



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Published under the auspices of the American Benedictine Academy

www.americanbenedictine.org

Volume 53, Number 3

October 2022

Inside this issue:

President's Message	2
Canon Law Column	3
Feature: Benedictine SOIL	5
News	6
Convention News	10
Membership Form	12

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.

ABA to Celebrate 75 Years

"On December 30, 1947, abbots or representatives of seventeen American Benedictine abbeys met at St. Procopius' Priory, Chicago, to found an American Benedictine Academy," says the constitution of the organization. That means that the coming year will mark the 75th year since its founding. While it has evolved in several ways since then, it is still about the intellectual life of American Benedictines, as stated in an article in *The American Benedictine Review* in 1950: "The specific objective of the organization is the promotion of scholarship among American Benedictines, productive scholarship. This is the proper sphere of the Academy."

The problem that was being addressed in the 1940s is that, while Benedictines were staffing colleges and excelling in every academic area, they were by and large unable to attend professional meetings in their discipline. Therefore, it was decided that they would benefit from connecting with other monastics for professional sharing. They formed eight sections: sacred sciences, philosophy, social sciences, natural sciences, education and psychology, language and literature, fine arts, and library science. Initiated and sponsored by men's monasteries, "only Benedictine monks may become constituent members. Other classes of membership are open to men and women in sympathy with the objectives of the Academy."

By the time of the 1965 constitution, women had become much more active and equal members, and all had more opportunities to mingle with their academic peers in secular meetings. The Academy was able to move away from the divisions by disciplines, especially the sciences, and to maintain and strengthen its focus on what was more specifically Benedictine. The 1965 document said, "To invigorate the tradition of learned work in our day is the *raison d'être* of the American Benedictine Academy. Only the enthusiastic interest and energetic cooperation of all members of the Benedictine Order as well as of other men and women interested in things Benedictine and things of the mind will bring the dreams of the founders to fruition."

This mention of other men and women was a glimpse of what the ABA is today. This newsletter will be celebrating the anniversary with more about the past, present and future of the organization in coming issues.

President's Message

With the 2022 ABA business meeting, Rev. Greg Peters passed the leadership of the Academy to Gregory Evans, an oblate of St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, Virginia. Gregory was elected vice-president/president-elect at the 2020 convention.

Dear ABA Members and Friends,

Covid was unable to stop our biennial Convention thanks to our use of current technology. Our convention was a success with a fantastic turnout. We are now preparing for our next convention to be held at Saint Meinrad Archabbey on August 7-11, 2024. At that convention we will look into the "Liturgy of the Hours, the evolution."

At our last board meeting, we proposed to examine how we can improve what we, as ABA, are doing by reviewing our Constitution and By-Laws and through better use of technology. In addition, we will be celebrating 2023 as the 75th anniversary of the American Benedictine Academy, which was established in December 1947.

We will be checking the ABA's archives for notable events and accomplishments during this span and making them available to members and

friends. In addition, we will be looking for articles on the Liturgy of Hours as it relates to American Benedictines and also seeking information on liturgists past and present who helped develop it. This information will be presented to the membership during the 2024 conference year.

Gregory Evans
ABA president
greg.oblsb@gmail.com

Editor's Note: If you have information or memories regarding the history of the Academy that would be of interest to our readers, or names of significant liturgists we should highlight in next year's issues, please get in touch with me (jsutera@mountosb.org)

RECORDINGS OF CONVENTION PRESENTATIONS

The ABA has recordings of each of the 2022 convention presentations at a cost of \$8 per video DVD or \$5 for audio only CD (includes shipping), or \$2 each for digital mp4 files.

Sister Laura Swan, OSB – "The World of the Desert Ascetics"

Rev. Dr. Donald Richmond, Oblate – "The Fool with Words"

Sister Mary Forman, OSB – "Give me a word ...
Lectio divina and the Sayings and Lives of the Desert"

Please specify format and desired talks, and send with payment (checks should be made to Sister Judith, not to ABA) to:

Judith Sutera, OSB
801 So. 8th St.
Atchison, KS 66002
<jsutera@mountosb.org>



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Submit any announcements or articles to:

Editor: Judith Sutera, OSB

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

Email: jsutera@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 found online at:

www.americanbenedictine.org

Why Belong To A Monastic Congregation?

Introduction

Most Benedictine monasteries are autonomous monasteries, and their members are members only of their respective monastery. However, with a few exceptions, autonomous monasteries belong to a monastic congregation, and are frequently referred to as “member monasteries.”

Membership in a monastic congregation has many advantages. Perhaps the primary advantage is the mutual support often derived from a common heritage among the member monasteries. This mutual support may be financial if a monastery is having financial difficulties; it may be the sharing of personnel such as a canonical administrator or financial expert.

Of course, this mutual support could and does exist among monasteries outside of the structures of a monastic congregation. In the United States there are the conference of prioresses, the meetings of abbots or prioresses, the programs for those in initial formation, along with other collaboration among the monasteries and their members.

