



# 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 Benedictine monasteries of North America and members of the American Benedictine Academy.*

## *In Memory of Terrence Kardong, OSB*

The monastic world is mourning the unexpected death of Father Terrence Kardong, OSB who died peacefully in his sleep on the morning of March 24, 2019. He will be remembered as one of the most prolific and respected monastic scholars of his generation. Born in Minneapolis, on October 22, 1936, he went to Richardton, N.D., for high school and junior college with the Benedictines because he had three uncles who were monks at Assumption Abbey. He entered the novitiate there in 1956, attended Saint John's University in Collegeville, where he earned a bachelor of arts degree in philosophy, and was ordained a priest in 1963.

The study of classical languages at Catholic University for his master's degree in Latin, followed by monastic studies at the Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo, equipped him for his lifelong devotion to the study of the Rule of St. Benedict. Besides his masterful *Benedict's Rule: A Translation and Commentary*, other books included *Commentaries on Benedict's Rule (1986)*, *Together Unto Life Everlasting*, *Asking Benedict: A Study Program on the Rule*, *Benedictines, Day By Day with Saint Benedict*, *The Life of St. Benedict by Gregory the Great: Translation and Commentary*, *Pillars of Community: Four Rules of Pre-Benedictine Monastic Life*, *Conversations with Saint Benedict*, *Saint Columban: His Life, Rule, and Legacy*, and *Benedict Backwards: Reading the Rule in the Twenty-First Century*.

Father Joel Ripplinger recalls "Terrence was a dear friend and colleague over four decades. I treasure his personal insights and unvarnished opinions that were never lacking in their verve and insight. I give thanks for the singular gift of his work ethic and research in shedding light on the richness of monastic tradition. I am no less grateful for his unflinching commitment to maintain the highest standards of monastic scholarship in this country, blazing a trail for others to follow. His outward crustiness was a thin veil to cover his Benedictine *conversatio*."

In addition to all this, Father Terrence was the driving force behind *The American Benedictine Review* for nearly forty years, not only as its editor but as a contributor of numerous original articles as well as translations of other scholars' works from French, German, or Italian. Sister Colleen Maura

*(continued on p. 3)*

## President's Message

### *The Vision of the World in the Light of God*

This is the title given to Section 15 of *The Life of St. Benedict by Gregory the Great: Translation and Commentary* by Terrence G. Kardong. I have read, reread and reflected on the pages of this section many times during the past year. Most recently, I have had a few conversations with our dear departed brother and friend, Terrence, about his translation and commentary on this story from the *Dialogues*. Of course, those conversations have been in a spiritual sense as we were not physically present to each other. I am struck by this story of Benedict near the end of his life and by Terrence's commentary on it.

In his translation he writes, "When the brothers were still asleep, the man of God, Benedict, got up to watch in prayer before the time for the Night Office. Standing at the window and praying to almighty God in the middle of the night, he suddenly saw a light pour down that routed all the shadows. It shone with such splendor that it surpassed daylight, even though it was shining in the darkness. A wonderful thing followed in this vision, for as Benedict reported later,

the whole world was brought before his eyes as if collected in a single ray of sunlight" (pp. 131-132).

While Terrence takes time to note several things about this vision, such as the fact that it was witnessed by another, the possibility that it really happened, and how it relates to other similar historical stories, what grabbed my attention most was this statement: "... Benedict does not have a cosmic dream or even a cosmic vision. He is fully within the realm of Christian mysticism, and so what he sees is not of this world at all. When he sees the whole of creation summed up in a tiny ball, the context is simply the immensity of *God himself*" (p. 137).

The theme for our next convention, "2020 Vision: Seeing the World in a Single Ray of Light" has been in my head and on my heart for months. Father Hugh Feiss, OSB will help us consider how change has been a constant feature in Benedictine history; Sister Pia Portman, OSB, Father Joel Macul, OSB and Sister Ann Hoffman, OSB will give us a current world view of Benedictine life. I keep trying to envision how our pondering and sharing will go, as well as what the outcome might be. I believe it depends on who is present and how open we are to the movement of the Spirit among us. It seems that we must trust that God working in and through us can shed light on our gathering so that the vision we see will lead us into a fruitful future, to something greater than ourselves, and that together we will indeed see "the immensity of God." I trust that what we see will enable us to let go of what holds us back from facing and embracing whatever God has in store for the future of the American Benedictine Academy and for the future of Benedictine monasticism.

