



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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The mission of the American Monastic Newsletter is to be an instrument of communication and information for monastic communities in the Benedictine tradition in North America, members of the American Benedictine Academy, and other interested persons.

Convention Updates

Planning continues for the ABA convention to be held from July 7 to 10 in Schuyler, Nebraska, with the theme "Give Me a Word ...". We were looking forward to having Tim Vivian, the world's premier translator of the *apophthegmata patrum*, as one of our plenary speakers at the convention. Regrettably, Dr. Vivian has had to ask to be released from his commitment.

Thus, our third plenary speaker will be the Rev. Dr. Donald Richmond, a Benedictine oblate and ABA member. Fr. Richmond is a widely published author and illustrator in publications such as *Our Sunday Visitor*, *The Deacon*, *St. Austin Review*, *The Anglican Digest*, *Forward in Christ*, *The Lutheran Forum* and *Modern Reformation* (among others). He is a priest of the Reformed Episcopal Church, a sub-jurisdiction of the Anglican Church of North America and is an oblate of Saint Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, California.

The title of his presentation is "The Holy Fool: Prophet of the Ordinary." He will join previously announced speakers Sister Laura Swan, OSB and Sister Mary Forman, OSB. Sister Laura will speak on "The World of the Desert Ascetics" and Sister Mary's topic is "*Lectio Divina* and the Sayings and Lives of the Desert."

In addition to the presentations, there are also a number of other customary elements of the convention. There will be time set aside for smaller group discussions for those who wish to take part in one of the Academy's Special Interest Sections. Gatherings will be held for monastic librarians/archivists, monastic researchers/scholars, visual artists, and oblates. A memorial celebration will honor members who have died in the past two years, a display of art works by members will be open for viewing, and awards will be given at the festive banquet that follows the Saturday evening Eucharist. At the business meeting, the ABA members will elect some new board members and attend to other business of the Academy.

The most important element at every convention is the conversation and shared time among the participants, which will be most welcome since the last in-person convention was four years ago. Information about the different activities will be found inside this issue, along with a registration form. Fillable PDF registration and Paypal payment option are on the ABA's website.

President's Message

Dear ABA Members and Friends,

As we prepare to gather in person again this July at the St. Benedict Center in Schuyler, Nebraska, I have been spending some time thinking about the conference theme of "Give me a word...". When I decided to have that as our 2022 theme, it was for the purpose of speaking words of life and wisdom into contemporary monasticism. As I said in my 2020 presidential address: "Notice that the need for a 'word' is not just for the sake of knowledge or curiosity; rather, it is for the purpose of salvation. ... These words matter because they deal with life and salvation. These words are born from wisdom and instill wisdom in the next generation of monastics. These words are not opinion pieces but words that give life and give it abundantly (cf. John 10:10). These words also lead to action."

I then concluded with these thoughts: "The goal is not just to look back at the monastic tradition of the early Egyptian desert in an abstract historical manner but to appropriate that tradition anew for the purpose of moving forward as monastics, oblates and friends of monastic communities. We need to hear a fresh word from the wise monastics of the past but also we need to hear a word from our current ammas and abbas of the monastic desert, literal or otherwise." I still think this is all true, of course, and as we approach the convention, I am finding myself excited about the

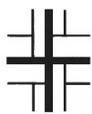
words that we will hear. But I do not just want to hear words, I want them to be words that will lead to action, that will lead to wisdom.

Having recently turned 50 years old I have spent some time in reflection. I realize that I still love being a university professor and parish priest. As my kids enter their years of adulthood, I continue to receive great joy from their growth and development. As I approach twenty-eight years of marriage, my wife and I continue to be happily married.

In short, all is well. But I find myself thinking differently about my reading, studying and writing life. Though these are traditional tasks for a university professor, they are done for different reasons. As a junior faculty member I was motivated by my desire to "make rank" and earn tenure. Mid-career I was more motivated to establish myself in "the academy." I did not need to be the "expert" known and consulted by everyone but I wanted to publish thoughtful and responsible books and articles. Now, as I enter into my senior faculty member years, I am mostly motivated by a "learning for learning's sake" mentality. That is, I have rediscovered the joy of reading and thinking above reading and thinking merely for publication's sake. I feel like I am in the glory of my graduate school days again!