Therefore, why would an autonomous monastery belong to a monastic congregation? This is the question I will explore in this article.

Monastic Congregation or Diocesan Bishop

There is a norm in canon law that an autonomous monastery must belong either to a religious institute or be entrusted to the special vigilance of its diocesan bishop (canon 615). The religious institute in this case is a monastic congregation. If the monastery belongs to a monastic congregation, the president of the congregation must have authority regarding the monastery according to its proper law. If the monastery is subject to the diocesan bishop, the bishop has authority within the monastery according to its approved constitution and norms of the Code of Canon Law. An autonomous monastery subject to a diocesan bishop is often referred to as a “615 monastery.”

Besides the responsibility of general supervision, the diocesan bishop of a 615 monastery has the following rights and responsibilities in the Code of Canon Law:

- He presides at elections (canon 625.2)
- He must receive a yearly financial accounting (canon 637)
- His consent is required for alienation of property and indebtedness above certain amounts (638.4)
- He must confirm an indult of departure (dispensation) for a person in temporary vows (canon 688.2).

If an autonomous monastery belongs to a monastic congregation, the exercise of such authority is exercised by the president according to the decisions of the general chapter as expressed in the proper law and other documents. Further, those persons responsible for exercising authority are other monastics chosen by the general chapter. Therefore, the exercise of authority is done by persons who understand the uniqueness of monastic life and governance.

On the other hand, most diocesan bishops are not members of religious institutes, let alone a monastery. Therefore, a diocesan bishop may be very supportive of a monastic community, but he and his advisors probably have only a general understanding of monastic life and governance.

Establishment of an Autonomous Monastery

An autonomous monastery can be established in one of two ways. First, a monastic congregation can establish a monastery as an autonomous monastery and a member monastery of the monastic congregation. The second way is that the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life in Rome (DICLSAL) can establish a 615 monastery.

Closure of an Autonomous Monastery

The closure of an autonomous monastery (suppression) that is a member monastery of a monastic congregation belongs to the general chapter and/or the president and council, depending upon the proper law. The sale and distribution of the assets also belong to the general chapter and/or president and council. This distribution first must provide for any members who have transferred to other monasteries or petitioned for a dispensation (indult of departure). Any further distribution of assets is usually done in accord with the expressed wishes of the monastic community. The administration of the sale and

(continued next page)

distribution of the assets is usually overseen by the president and council.

The closure of a 615 monastery belongs to DICLSAL, as does the distribution of the assets (canon 616.2). The sale and distribution of the assets usually is entrusted to the diocesan bishop.

Visitations

One of the original purposes for forming monastic congregations was to establish the system of visitation. The system of visitation was a method to ensure that monasteries were remaining faithful to the Rule of Benedict and monastic life.

Today, visitations continue to be a method to encourage fidelity to the monastic way of life. Visitors also reflect with members of a monastery on their way of life and assist the members and leadership in addressing issues within the community.

The procedures, qualifications of visitors, and the authority of the monastic congregation following a visitation depend upon the proper law of each monastic congregation. However, the visitors are normally monastics. On the other hand, if a monastery is a 615 monastery, a visitation is conducted by the diocesan bishop or his delegates and the procedures depend upon the decision of the diocesan bishop.

Viability of a Monastery

One of the responsibilities of a monastic congregation is to provide leadership if a member monastery can no longer govern itself. Another is that, if a member monastery is not financially viable, the monastic congregation must provide financial support for the members. Such assistance is generally provided by the other member monasteries through the president of the monastic congregation.

A diocesan bishop does not have financial responsibility for a 615 monastery and its members. If there is an issue of leadership, the competency to provide for leadership is governed by the papal *motu propria* "Cor Orans."

Some monastic congregations have provided the president with the authority to modify or suspend the governance of a monastery that may be non-viable or has only a few members. If this authority does not exist, the Dicastery of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (DICLSAL) must

provide for the matter. It seems preferable that persons who know the community work with the community to provide for its governance and future rather than a dicastery in Rome.

A Monastery and DICLSAL

On occasion, the DICLSAL may intervene in an autonomous monastery, even a monastery that belongs to a monastic congregation. The monastic congregation is there to assist the monastery during the intervention and at times to request DICLSAL to respect the rights of the monastic congregation to handle the issue rather than DICLSAL. Normally the proper law of the monastic congregation provides for the president, at times with the consent of the council, to grant dispensations from norms of the proper law governing the autonomous monasteries and their members. A 615 monastery must seek dispensations from the diocesan bishop or DICLSAL.