I did a quick perusal of past themes of our conventions since 1998 and noticed a pattern in words –prism, refounding, revitalizing, expanding vision, seek, and eyes – all related to "seeing" and a sense of something new. We have considered the past even while we stood in the present, aware of the dying process that precedes new life. We realize that what we have known is changing. We have begun to gaze toward the unknown future with anticipation and at least a little uncertainty. We have looked beyond ourselves as we considered mentoring,



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## *President's Message (continued)*

evangelization, family, and global upheaval. We have recognized the need to revitalize ourselves with the good news of monasticism and with the sacredness of God's creativity around and within us.

In the February 2014 issue of *The American Monastic Newsletter*, Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB was quoted as saying, "We are to be artisans of a new moment in the history of monasticism, as were our foremothers and forefathers." This is the moment in which we are called to see the immensity of God at work in our world creating and bringing about new life. We need to trust that the God who calls us to continual conversion is with us through the transition from death to life, from darkness to light. We need to let go of our short-sighted vision of what we think should be, and trust that there is a greater Light guiding the way into the future. We are here, and the time is now. We are called to stand together in prayer asking God to shed light upon our darkness; to open our eyes to see "a vision of the world in the light of God."

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## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The ABA Biennial Convention in 2020

*2020 Vision: Seeing the World  
in a Single Ray of Light*

July 16 - 19, 2020

Benedictine College

Atchison, Kansas

## *Kardong (continued from p. 1)*

McGrane took over as editor last year. "While I will miss Father Terrence much," she says, "I am also filled with gratitude for having had the opportunity to have known and worked with him." Another member of his editorial board, Sister Marielle Frigge, recalled, "At a gathering of Benedictine men and women, the subject of Terrence's prodigious scholarship came up. One of his brother monks quietly remarked, 'And he *lives* it, too.' I can think of no greater tribute to this great Rule scholar."

This devotion to his monastic life and place is expressed in the obituary sent out by his community. It noted, "He was also an environmental activist through his participation in the Dakota Resource Council since 1978. But he was a regular monk, too, helping with chores such as washing pots and pans and weeding the garden. He believed that a monk should also work with his hands."

Father Terrence was also very devoted to the American Benedictine Academy, participating vigorously in conventions and chairing the Monastic Researchers Section for many years. He was also the one who insisted upon the ABA creating an American monastic newsletter that would provide a vehicle for circulating monastic news after he saw such a publication in another country.

Former ABA president Susan Quaintance wrote, "When I was trying to explain his impact to someone yesterday, the only word I could come up with was 'staggering.'" ABA board member Judith Valente had this to say: "I remember seeing the soft side of Father Terrence at the 2016 ABA convention, where he read some of the obituaries he wrote. Father Terrence choked up reading the final lines of the obituary: 'Perhaps not enough of us made time for him,' he said of the monk who had died. 'Where he is now, there is One who has infinite time for him.' ... Father Terrence is with the One who has infinite time to talk to him about the topics that so animated his life."

The memory of Father Terrence will live on not only in these friends and colleagues but in the great body of his writings and in the future scholarship that will be built upon the foundation he has provided.

## CANON LAW COLUMN

*Recent legislation from the Holy Father  
on enclosed women religious – Part II*

This column is part II on the directives of *Cor Orans* which was first addressed in the February 2018 canon law column in this publication.

### **What *Cor Orans* means for Benedictine *moniales***

Benedictine nuns/*moniales* are governed not only by the Code of Canon Law and by their own constitutions, but also by documents from the Vatican. Most recently, Pope Francis issued an apostolic constitution, *Vultum Dei quaerere* (*Seeking the Face of God*) (hereinafter VDQ) in June 2016 (See the February 2018 column for a short description and analysis of VDQ).

In VDQ, the Holy Father directed the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CICLSAL) to write and publish an Instruction that would further elucidate the requirements of VDQ. In May 2018 CICLSAL published the long awaited Instruction, *Cor orans* (praying heart).