But the risk now, I think, is that I could fall into the sin of *curiositas*. In the *Confessions*, Augustine says that curiosity is "a vain desire cloaked in the name of knowledge" wherein one "proceeds to search out the secrets of nature, things outside ourselves, to know which profits us nothing, and of which men desire nothing but to know them." Simply put, curiosity is solely knowledge for knowledge's sake. And this is what I am afraid I might be prone to, but also what I do not want for our upcoming convention. Again, a disciple's request for a "word" must not be only for curiosity's sake but for life and salvation, which leads to action. So please join us in July in Nebraska as we hear words of life from our speakers and share them with one another.

Greg Peters
ABA president
greg.peters@biola.edu



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Submit any announcements or articles to:

Editor: Judith Sutura, OSB

Mount St. Scholastica, 801 S. 8th, Atchison, KS 66002

Email: jsutura@mountosb.org

For all address changes, membership payments, or any other ABA business, please contact the ABA secretary:

Email: abacadsec@gmail.com

The American Monastic Newsletter is published three times per year and it, as well as other ABA information, may be read online at:

www.americanbenedictine.org

ABA Biennial Convention

“Give Me a Word...”

July 7-10, 2022

St. Benedict Center

Schuyler, Nebraska



Registration Form

(Please Print)

Last Name _____ First Name _____ OSB ___ Oblate ___ Other ___

Preferred name on badge _____

Abbey/Monastery and City _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP/Country _____

Primary Phone _____ E-mail _____ Gender: F () M ()

Registration Fee *(mark your choice)*

	<i>Before April 1, 2022</i>	<i>After April 1, 2022</i>
ABA Members	\$175	\$200
Non-Members	\$200	\$225

Room and Meals *(Includes three nights and Thursday evening dinner through Sunday morning breakfast)*

Single: \$235 **Double:** \$215 **I would like to share room with** _____
(both individuals should list on their forms)

Commuter *(covers meals only):* \$100

Airport Transportation ** Arrival Date _____ Time _____ Airline/Flight Number _____

Departure Date _____ Time _____

** *ABA will provide names of those arriving at approximately the same time, to facilitate travel to Schuyler.*

Please specify any dietary restrictions or mobility assistance needed

Registration Fee _____

+ Room and Meals _____

TOTAL _____

Please make check payable to
American Benedictine Academy
and mail with registration form to:
Julie A. Ferraro
Mount St. Scholastica
801 South 8th Street
Atchison, KS 66002

If paying with PayPal, email form to: *ABAcadSec@gmail.com*

Claustral Oblates

Most often when we hear or read the term “oblate” we think of women or men who associate themselves with a particular monastery but do not become members of the community and live with the monastics. Occasionally such a woman or man has been referred to as an “extern oblate” or a “secular oblate.” However, more often than not, the person is simply referred to as an oblate.

However, even before the eleventh century, there were also oblates who lived in the monastery and observed the life of the monks. This oblate, who did not make formal monastic profession, was at times referred to as “confrater” or “intern oblate” or “regular oblate.” Today, an oblate living with the monastic community is generally referred to as a “claustral oblate.”

Benedictine men’s congregations (OSB), Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO), and the Order of Cistercians (O.Cist.) congregations provide for the possibility of claustral oblates in their proper law. The Benedictine women’s congregations in the United States do not mention either extern oblates or claustral oblates. However, since the proper law of the women’s congregations does not prohibit oblates or claustral oblates, the decision and process is left to the discretion of each monastery.

The OSB men’s congregations, while providing for claustral oblates, leave the particulars to the individual monasteries. Depending upon each congregation, the O.Cist either provide for norms by the congregation or by each monastery or both.

In 1987, the OCSO general chapter adopted “Statute for Oblates” who live within a monastic community. The statutes prescribe the admission process, a probationary period determined by the abbot, a two year aspirant-oblate stage, and a final probationary period of three years before “definitive engagement.” In 2020 there were 29 claustral oblates in monks’ monasteries and 26 claustral oblates in nuns’ monasteries of OCSO.

