

## Current Projects



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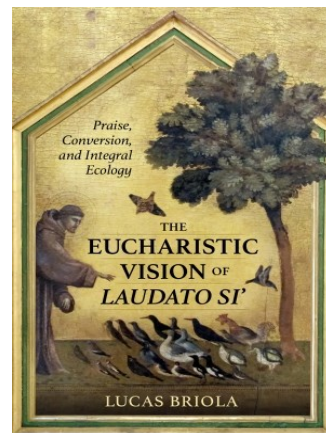
### • Contributors

- Samuel Torvend
- Greg Peters
- Hugh Feiss
- Aaron Raverty
- Jerome Oetgen
- Miriam Perkins
- Gina Visel
- Judith Valente
- Michael Seretny
- Jacob Riyeff
- Tracy Rittmueller

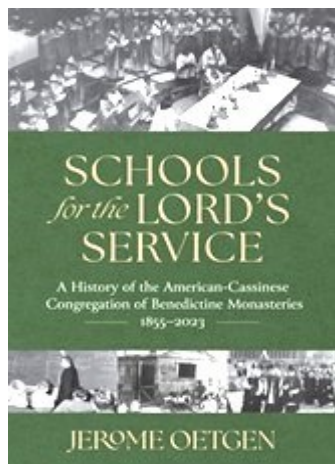
**Samuel Torvend, ObISB**, PhD writes: “The Spring has been marked by a number of workshops related to my *Monastic Ecological Wisdom: A Living Tradition* (Liturgical Press, 2023). At the same time, I have been participating in the *Benedictine Land Ethics* initiative sponsored by the Monastery of St. Gertrude (Cottonwood, Idaho) and organized by Jason Brown of Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, BC), author of *Dwelling in the Wilderness: Modern Monks in the American West* (Trinity University Press, 2024). I continue to work on a new monograph, *Christ in Nature: A Monastic Christology*, that highlights the Christ of creation as seen in the works of Benedict of Nursia, the Venerable Bede, Walafrid Strabo, and Hildegard of Bingen. I am grateful for collaboration with Lucas Briola of St. Vincent College, author of *The Eucharistic Vision of Laudato Si: Praise, Conversion, and Integral Ecology* (Catholic University Press 2023). I am speaking on Benedictine environmental practices in his [summer 2024] course on “Catholic Environmental Ethics and Spirituality” at Saint John’s University Collegeville, Minnesota. **Greg Peters, ObISB**, reports that he “presented

“The ‘Reanimating Principle’ of Edward Bouverie Pusey: The Re-Establishment of Monasticism in the Church of England,” at The Herbert Kelly Institute for Anglican Religious Life in Durham, UK on May 15, 2024. The presentation was co-sponsored by the Michael Ramsey Centre for Anglican Studies at the University of Durham. He then spent three weeks researching and writing in Cambridge as a Research Associate of St Edmund’s College, University of Cambridge. On June 27 he presented “To Be the Church: A Praying People” at the Anglican Church in North America’s Provincial Assembly, hosted by Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA. From July 8-12 he will teach a course on the “Ascetical Theology of the Caroline Divines” at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin. **Hugh Feiss, OSB** reports the following: “Since the last newsletter I gave a paper on the influence of the theodicy in Boethius, *De consolatione philosophiae*, on writings of Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor, at the zoom meeting of the *Societas Victorina*, and a paper on Hugh of St. Victor’s *De sacramentis*, Book 2, part 13, on “Virtue and Voices,” but mostly about *caritas*, at the Interna-

tional Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo. There I also organized and chaired a session on Medieval Benedictines on salvation, and one in the Cistercian Studies sessions on Caesarius of Heisterbach’s *Dialogus miraculorum*. The session on Salvation for ABA was particularly enjoyable, with two papers on Book Two of the *Dialogues* (Christopher Collins, University of Mary) and Maura Shea (University of Notre Dame) and papers on Anselm (Rachel Cresswell, Oxford) and Odo of Cluny’s *Occupatio* (Karolina Bialis, University of Warsaw). I am now preparing the two papers I gave for publication and looking forward to the 2025 Congress at Kalamazoo where the topic for the proposed ABA session (s) is “Benedictine Hospitality in the Middle Ages. **Submissions from ABA members are welcome.**”