VDQ and *Cor orans* apply only to women monastics in monasteries of Latin rite who are enclosed, i.e., cloistered. While *Cor orans* is multi-faceted, here we will address only 3 areas covered by the Instruction: requirement of monasteries to belong to a *federation* or another structure of communion or governance; requirement of *enclosure* (though allowing monasteries to choose one of three types of enclosure); and *formation*, particularly the length of the period of initial formation before perpetual vows.

The section regarding the requirement that all women's enclosed monasteries should be part of a *federation* or of some other form of association is the section that gives the monasteries a one year deadline of compliance for creating or joining a federation if they are not already part of one. However, it seems that as long as CICLSAL is notified of the efforts being made to form a federation or congregation, that would satisfy the one year requirement. This is the first time that enclosed monasteries of women are being put under a mandate to join a federation, but it has been strongly encouraged since at least the 1950

Apostolic Constitution, *Sponsa Christi*. The hope at that time was that the isolation of monasteries would be overcome, and a mutual sharing of encouragement to live the monastic life faithfully would readily be in place through federations.

In response to *Cor orans*, some of the women's monasteries are choosing to form monastic congregations, a stronger form of association with jurisdiction. Monastic congregations are what exist here in North America (for both sisters and monks). *Cor orans* clearly states that federations or congregations are to be erected by the Holy See (CO # 86). The Vatican says that federations "promote contemplative life in the monasteries, guarantee assistance in initial and ongoing formation, and exchanges of nuns and material goods" (CO # 92). Illustrating that formation in enclosed monasteries is an important concern of the Vatican. It states that the federation president is to "watch over initial and ongoing formation to see if it is in conformity with the charism of the institute" (CO #97).

*Cor orans* does not dictate how many member monasteries must be in a federation. Nevertheless, it does provide that the federation president and a federation council of four councilors are to be elected by the federation assembly (CO # 123). According to the document, the "primary task [of the federation assembly] is to protect the charismatic patrimony of the institute among the federation monasteries and to promote an adequate renewal in harmony with it" (CO # 133). The federation assembly is made up of the federation president, federation councilors, the federation financial administrator, and the major superior and one elected delegate from each of the monasteries of the federation (CO #134). It does seem that if the superiors of the monasteries in the federation are the federation president and the councilors themselves, then the only additional members of the federation assembly would be one elected delegate from each of the monasteries of the federation.

When the federation assembly meets every six years, it is to "develop for a six year period the common formation courses that each community is obliged to carry out" (CO #141). A priest also must be appointed by the Holy See as the Federation Assistant to serve in a supervisory and helping role (CO #149-152). Undoubtedly, this last requirement

## *Canon Law (continued from p. 4)*

to have a man serve in a women's federation of monasteries could create a difficult situation. But hopefully the Holy See will at least appoint the one nominated by the federation members themselves. At least one canonical commentator who knows the documents of Vdq and *Cor orans* very well has expressed the view that the requirement of a federation assistant is only for those forming federations, not for monastic congregations. Those monastic congregations which are already in existence do not have such clerics as assistants to the congregation.

The following chapter of *Cor orans* concerns "separation from the world" or *enclosure*, also referred to as cloister. In this section, four different types of cloister are described. The first is often referred to as "common cloister" because it is an obligation common to all religious institutes, not only enclosed monasteries. Common cloister is "to create in every religious house an atmosphere and environment favorable to recollection" (CO # 156).

The other three types, reserved to "contemplative nuns" (as the document refers to women living in enclosed monasteries), are referred to as papal cloister (CO ## 183-203), constitutional cloister (CO ##204-7; 212-18) and monastic enclosure (CO ## 208-11), which is simply a form of constitutional enclosure. Generally speaking, the document says that "the cloister of the contemplatives responds to the need, perceived as a priority, to remain with the Lord" (CO # 160). It goes on to say that, "[w]ith the name cloister, we mean the monastic space separated from the outside and reserved for the nuns, in which the presence of strangers can only be admitted in case of necessity. It must be a space of silence and recollection where the permanent search for the face of God can develop, according to the charism of the Institute" (CO # 161).