There may be various reasons for accepting someone as a claustral oblate. A person may not be canonically eligible to be a professed monastic because of a pre-existing marriage for which the person has not received an annulment. A person may have financial or family obligations or both. A person may be older and the stages of initial formation for a professed member do not seem reasonable for the person.

Many monastic communities have an age limit policy regarding persons requesting to become a professed monastic. One of the primary reasons for such a policy is that an older person may find it difficult to adjust to the communal life and the obligations. Now some persons have suggested that an older person could be accepted as a claustral oblate. However, a claustral oblate is invited into the community to live as a monastic in a similar way that a person is invited into the community as a professed member.

Caution is advised when accepting into a community an older member as a claustral oblate who is not financially independent. Such a person may not adjust or fit in to the community. However, a problem may arise when the person leaves or is dismissed. Unlike a younger person, the older person does not have the ability to leave and become self-supporting. Therefore, the monastery would have to provide for the person upon leaving.

Today, if a monastery is considering accepting a person as a claustral oblate, the monastery should have a policy that provides for qualifications of admission, the stages of admission, the rights and obligations of the oblate, and the extent and expectations of his/her participation in the life of the community. The qualifications for admission may include age, health, religious affiliation, marital status, family obligations, and financial factors such as assets and debt. The stages of probation may include a novitiate similar or the same as a canonical novitiate. The rights may include financial support, health care, and a process before termination of the status of claustral oblate. The obligations may include the observance of poverty and obedience. The extent and expectations of participation in the life of the community may

(continued next page)

include attendance at common prayer, meals, community meetings, and chapter.

In order to formalize the policies, it is good to enter into a formal document such as a Memorandum of Understanding that specifies the above. The formal document may vary in each individual case, especially when it comes to financial matters. Attached to this article is a sample draft of a formal document. This document is only a template that must be adjusted in each situation.

Daniel J Ward, OSB
djaward44@gmail.com

TEMPLATE FOR A CLAUSTRAL OBLATE AGREEMENT

NAME (the "Oblate") requests to become a claustral oblate of (name of Abbey/Monastery) a public juridic person of the Roman Catholic Church, (the "Abbey"/ "The Monastery"). The Abbey/Monastery is willing to accept the Oblate as a claustral oblate.

This Agreement establishes the relationship between the Oblate and the Abbey during initial formation, and if accepted as a claustral oblate for the duration of his/her status as a claustral oblate.

Wherefore, the Parties agree to the following terms and conditions.

The Oblate agrees to:

1. abide by the norms, customs and schedules of the Abbey/Monastery (such as wearing the habit according to the custom of the Abbey/Monastery; also may include any way in which the Oblate is not allowed to participate in the life of the Monastery such as canonical chapters).

2. abide by the policies of the Abbey/Monastery regarding claustral oblates.

3. retain ownership of all his/her present and future liquid and real assets. He/She may manage his own liquid and real assets. He/She may use personal liquid and real assets for his/her own benefit.

[Alternate 3. may not dispose of or use his/her liquid or real assets or use them for his/her own

benefit except with the consent of the Abbot/Abbess/Prioress of the Abbey/Monastery].

[Alternate 3b, will make a monthly contribution of (dollar amount) to Abbey/Monastery to assist with his/her support. (Note: this alternate may be combined with 3 or Alternate 3)].

4. accept assignments from Abbot/Abbess/Prioress of the Abbey/Monastery to contribute to the welfare of the Abbey/Monastery. Such work assignments do not constitute employment nor establish an employer-employee relationship but rather are part of the life and work of the members of the Abbey/Monastery

5. prepare and sign the following documents upon acceptance into the claustral oblate novitiate:

- A. Last Will and Testament (may leave property to whomever he/she wishes)
- B. Health Care Directive
- C. Durable Power of Attorney
- D. Declaration of Non-Remuneration

The Abbey/Monastery agrees in its sole determination to:

- 1. welcome the Oblate into living within the Abbey/Monastery
- 2. Provide room, board, medical, and financial assistance necessary for the Oblate according to the norms, customs and schedule of Abbey/Monastery.
- 3. Provide the Oblate with formation to live as a claustral oblate.