## CURRENT PROJECTS CONT.



*"An inspiring narrative history of the oldest congregation of Benedictine monasteries in the United States."*

**Aaron Raverty, OSB** continues work on his forthcoming book from Lexington Press, entitled: *Shrines Theorized: Symbolic Repositories of Memory Culture*. His latest article for *The Abbey Banner* is on "Montecasino."  
**Jerome Oetgen**, writes, "My history of the American-Cassinese Congregation of Benedictine Monasteries (*Schools for the Lord's Service*) is scheduled for publication by Liturgical Press in December, 2024. For details about the book and its publication I'm attaching the publisher's announcement." <https://litpress.org/Products/01419/Schools-for-the-Lords-Service>" In case you missed it in *ABR* and in the *February 2024 ABA Monastic Researchers Newsletter*, a chapter of the forthcoming book appeared in the *American Benedictine Review*

of December 2023 (vol 74: 377- 414) under the title "Initiating Monastic Renewal in the American-Cassinese Congregation: 1965-1969."

**Miriam Perkins, ObISB** (of St. Walburg Monastery) gave a plenary address on April 11 which will be published this fall in the *Stone Campbell Journal*: "Fragrant Freedom in the Anointing of Jesus (John 12:1-8): Calling Bound Brothers from Tomb to Table." She is also co-editing a volume of scriptural devotions entitled, "An Affirming Word." Miriam is a professor of theology and society in the area of Christian theology at Milligan University, in Johnson City, Tennessee.

**Jeana Visel, OSB** taught a summer intensive course on Benedictine Spirituality at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology. She writes that "this year I have been spending some time bringing post-Vatican II Church documents on religious life into conversation with the tradition."

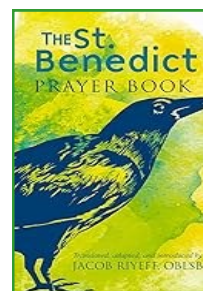
**Judith Valente, ObISB** writes that she "has a new book coming out in May of 2025 from Hampton Roads/Red Wheel Weiser titled *"The Italian Soul: How to Savor the Full Joys of Life,"* based on her many stays in Italy. Her latest collection of poems, titled *"How to Be a Contemplative,"* is forthcoming in 2026 from Kelsay Books. For the second year in a row, she will guide the Benedictine Footprints contemplative,

cultural, culinary retreat/pilgrimage to lesser-known parts of Italy, this year from Aug 29-Sept 12. She will be guiding contemplative retreats in Big Sur, CA, Bartonsville, IL and Dayton, OH in the coming months and is also serving as the 2024-2025 president of the International Thomas Merton Society. Judith writes a weekly Sunday Thoughts blog on [Medium.com](http://Medium.com) on matters both spiritual and practical which she also posts on Sundays on her Judith Valente Facebook page."

**Michael Seretny, ObISB**, (St. Meinrad Archabbey) reports the following: "June 2024 brought the end of a yearlong Oblate study/reflection program entitled: "Desert Sayings Reflections." The pilot was this past year made available on a weekly basis to the St Meinrad Oblate online community. This was an approach to Oblate formation that was supported by our prior Oblate Director, Janis Dopp, and continued under our current Director, Br. Michael Reyes, OSB. We studied various Desert Abbas and Abbesses who had written on topics germane to Benedictine spirituality. Following the introduction of each week's desert saying, participating oblates had the opportunity to reflect and share their personal applications with the wider online Oblate community. We reported summary

information twice this past year to the greater Oblate community at St Meinrad Archabbey through the *St. Meinrad Benedictine Oblate Quarterly*. Now the hard work of transforming this into a lasting program for spiritual formation and reflection can begin. Several Oblates have become interested in forming a study/research team to draw on the pilot year's activities.