In addition, CICLSAL says that, "[i]n the monasteries of nuns, the cloister must be understood in a positive sense as a space for the use and intimacy of the nuns who live the contemplative life, a space of domestic and family life, within which the community lives fraternal life in its most intimate dimension" (CO # 164). The helpful aspect of this section of the document is that it allows each monastery to make its own decision about which of

the three cloister types the members will live. As long as their decision is supported by sufficient rationale the Holy See will approve their choice (CO #166). In addition, a welcome change allows for the major superior of the monastery to make the determination concerning dispensations (i.e., exceptions) for individuals regarding the cloister, rather than having this reserved to the local bishop as was the previous law (CO #174-5).

Finally, the following chapter of *Cor orans* is on *formation*. In some of the press releases from the Vatican, a connection seemed to be made between the number of nuns who had been requesting an indult of departure, i.e., release from their vows, and perhaps an insufficient course of formation. There is no evidence that there is actually such a nexus, but it seemed to be an assumption made by some at the Vatican. As a result, in a section of the document which has caused considerable concern in many women's enclosed monasteries governed by *Cor orans*, an extended period of initial formation is mandated for all.

It gives no discretion to the major superior and the formator to make decisions about the length of the formation period based on individual needs, as is provided in the current Code of Canon Law. Rather, it mandates four stages of initial formation with set time frames: *aspirancy* for a minimum of twelve months (CO #268), *postulancy* for a minimum of twelve months (CO # 275), *novitiate* for a minimum of two years (CO # 269) and *juniorate* for a minimum of five years (CO #287). Therefore, the minimum time frame for initial formation, regardless of age or life experience or cultural milieu of the candidate, is 9 years.

This is one of the derogations to the Code provided by *Cor orans*. (A derogation of law is a partial suppression of a particular part of the law. In this case, for the canons noted at the end of *Cor orans*, the canons still remain for other religious, but not for women monastics in enclosed monasteries.) The 1983 Code of Canon Law provides that the novitiate must be a minimum of twelve months and no more than two years (Canon 648). There is no required aspirancy in the Code. For the period in temporary profession, Canon 655 states that it "may not be less than three years and no longer than six." Nevertheless, by way of exception, canon 657 §2 says that a superior may extend the period of temporary

profession, but for not more than a total of 9 years. Therefore, in the Code of Canon Law, the minimum time in initial formation would be four years with a maximum of ten years. But with the derogation from these canons in *Cor orans*, the minimum time is nine years with a maximum of twelve years, with no discretion residing in the superior to lessen or further extend the period of initial formation.

This extended period of formation seems to be welcomed by monasteries in some cultures, and very unwelcome in other cultures. Through formal and informal discussions among members of the international Benedictine women's association, known as *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum (CIB)*, we have learned that in certain cultures where perhaps education is not common among women, the extended period of formation is preferred to allow for a longer time for education and formation in the monastic way of life. In other cultures, however, especially where women who are entering are well educated and often middle aged or close to that age, this mandate of an extended period of formation seems unreasonably long and is perceived as being a possible discouraging factor for women seeking entrance to monasteries in such cultures. There is much discussion among Benedictine women about requesting a change in this portion of *Cor orans* which would allow for a more flexible period of initial formation as in the canons noted above. Nevertheless, anecdotally it does not appear that the Vatican is open to such flexibility for enclosed women monastics.

There is certainly more to *Cor orans* than discussed here, but the three topics of federations, enclosure and formation are central to the concerns of the Vatican for the enclosed monasteries of women around the world. There has already been a lot of ink spilled about these new Vatican directives; no doubt, there will be much more spilled in the coming years as the details and consequences work their way through the system.

*If you have a question or idea for a future column, feel free to contact Sister Lynn.*

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*Report on the ABA Session at the International Congress of Medieval Studies, May 9-12, 2019, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich.*

Our session on "The Image of Christ and the Rule of Benedict in Medieval Benedictine Writers" attracted four fine papers. The Rule of Benedict does not aim to present doctrine, but presupposes the reality of Christ the Lord: divine, risen, and all-seeing, his love preferred to nothing else. Our primary question is how this image of Christ influenced the way Benedictines thought and prayed.

Enrico Beltramini, of Notre Dame de Namur University, investigated two topics: the uses of the "name" of Christ and Christ as "king," in Book II of Gregory's *Dialogues* and the RB, respectively.

Sister Collen Maura McGrane, from the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, spoke on the prominence of the idea of redemption in the *Expositio in regulam Benedicti* of Hildemar of Corbie (ca. 812/850).