This Agreement may be amended by the mutual agreement of both Parties expressed in writing.

Both Parties agree that this Agreement may be terminated with or without cause by either Party by giving either written or verbal notice to the other party. The Abbey/Monastery will observe equity and charity in assisting, if needed, the Oblate as he/she leaves the Abbey/Monastery

Wherefore, both Parties freely and without reservation agree to and enter into this Agreement as of (date)

(Signatures of superior and oblate)

COMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES ONLINE May 9-14

The ICMS has been the premier worldwide gathering of people from every branch of medieval studies for 57 years in Kalamazoo, Mich. This year provides a unique opportunity for a broader audience's virtual attendance at the hundreds of sessions being offered. The American Benedictine Academy and Cistercian Studies will host sessions, along with many others on topics related to the literature, saints, spirituality and material culture of medieval monasticism. The full program for the week-long event is available at Western Michigan's website <<https://wmich.edu/medievalcongress>>.

BENEDICTINE LIFE: A VISION UNFOLDING CENTENNIAL COLLOQUIUM Mount Saint Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas and virtually June 21-24

The Benedictine women's Federation of St. Scholastica will celebrate its centennial with a colloquium "Benedictine Life: A Vision Unfolding" open to all with an interest in Benedictine spirituality and the future of monastic life: women and men who are professed, oblates, or spiritual seekers. It will also be offered virtually as a live stream.

Speakers will address past, present and future perspectives:

WISDOM: Judith Suter OSB, Mount St. Scholastica, and Linda Romey OSB, Mount St. Benedict, Erie, Pa.

WITNESS: Deborah Asberry, CommunityWorks, Inc., and Patricia Fawcner SGS, Good Samaritan Sisters, Australia

WAY FORWARD: Katie Gordon, Nuns & Nones, and Edith Bogue OSB, Sacred Heart, Cullman, Ala.

Information and registration are at <scholastica-celebration.org>.

FROM ANCHORHOLD TO PARISH: ENGLISH MONASTICISM AND ANGLICAN SPIRITUALITY Nashotah House, Nashotah, Wisc. June 23-24

The sixteenth-century Church of England was greatly influenced by late medieval English monastic spirituality. John Bede Pauley and Bede Thomas Mudge have both shown the monastic influence, especially from the Benedictines, on the *Book of Common Prayer*; and scholars such as Eamon Duffy have demonstrated that there was continuity between late medieval devotional practices and early Anglican piety.

Speakers for the conference are Rev. Professor Bryan D. Spinks, professor of liturgical studies and pastoral theology at Yale Institute of Sacred Music, Yale Divinity School, and Berkeley Divinity School at Yale, and Dr. Ann W. Astell, professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. Information is at <<https://nashotah.edu/breckconference/>>.

SACRED SITES: THE HOLY LAND IN THE HEART OF ITALY June 18-27

Join Msgr. Timothy Verdon, Prof. Alexei Lidov, and Fr. Martin Shannon CJ as they lead a Mount Tabor pilgrimage tour to sacred sites inspired by the Holy Land in the scenic regions of central Italy. After introductory discussions at the home of the Mount Tabor Centre in Villa Via Sacra in beautiful Barga, the tour will take us to the Holy Mountain of San Vivaldo, Bologna, Loreto and conclude in the iconic city of Florence. A modern pilgrimage of faith for the renewal of heart, mind and body. Information is at <<https://mounttabor.it/events/>>.

**DIVERSITY AND DIGNITY
ACROSS TIME AND PLACE
The 12th Triennial Conference on
the History of Women Religious
University of Notre Dame
June 26-29, 2022**

The Conference on the History of Women Religious (CHWR) was established in 1988 to assist historians in discovering and preserving the historical record of vowed women and to integrate their stories into the larger narratives of their times and places.

