productive in writing and activity. Her view of humility does not focus on the idea of being a servant to others or on how a community should be humble.

● **NOTICE:** "The theme of the ABA online session of the 57<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Medieval Studies, **May 9-14, 2022** is: "How Did Medieval Benedictines Respond to Crises?" At the present time of pandemic and a sharp drop in vocations, this session will consider how Benedictine monasteries responded in the Middle Ages to crises, such as destruction by invading armies, plague, internal discord, lax observance, fire, or a dearth of members. The motto of St. Benedict's Abbey of Monte Casino, 'sucissa virescit,' 'chopped down, it grows back green,' describes what happened often to monasteries in the Middle Ages. Of course, monasteries did not always grow back. What factors accounted for survival or lack of survival of one or several monasteries at a time of crisis?"

Anyone interested in preparing a paper for this session is welcome to contact Fr. Hugh Feiss, O.S.B., [hughf@idahomonks.org](mailto:hughf@idahomonks.org). 208-761-9389, Monastery of the Ascension, 541 E 100 S, Jerome, ID 83338.

**Abstracts need to be entered before September 15.**

● **LOOKING AHEAD:** The **2023** session at Kalamazoo will be devoted to the theme of monastic work.

### Notice

**Next MR Newsletter, October 2021**

**Compiled and edited**

**by Ephrem Hollermann, OSB**

**Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN**

**Comments/suggestions welcomed**

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### 2022 ABA Convention

**GIVE ME A WORD...**

**July 7-9**

**St. Benedict Center**

**Schuyler, Nebraska**