In a third paper, Rachel E. Cresswell of Blackfriars Hall, Oxford, explained how Christ is approached in the prayers of St. Anselm (1033/4-1109) to the saints. In *Why God Became Man*, Anselm tries to understand the logic of the Incarnation, without recourse to the revealed truth (*Christo remoto*).

Lastly, Father Hugh Feiss, OSB, of the Monastery of the Ascension, studied the writings of spiritual guidance penned by Louis de Blois (Latin, Blosius; 1506-1566).

For next year's congress, we have requested a session at Kalamazoo on "Humility among Medieval Benedictines: What Was It and Was It Good for Them?" We have also joined the Cistercian and Monastic Studies Program and Cistercian Publications in requesting a jointly sponsored panel discussion on the educational uses of the *Benedictine Reader, 530-1530* (Cistercian Publications, 2019). After these sessions are accepted, anyone interested can submit papers for the first, and offer to be a part of the second by emailing [hughf@idahomonks.org](mailto:hughf@idahomonks.org).

Hugh Feiss, OSB  
Jerome, Idaho  
ABA session coordinator



## NEWS

The following were recently elected to lead their monastic communities:

Prioress Joanna Burley, OSB - St. Benedict's Monastery (Bristow, Va.)

Prioress Marie Therese Long, OSB - St. Joseph's Monastery (Tulsa, Okla.)

Prioress Anita Louise Lowe, OSB - Monastery Immaculate Conception (Ferdinand, Ind.)

Prioress Catherine Nehotte, OSB - St. Paul's Monastery (St. Paul, Minn.)

Sister Judith Murphy of St. Scholastica Monastery (Chicago, Ill.) was re-elected for another term as prioress.

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### *Transitions:*

As they adjust to their move to the new monastery building on their property, the sisters at St. Scholastica Monastery (Fort Smith, Ark.) have decided to postpone their election. Sister Kimberly Prohaska, OSB of that community will be acting as interim administrator.

The Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, whose monasteries previously formed a congregation, have closed their monastery in Tucson, Ariz., leaving only the original monastery in Clyde, Mo. The sisters have decided that there is no longer a need for two levels of administration with a prioress general and a local prioress in Clyde. Therefore, the prioress general, Sister Dawn Annette Mills, OSB, will now serve as acting prioress of the Clyde monastery.

An American nun, Sister Hildegard Dubnick, OSB of the Abbey of St. Walburga in Virginia Dale, Colo., has been chosen to be abbess of the monastery of St. Walburg in Eichstätt, Germany. This one thousand year old monastery was the founding house from which the first Benedictine nuns came to America in 1852 and a large proportion of American Benedictine women's communities trace their roots to this monastery.

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### *"Being Benedictine in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Spiritual Seekers in Conversation"*

It is the nature of Benedictine life to listen intently and respond faithfully to the needs of every era, qualities that have enabled the charism to remain relevant for more than 1,500 years. How we respond, then, to the new questions and pressing needs of the 21st century will determine the ongoing relevance of this way of life for today's seekers.

This conference, June 26-28, 2020 at the Sophia Center of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kan., marks a first-ever gathering of professed Benedictines, oblates, staff, volunteers, friends and benefactors of Benedictine ministries and monasteries, and any seeker who has read *The Rule of St. Benedict* and experienced a conversion of heart. We will hear from speakers including Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister, one of our visionary spiritual voices, and oblate authors Kathleen Norris and Judith Valente and engage in facilitated conversation and idea generation. We will put special emphasis on inviting the participation of millennials, who often eschew formal religion but still seek an authentic experience of faith in action.

This conference will not dwell so much on exploring what is but rather the important questions we haven't yet asked. Our goal is to come away from this conference with a new roadmap for spreading the light of Benedictine spirituality well into the 21st century.

Information is at the conference website <[www.beingbenedictine.org](http://www.beingbenedictine.org)>.

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Sister Theresa (Mario) Schumacher, Saint Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minn., died May 29, 2019. after two years of living with ALS. Sister Theresa was a member and past president of ABA who still attended the 2018 ABA convention at her monastery with her beautiful smile, gentle presence and gracious hospitality.