Throughout their histories, women religious have celebrated and struggled with many aspects related to diversity in their personal lives, congregations, and ministries. At the same time, their work has often focused on upholding the “dignity of the human person,” particularly the dignity of women. This conference seeks to explore aspects of diversity and dignity within the history of women’s religious congregations around the world.

The conference is hosted by Notre Dame’s Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism and cosponsored by Notre Dame’s Medieval Institute, Saint Mary’s College (Notre Dame, Indiana), and the Center for Spirituality at Saint Mary’s College.

Information about HWR and the conference are at: <<https://cushwa.nd.edu/hwr/>>.

**SAINT JOHN’S SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
MONASTIC INSTITUTE
“Humility”
Saint John’s - Collegeville, Minn.
June 27 - July 1**

The topic for the 33rd annual Monastic Institute at Saint John’s School of Theology is “Humility: Paradoxical Pathway to Union with God.” Letting go of the demands of the ego begins with fear of the Lord. The ascent of the ladder of humility leads to that perfect love that casts out fear. Come and explore the wisdom of the monastic tradition on this central challenge of embracing the Cross of Christ with the assistance of highly-regarded spiritual guides: Luke Dysinger OSB (St. Andrew’s, Valyermo, Cal.), Manuela Scheiba OSB (Abbey of St. Gertrude, Alexanderdorf, Germany), and Michael Casey OCSO

(Tarrawarra Abbey, Australia). Register at <<https://www.csbsju.edu/sot/lifelong-learning/monastic>>.

**SAINT MEINRAD SEMINARY
AND SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
“Thomas Merton and
the Spirituality of Non-Violence”
June 25-26, July 23-24, and August 20-21**

Saint Meinrad’s Graduate Theology Program is offering an in-person 3-weekend course on “Thomas Merton and the Spirituality of Non-Violence,” taught by Fr. Adrian Burke OSB. For more information and to register either for credit or non-credit, contact Sr. Jeana Visel OSB at jvisel@saintmeinrad.edu.

**NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
BENEDICTINE OBLATE DIRECTORS
St. Meinrad Archabbey, St. Meinrad, Ind.
August 4-9**

This year’s NAABOD convention will be hosted at St. Meinrad’s Archabbey in Indiana and the theme will be “Weaving St. Benedict’s Way of Life into the Future.” The speakers are Fr. Thomas Gricoski, OSB, of St. Meinrad Archabbey and Sister Anita Louise Lowe of Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind. This gathering is for directors of oblates and/or an oblate designated by them to attend. Registration and final details will be posted on the NAABOD website: <www.naabod.org>.

All ABA memberships run concurrent to the calendar year, regardless of when the membership began. If you’re reading this online or in a library and wondering why you didn’t receive a copy, chances are your membership expired. Please check the current 2022 member list on page 11, renew soon and encourage new members to join. Payment may be made by mail or by using the Paypal link on the membership page of the website.



In a recent election, Sister Bernadine Reyes OSB was elected prioress at St. Scholastica Monastery (Boerne, Tex.).

Dom Brendan Freeman OCSO has been appointed as Superior *ad nutum* of New Melleray Abbey (Peosta, Iowa).

Paraclete Press is offering a series of Lenten live online webinar presentations on the topic of stability as part of their introduction to Nathan Oates' new book on the subject. The presentations, Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. Eastern Time are:

March 19: "Stability and God/Stability and Self" with Nathan Oates

March 16: "Stability for Non-Monks" with Kathleen Norris and Michael Patrick O'Brien

March 23: "Stability and Growth" with Jonathan Wilson Hartgrove

April 6 "Stability and the Family" with Ron Rolheiser.

Details are at the paracletepress.com website.

Abbot John Klassen, OSB, is pleased to announce that Therese L. Ratliff, PhD, will be the next director and chief executive officer of Liturgical Press, the publishing apostolate of Saint John's Abbey. Ratliff will succeed Peter Dwyer after 33 years of service to the Press, 21 years as director. Ratliff will be the second layperson and the first woman to lead Liturgical Press in its 96-year history.