**Jacob Riyeff, ObISB** reports that he is "in the final drafting stage of his latest book, *Contemplate: Essays: Toward an Expansive Heart*. His second poetry collection, *Be Radiant*, will be coming out from Fernwood Press later this year. Several essays have appeared in the calendar year so far, in the veins of Benedictine spirituality and academic integrity in higher education (in part from a Benedictine perspective), as well as a literary bibliography of an early Milwaukee poet, Bernard Durward. Jacob also co-hosted 'Wake Up!' A 50<sup>th</sup>-Anniversary Celebration of Swami Abhishiktananda's *Mahaprasthanā* online with Jon Sweeney, Fr. Adam Bucko, and Fr. Cyprian Consiglio for a dedicated audience from four continents.



**Jacob Riyeff**

**Tracy Rittmueller** writes: "I have been co-facilitating an experiment called Lyricality, an intergenerational, intercultural, and inter-spiritual organization of artists and healers (social workers, therapists, health and wellness coaches) in central Minnesota. Our process involves translating the principles of the Rule of Benedict into non-

proselytizing words and practices to reflect cultural competency, antiracism, and pathways to a decolonized future. Our evolving focus is to educate, inspire, and empower Central Minnesotans to connect to their creativity and to others with care and kindness. We remind each other that our work is to

practice our core values together (Listening Presence, Authenticity, Mutuality, and Inclusive Belonging). Our work does not involve striving to be successful, popular, or big. Our nine-member core leadership team is 67% Global Majority (Black-African,

Singapore, Eurasian, Chinese-Malaysian, and Mixed Race), 33% white. We are gender diverse, ranging in age from early 30's to late 70's. 78% identify as living with neurodiversity, mobility disabilities and/or hearing/auditory processing impairments. Our spiritualities include Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hindi-Buddhism, Daoism, Paganism, and

Agnosticism. In response to funding organizations' and board Directors' expectations that we articulate our 2024 capacity building goals, our leadership team agreed that we will build our capacity to serve each other, we will normalize asking for support, and prioritize not burning out. You can learn more about us at [Lyricality.org](http://Lyricality.org).

## PUBLICATIONS

**Burkhard, Marianne, OSB.** Book Review: *Like a Mustard Seed: A History of the First Benedictine Women's Monastery in North America 1852-2014* by Ephrem Hollermann, OSB (Federation of Saint Scholastica, 2022) in *ABR* 75:2 (June 2024) 225-230.

**Feiss, Hugh, OSB.** Book Review: *Meditation and Prayer in the Eleventh and Twelfth-Century Monastery: Struggling Toward God* by Lauren Mancina (Leeds, UK: ARC Humanities Press, 2023) in *ABR* 75:1 (March 2024) 103-105.

**McGrane, Colleen Maura, OSB.** "The Number of Masses Celebrated Each Day in Hildemar of Corbie's *Expositio Regulae Sancti Benedicti*," *Revue bénédictine*, 134, no. 1 (2024):125–130.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Redemption in Hildemar's *Commentary on The Rule of Benedict*," *ABR*, 75:3 (forthcoming, September 2024).

\_\_\_\_\_ Book Review: *Brides of Christ: Women and Monasticism in Medieval and Early Modern Ireland* by Martin Brown, OSB, et al (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2023) in *ABR* 75:1 (March 2024) 112-113.

**Quaintance, Susan, OSB.** Book Review: *Grief on the Road to Emmaus: A Monastic Approach to Journeying with the Bereaved* by Beth L. Hewett (Collegetown, MN: The Liturgical Press, 2023) *ABR* 75:2 (June 2024) 235-236.

**Riyeff, Jacob, ObISB.** "Generative 'AI' and the Problem of (Dis) Trust." *Inside Higher Ed* ([insidehighered.com](http://insidehighered.com)) June 27, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Integrity in Three Keys: A Catholic Approach to Integrity in Higher Education." *Jesuit Higher Education: A Journal* 13.1 (2024).

\_\_\_\_\_ "A Bibliography of the Literary Works of Bernard Isaac Durward." *American Notes and Queries*. March 202,1-4.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Humbling the Contemplative Tradition in Our Particular Moment." *New Camaldoli Hermitage Newsletter*. Lent/Easter 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Journeying with Youth by Affirming the Value of their Limits." *Conversations in Jesuit Higher Education*. February 24, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ "Mother of All: Why Honoring Earth Day Is Not Enough." *Living City* ([focolaremedia.com](http://focolaremedia.com)). April 24, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Be Radiant* (poems), Nova Scotia: Fernwood Press, forthcoming late 2024.