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Representatives from Region 4, the Central Midwest Plains, Benedictine oblate directors and oblates met last fall at St Benedict Center,

Schuyler, Neb., hosted by Christ the King Priory and their oblates. Approximately thirty-five were present representing five area monasteries: Christ the King Priory (Schuyler, Neb.), Conception Abbey (Conception, Mo.), Sacred Heart Monastery (Yankton, S.D.), Mount St. Scholastica (Atchison, Kan.), and Immaculata Monastery (Norfolk, Neb.).

Attendees participated in discussions about the future of Benedictine oblates in response to the Fourth World Congress of Oblates in 2017 held in Rome. Jodi Gehr and Steve Meysing, oblates of Christ the King and attendees of the congress, presented the five themes of the draft “Vision Statements for Benedictine Oblates,” which stirred lengthy discussions about the future of Benedictine oblates.

Region 6, the Midwest Woodlands, met at St. Meinrad Archabbey (St. Meinrad, Ind.) with the theme, “The Gift of Shared Leadership.” Oblate Kevin Cheers of St. Scholastica Monastery (Chicago, Ill.) introduced the idea that, as monastics and oblates listen to each other, it is necessary to identify affirmations and challenges, to be open to everything, and to be prepared to be surprised. Monastics and oblates are at a threshold of change as they work together to preserve the Benedictine charism. Sister Patricia Crowley, also from St. Scholastica’s, posed challenging questions for the group.

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The response to the request for volunteers to transcribe Dorothy Day’s journals was overwhelming and no new volunteers are being added at this time. The Dorothy Day Canonization Support Network, ([www.dorothydayasaint.org](http://www.dorothydayasaint.org)) is working towards the Benedictine oblate’s canonization through its prayer network, which is focusing on praying for the favors and graces that individuals are asking through Dorothy’s intercession. The documentation of miracles obtained through the candidate’s intercession are an important requirement. Individuals are encouraged to send in their prayer intentions if they want them posted on the website. This website also has a page of resources for Benedictines.

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The American Benedictine Formation Conference held their symposium at Sacred Heart Monastery (Yankton, S. D.) May 5-10, 2019. ABFC is for

those sisters who work in vocations or initial and ongoing formation ministry at women’s Benedictine monasteries throughout the country. Speakers Sisters Cathering Bertrand, SSND and Kathy McNany, OSB addressed the topic of “Women of Hope - Living the Mystery.

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The Abbot General of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO) requested from the Vatican, and was granted, an exemption from the obligation for all contemplative nuns to belong to a federation according to the norms “Cor Orans” (see page 4). The request emerged from the study and experience of the communities of nuns that this norm was not applicable to the nuns of the order since the order’s structures and legislation provide them with an answer to everything that Cor Orans seeks to provide through the federation structure.

### MONASTIC STUDIES GRANTS

ABA members are invited to apply for Monastic Studies Grants to support projects that “cultivate, support and transmit the Benedictine heritage within contemporary culture.” Applications will be selected on the basis of quality of the proposal (originality, feasibility, clarity of purpose), potential benefit for monastics, and relevance to the purposes of the Academy. More details are on the ABA website.

To apply for a grant please supply:

Name, address, phone number, e-mail

Religious or academic affiliation (if any)

A brief description of the proposed project

The goal(s) of the proposed project

An itemized budget which includes:

total cost of project

sources of funding other than the ABA

sum requested from the ABA

Send applications to: Greg Peters

THI, Biola University

13800 Biola Avenue

La Mirada, CA 90639

or submitted by email as a Word document to

[greg.peters@biola.edu](mailto:greg.peters@biola.edu)

## BOOK REVIEWS

*How to Live* by Judith Valente, 2018, Hampton Roads, Charlottesville, Va., 211 pp., \$16.95, ISBN 978-1-57174-798-3.

The subtitle of this book is “What the Rule of St. Benedict Teaches Us About Happiness, Meaning, and Community.” Who in our fragmented and troubled world would not want to buy a book with a title like that? Fortunately, there is actual advice and inspiration within the book from which just about anyone could benefit.

As is her usual style, Judith Valente starts with her own experience of life in the world in order to share insights she has gained from her deep encounters with Benedict’s rule. She organizes her reflections thematically, with topics like trust, silence, peaceful living, etc., and each chapter includes short quotes from the rule, her own observations, quotes from other literary sources and some very helpful questions for personal reflection.