Ratliff comes to Liturgical Press with a diverse and accomplished portfolio in Catholic book and periodical publishing. Most recently, Ratliff served as the publisher of books and devotionals for the US divisions of Bayard, Inc.: Twenty-Third Publications, Pflaum Publishing Group, and Creative Communications for the Parish. She has contributed to several international publishing boards and is currently the vice president of the Association of Catholic Publishers Board of Directors (2020-2023). Before joining Bayard, Inc., Ratliff enjoyed a variety of publishing roles and experiences at Pauline Books and Media.

"We are thrilled to have Therese Ratliff come on board as director of Liturgical Press," said Klassen. "She is an energetic, vibrant person who brings a rich set of leadership experiences in the world of Catholic publishing."

"I am thrilled to be joining a talented, top-notch team and look forward to building on the extraordinary reputation of Liturgical Press," said Ratliff. "We in Catholic publishing must meet the moment our world faces in diverse new ways, and I'm confident that, together, we will find new pathways and explore new directions for the Gospel to take root and flourish."

"I am delighted in the appointment of Therese Ratliff as the next director of Liturgical Press," said Dwyer. "She brings exceptional leadership skills and vision, as well as a deep commitment to the Gospel, to her tenure at the helm of this storied and trusted house."

Ratliff has a PhD in theology and education from Boston College, a Master of Arts in theology from St. Michael's College, and a Bachelor of Arts in writing, literature, and publishing from Emerson College.

Prior to Dwyer, previous directors of Liturgical Press were monks of Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota: Fr. Virgil Michel, OSB, whose energy and vision led to the founding of Liturgical Press in 1926; Fr. William Heidt, OSB (1949-1978); Fr. Daniel Durken, OSB (1978-1988); and Fr. Michael Naughton, OSB (1988-2001).

The Norbertine community at St. Michael's Abbey in Silverado, Cal., is celebrating the opening of their new library. Two notable collections for monastic scholars are now housed at St. Michael's: the personal library of the preeminent early church historian Henry Chadwick, and the rare books of Thomas C. Oden, editor of the *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*.

The Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM USA) has launched its annual Lenten appeal with the following beneficiaries: monastery in Viet Nam to assist in Covid relief, in Lurin, Peru, for new bread machine and oven, and in Democratic Republic of Congo for study funds for sisters to train in catechesis and health care. To find out more or make donations, go to www.AIM-USA.org.

CONVENTION MATTERS

It is time for ABA members to nominate current ABA members for vice-president (who becomes president) and two board members to be elected at the convention. President Greg Peters will be going off of the board and Gregory Evans, vice-president/president elect will become president. Current board member Sister Colleen Maura McGrane will complete her term and is not eligible for re-election. Board members Tom Piazza and Sister Jeana Visel remain on the board for another 2 years. Sister Edith Bogue was elected to a 2-year term in 2020 to complete the board term of Gregory Evans, who was elected vice president at that meeting, and can now be re-elected. Membership will also elect a new vice-president who will assume the presidency in 2024.

Duties can be found in the by-laws and a list of current ABA members is on page 11 of this newsletter. Nominations may be submitted in advance or made from the floor during the business meeting. Having nominations in advance helps to ensure that there is a good slate and allows for information about the candidates to be published in the June AMN in advance of the convention for the members' deliberation and prayer. Please take time to give this right of membership your energy and initiative. Members may submit names for vice-president or board members by email (greg.oblsb@gmail.com) or by hard copy to:

Gregory Evans
c/o St. Benedict Monastery
9535 Linton Hall Rd.
Bristow, VA 20136



Prayer for Deceased ABA Members

As a part of the convention, the ABA will honor all members who have died since the 2020 meeting. Please send names of deceased members to the ABA president, Greg Peters (greg.peters@biola.edu). If the person was a religious or oblate, include the name of their monastery and city. You are welcome to add more about the person's life and their contributions to the ABA and monastic life.

Convention Art Display

The Visual Arts Section of the ABA invites Benedictine artists to submit one to four pieces of their artwork for the ABA Art Show at the convention in Schuyler, Nebraska. There will also be a digital art gallery for artists to submit one to three digital images.