**Valente, Judith, ObISB.** "*The Italian Soul: How to Savor the Full Joys of Life*," Newburyport, MA: Hampton Roads/Red Wheel Weiser, forthcoming May, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_ *How to Be a Contemplative* (poems), American Fork, UT: Kelsay Books, forthcoming in 2026 .

## Presentations

**Feiss, Hugh, OSB**, "The influence of the Theodicy in Boethius, *De consolatione pbilosophiae*, on the Writings of Hugh and Richard of Saint Victor, zoom meeting of the *Societas Victorina*, June 7, 2024.

"Hugh of St. Victor's *De sacramentis*, Book 2, part 13, on Virtues and Voices," International Congress of Medieval Studies at Kalamazoo, May 9, 2024.

**Norris, Kathleen, ObISB** taught a class—"Maintaining Stability, Remaining Open to Change: How Benedictine Values Form Us"—at the School of Theology/Seminary, St. John's University, Collegeville, MN,

**Perkins, Miriam, ObISB** "Fragrant Freedom in the Anointing of Jesus (John 12:1-8): Calling Bound Brothers from Tomb to Table," a plenary address on April 11, 2024, to be published in the fall issue of *The Stone Campbell Journal*.

**Peters, Greg, ObISB** "The 'Reanimating Principle' of Edward Bouverie Pusey: The Re-Establishment of Monasticism in the Church of England" at The Herbert Kelly Institute for Anglican Religious Life in Durham, UK, May 15, 2024.

"To Be the Church: A Praying People," at the Anglican Church in North America's Provincial Assembly, hosted by St. Vincent's Archabbey, Latrobe, PA, June 27, 2024,

"Ascetical Theology of the Caroline Divines," a course to be taught at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Wisconsin, July 8-12, 2024.

**Torvend, Samuel** "Benedictine Environmental Practices," a distance presentation for a course entitled "Catholic Environmental Ethics and Spirituality," taught by Lucas Briola at the School of Theology/Seminary, Collegeville, MN, Summer 2024.

## A Notice and A Bit of History

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

With this issue of our Newsletter, I'm signing off as your editor after fifteen enjoyable years. Here's the back-history!

At the ABA Board meeting in January of 1991, what were being called "interest groups" were designated as "Sections of the Academy." At that time the sections were formalized 1) to have an ongoing existence between conventions, and 2) to have a regular membership and certain procedural structures.

As far as I can ascertain, the Monastic Researchers' Section of ABA began some time in the late 1980s. What may have been the first monastic researchers "newsletter" was circulated in the fall of 1988, and was compiled by S. Mary Forman, OSB, from minutes taken from our "interest group" meeting at the ABA Convention in Bismarck in 1988. Father Terrence Kardong, OSB, "stepped up to the plate" as convener.

As a result of a preliminary search in the ABA archives here at my monastery, I found that the Monastic Researchers Newsletter was published regularly between 1988 and 2000—usually three editions annually from 1989-2000. The editors during those years were Mary Forman, John Klassen and Columba Stewart. The last edition to be found in the archives at that time was dated November, 2000. It seems the newsletter ended at that time because John Klassen who was editing it was elected Abbot in December of 2000!

I was a new ABA Board member in 2009 when we spoke about reinstating what was once informally referred to as "The Monastic Researchers Newsletter." Since I had really appreciated the occasional contact with persons doing study, research, and writing in Benedictine monastic studies, I volunteered to try to "get it off the ground" again. The rest is history, and it's time for "new blood."

Sister Colleen Maura McGrane is the current convener of the section, and I have communicated with her and the ABA leadership about needing a new editor.

I am sincerely grateful to all of you for providing the content of the Newsletter. It has been a privilege to know and appreciate the wonderful work that is being generated by the members of our section. I plan to remain active in ABA.

Thank You!

Ephrem, OSB

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