Simple yet profound, this would be an excellent book for individuals and for oblate group discussion.

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*The Monkhooood of All Believers: The Monastic Foundation of Christian Spirituality* by Greg Peters, 2018, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, Mich. 210 pp., \$24.99, ISBN 9780801098055.

Greg Peters has become a leading voice in bringing the monastic tradition to non-Catholic Christians (and perhaps even Catholics) who have not been aware of the pivotal role of monasticism in church history. His latest book begins with a solidly academic exploration of the history of monasticism and its role in the early Church. He builds on this to examine the important role of asceticism in spirituality and how one interiorizes “monkhooood.”

With an expanded understanding of baptismal commitment and conversion, he is able to proclaim in the last section “All monks are Christians and all Christians are monks.” While this may seem like a stretch of definitions, his point is clear that to be a follower of Christ is to embody the basic vocation to

which Christ would call people, based on his own life and teachings.

Because the book is based on the author’s extensive study of the monastic tradition, it is heavy on historical information and citations of noted historical figures such as St. Bernard. Thus, it may not be the first book to which to point someone just beginning to explore the monastic tradition. Nevertheless, it is filled with both good information and good theology, as well as a challenge to contemporary Christians to embrace their monkhood.

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*The Herald of God’s Loving-Kindness – Book Four.* Gertrud the Great of Helfta, translated and introduced by Alexandra Barratt. Cistercian Publications (Liturgical Press), 2018, 293 pp., \$44.95, ISBN 978-0-87907-285-8.

Renowned scholar of the Helfta literature, Alexandra Barratt, continues the work begun with her translations of the first three books. Although the entire *Herald* is attributed to Gertrud, Book Four is a compilation of her reflections by “Sister N.,” who has arranged them chronologically according to the liturgical feasts that inspired them.

There is particular interest right now in the writings of Gertrud and the other Helfta writers as there is an active campaign to have Gertrud declared a Doctor of the Church. At the same time, this interest has demanded more research on some unanswered questions.

Barratt acknowledges the existence of the recently discovered Leipzig manuscript, but she unfortunately undertook this translation before that critical discovery had been more thoroughly explored. She states at the end of her introduction that this apparently earliest version “is very different from the current ‘standard edition’ ... and contains a considerable amount of previously unknown material.” She notes some speculations but concludes that “a more definitive view must await further study and an edition of the newly discovered version.”

So this “new” book may need some updated footnotes almost before the ink is dry on this printing. Nevertheless, it provides scholars and other readers an opportunity to read the text as it is in the current standard edition.

*Excerpts from the Eulogy for Father Terrence Kardong  
by Father Damien Dietlein*

How does one begin to describe Fr. Terrence? If one were to ask, “Who do **people** say Terrence was?” I’m sure there would be many different replies.

Fr. Denis told me: “I came here as a transfer junior. There was a group of kids near the front of the bus engaged in loud conversation and one of them seemed to be the center of attention. When the bus got to Richardton, I saw a station wagon and three black robed monks who put our luggage in the station wagon and drove off with the apparent leader of the group while the rest of us walked to the abbey. So this is how I first met Terrence and his three uncle monks.”

After junior college, Terrence was accepted as a novice. When he was up for evaluation, some were concerned about his impulsiveness and felt he was somewhat lacking in prudence and tended to be a bit flippant and exhibit a spirit of independence. Some even questioned whether he had a vocation, others feared that he might not persevere and simply get up and leave. But as time went on, they all admitted that he was a very fine student with a tremendous mind, was a good and faithful religious, and had shown much growth over the years, especially in spirituality and humility.

At Sant’ Anselmo, one of his mentors was the great and famous Adalbert De Vogüé. Much to the surprise even horror of some of his classmates, Terrence dared to challenge and disagree with him. But Terrence respected him and was greatly influenced by him and his works.

Terrence returned with his licentiate degree in hand and began his Benedictine scholarship. He had a very disciplined work ethic. Mornings were always spent doing research and writing. After lunch he’d spend an hour or two doing manual labor. He was a voracious reader and years later could talk about books and articles he had read.