Criteria for submission:

- original artwork in any medium (fiber, ceramic, woodworking, stain glass, photography, etc.)
- pieces ready for hanging or display on a pedestal or table
- each clearly labeled with the artist's name & medium - the name of the artist's community and its location
- shipped in a returnable container with pre-paid return shipping included. **DO NOT SHIP ANYTHING WITH GLASS.**

Bring art to the convention or ship so that it can arrive at the convention site by noon, July 7, 2022. ABA is not responsible for return shipments. Shippers will need to make arrangements for return shipping with Gregory Evans.

Send art to: St. Benedict Center
Attn: ABA Art
1126 Road I
Schuyler, NE 68661

Submissions for the digital gallery need to be in JPEG format. Please email files to greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com by June 18, 2022. Don't hesitate to contact Gregory Evans with any questions or concerns: Phone (571) 225-7745, Email: greg.oblsb@gmail.com.



Change your contact list: The ABA welcomes new executive secretary/treasurer Julie Ferraro. Julie is an oblate and social media specialist for Mount St. Scholastica. All correspondence, dues and other ABA matters should be sent to her at:

Julie Ferraro
Mount St. Scholastica
801 So. 8th St.
Atchison, KS 66002
ABAcadSec@gmail.com

ABA ESSAY CONTEST

Each convention year, the ABA sponsors an essay contest exploring topics related to the Benedictine tradition and charism. This contest is aimed at inspiring writing among newer community members and is open to monastics and oblates who have made their first profession or oblation within the past 10 years.

The word “essay” derives from the French verb *essayer* – to try, probe, or test. The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that essays offer a sense of inquiry and discovery. They provide concrete evidence of the thinking that has gone into a piece of writing. The best essays spark thinking. They maintain a balance between the objective and the subjective. They inspire and delight the reader as well as inform.

In keeping with the upcoming ABA conference theme of “Give Me a Word...” we are seeking essays that explore how God speaks in monastic tradition, the Rule of Benedict, and everyday monastic life, and what word (wisdom) Benedictine life has to share with the world today. Your essay should be 3000–3200 words in length and incorporate a variety of published or archival sources and personal experience.

Requirements for Participation:

The contest is open to professed members and oblates up to 10 years after first profession or oblation. Submit a double-spaced essay of 3,000–3,200 words in a Word document.

Your essay should contain no identifying information.

In your accompanying email please include your name, community, date of first profession or oblation, and mailing address.

Send to:

Sister Colleen Maura McGrane, O.S.B., Contest Committee Chair at:
colleenmaura@gmail.com

Deadline: March 31, 2022

Winners will be notified by May 15, 2022.

Prize:

A two-year membership in the American Benedictine Academy
Waiver of registration and hospitality fees for the 2022 ABA convention

A book of interest for monastics/oblates

The possibility of having one’s essay published in a relevant publication

BRIEF BOOK REVIEWS

Benedictine Options: Learning to Live from the Sons and Daughters of Saints Benedict and Scholastica (Liturgical Press, 2021) Patrick Henry.

—

This book is a response to the controversial 2017 book by Rod Dreher entitled *The Benedict Option* (subject of a lengthy feature review in the June 2017 issue of this newsletter). Patrick Henry points out that both his book and Dreher’s are laymen’s views of Benedictinism, but the contrast is sharp.

While Dreher is an outsider, Henry has been deeply immersed in monasticism through his decades-long association with real monastics. While

Dreher has a flee-the-world-and-circle-the-wagons misconception of what Benedict was doing, Henry uses real life examples to show how Benedictine men and women engage with and transform the world.

He gives the reader an opportunity to learn about authentic Benedictine options from early traditions and heresies, to the journey of nuns through post-Vatican transitions, to the way the lifestyle speaks to modern life and issues. This is a profound and thought provoking book, but it is made up of short and readable segments that present the essence of what Benedictines believe and practice. As Henry masterfully refutes Dreher while presenting other options, every monastic and oblate would benefit from spending time and thought with this book.

2022 Membership of the Academy

Below is a list of the 2022 membership of the Academy. Please encourage community members, oblates and others with interest in monastic life to consider joining this organization.

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