Terrence’s office in our library had long tables spread around the room. When he worked on his mammoth commentary, he had all his research books laid open on these long tables according to subject and could go from table to table. After he completed his commentary, he still used all these tables as he usually had several different projects going at the same time, and each project had its own long table at which he could sit and work.

He became editor of the *American Benedictine Review* in 1981. Sr. Renée became a partner in the

work of publishing each issue of the ABR. She was good for Terrence and became a valuable asset in assuring the professional excellence of each issue. Things didn’t always go smoothly but they respected one another’s gifts.

Kathleen Norris said that when she first met him, Terrence was “noticeably uncomfortable around women.” Some of this may have been because he was, as Sr. Renée mentioned, “excruciatingly shy.” But he became an advocate for Benedictine women in scholarship. Sr. Mary Forman wrote: “After my first year of reading early monastic sources and his hand calligraphied notes, he said I should go on to graduate school. When I asked what I would do with a PhD, he said, “Be a monastic scholar.” Then he sent a letter to my prioress and council suggesting that they send me to graduate studies, but [first] to send me back to him to learn Latin and French, so I could get into graduate school.”

Kathleen Norris echoed this saying: “The first time I came to the abbey, I was a mess of doubts. After a conversation with Terrence, I decided to write him about my religious quandary, and he sent a beautiful letter back. He also sent a book. I sighed when I opened the envelope. It was Hans Küng’s *Does God Exist?* **but** - in the margin of the mailing label, Terrence had written, “If this doesn’t work, try Flannery O’Connor’s *The Habit of Being*. And that was the book I needed - it changed my life! I still have that letter, **and** the envelope.

Above all, Terrence was a scholar and a monk. As Sr. Judith Sutera said: “He was a man of amazing intellectual gifts: his ability not merely to read and comprehend various languages, write in a way both scholarly and entertaining, engage in scholarly debate from a deep well of knowledge and careful thought (and no hesitation about expressing his opinions). But more important than being gifted is that he was gift. What he gave to the world of monastic study and wisdom is incalculable.”

Despite his international reputation, Terrence was not arrogant, though some people may have mistaken his shyness for arrogance, and some found him intimidating till they got to know him. He was a humble person. He could be impatient and brusque but he was also kind, sensitive, easily hurt and yet bearing no grudge.

When God had finished creating Terrence – warts and all – God broke the mould. Terrence, we will really miss you.

## 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.

We are seeking essays of 3,000-3,200 words that deal with a Benedictine theme. We have included some suggested topics below, though topics are not limited to these themes. We encourage you to use a combination of published sources and your own lived personal experience. This is not a research paper, but rather a more personal statement about some aspect of The Rule/ Benedictine life showing the writer’s personal process of thinking and feeling that led to his/her conclusions.

In keeping with the upcoming ABA conference theme of “2020 Vision,” we are seeking particularly essays that explore being Benedictine in the 21st century. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Adapting The Rule in concrete ways to 21st century needs
- How is RB 7 is relevant to today’s issues?
- Is contemplation possible in the age of Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram?
- Delve into a tradition in your monastic community (for example a monastic or liturgical practice, annual community event, social event) and examine through archival material, interviews with current members and Oblates how this tradition impacts your community. How is it a contemporary expression of the Benedictine charism?
- What tool from “Tools For Good Works” is absolutely essential for today’s world? Who in your experience is a master in using this tool? What challenge does using this tool pose for you and for our world?
- How do different members of your community exemplify aspects of the Benedictine charism? Who personifies humility, or hospitality or good zeal ... and why? How is their witness relevant in the 21st century?

### *Requirements for Participation:*

- Open to professed members and oblates up to ten years after first profession or oblation
- Submit an essay of 3,000 - 3,200 words as a double -spaced and computer-generated Word document
- **Deadline : March 31, 2020**
- Send to Judith Valente, contest committee chair, at [jvalente17@msn.com](mailto:jvalente17@msn.com).

Winners will be notified by May 15, 2020.

### *Prize:*

a 2-yr membership in ABA with waiver of registration and hospitality fees for the 2020 Convention  
a book of interest for monastics/oblates

Possibility of having one’s essay published in a relevant publication

Possible mentoring by contest committee members for runner-ups to help further develop their thoughts/writing

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