Other Canonical Advantages

There are other canonical advantages for monasteries and members when the monastery belongs to a monastic congregation. One important advantage is that the proper law of the monastic congregation generally provides for protection of rights of individual monastics. A member may appeal to the president of the monastic congregation rather than to DICLSAL. The issue may then be resolved by mutual understanding and collaboration by monastics themselves.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that being a member of a monastic congregation has the advantage over being a 615 monastery because the authority and responsibilities of the monastic congregation and its president are established by the delegates of the member monasteries through general chapter. Further, the exercise of authority is done by monastics themselves who have an ongoing relationship with each member monastery and understand the charism of monasticism.

Daniel J Ward, OSB
Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn
djaward44@gmail.com

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

Benedictine S.O.I.L.

First there is a creative spark, an idea that fuels individual creativity and sets that idea into the public domain. Could S.O.I.L. become a reality? It began with creative energy in the imagination of Sister Madeleine Mary, CSM. This was no little idea. This was huge and if realized it would change the lives of the Sisters at St. Mary's and their Episcopal Southern Province forever. As with all new projects and change, one comes to expect roadblocks and "what ifs" from inside and outside the primary community after the initial euphoria. Sister Madeleine Mary met political, economic, theological and practical issues with courage and integrity. This dream would be realized. Today, there is a vibrant intern program at St. Mary's.

So, what is this program? Women and men may come to St. Mary's for the summer or for a longer nine month program. During this time, they work alongside the monastic community, rooted in S.O.I.L. (Sacramental, Organic, Intentional Living). The mission of the program is spiritual and personal growth guided by the rhythm of work and prayer of the Rule of St. Benedict. The interns live next door to the convent in St. Dorothy's House. While they share some meals and prayer with the community, there also is time to bond as a group. There is time for study, rest, recreation, silence, prayer and work in and out of the monastic community. Interns take an active role in liturgy and the chapel is the heart of their spiritual journey.

While the main physical work is agricultural, each person is recognized for the gifts and talents they bring to the community and are encouraged to discern how those gifts are best used on their journey. One major project is growing and packaging lavender, part of which is sold to Thistle Farms in Nashville. This is a non-profit social enterprise run by women who have survived lives of prostitution, trafficking, addiction and life on the streets. Rev. Becca Stevens (Episcopal priest) dreamed of creating a way to rise up against systems that commoditize, criminalize, and abuse women. She calls it love. It is the exact opposite of the punishing system most women end up in after an arrest. This is one of the many ways interns see theology in action.

As I drove to St. Mary's I catalogued in my mind what I had read on the internet and in brochures

explaining S.O.I.L. While this mission statement fulfills the public definition, perhaps it is best understood by those who live it, who have learned from it.

Paul, the master gardener, was the first person I met as I drove into St. Mary's. Good omen. He is Paul; I am Pat: "two P's in a pod!" His smile was as wide as the state of Tennessee from east to west. He pointed the direction to the parking lot around the bend. I was excited to meet my first interns on this journey of discovery. It was Sister Hannah's huge spirit of welcome which embraced me. I was in good hands.

We walked to a shelter outside which became the meeting place of the interns who were working outside. My first questions roamed through my head and as I met them, I dismissed every one of my preconceived notions and questions. These young people were different. They were not what I expected. Back to square one. Let them talk and I would listen. At first there was silence but as they began to talk about their experience as interns, they were relaxed in one another's presence. They were in a circle of trust and I did not threaten them because they were so solid in their bond. They were excited to share their experiences and held nothing back. Truly honest, open and vulnerable as they wanted me to understand who they were and why they were there.

For each of the interns, coming to S.O.I.L. represented a drastic change in the way they lived. The slowing down and seeing more of everything, being intentional about their day, the rhythm of work and prayer all affected each person. Lou spoke of their awareness of "Being Here Now." Was it painful? Definitely. The silence was most profound and most different. It was beautiful how Lou was able to share some of the difficulties one might encounter when changing how one lives. Lou's prayer experience was from a church where silence was not primary, liturgical worship was foreign. Lou spoke of dealing with anger. The silence gave them space and time to deal with issues not dealt with before. Lou had been a volunteer during the year and became acquainted with the sisters, but living with them was totally different.

Caralynn had another whole set of issues. She considered herself as coming from a normal, everyday family. BUT! She is a cancer survivor so her world was filled with people who related to that huge part of who she is and really weren't seeing much more

since her illness. Being an intern was almost like starting over and she was able to be Caralynn because Lou and Dixon had not known her when she had cancer and she was able to focus on discernment and not always be “the one who had cancer.” She was able to laugh and not worry about someone treating her like a fragile person who was about to die. For Caralynn, intentional family became important and she had a new sense of how animals fit into her life. The community has pets! They have a 13 year old cat named Sophia and a 3 year old pitbull lab mix named Ellie. Often, “core community” was in Caralynn’s conversation about what is important to her.

Dixon gave us the quote of the day, “Grow the Garden – Grow the SOUL!” A thoughtful young man, Dixon talked of learning from the outdoors. For him working in the garden was spiritually nourishing. “It is intentional.” It was like he woke up and his day was going to be one of discovery. He said, “the Order of the Day became poetry. I became grounded emotionally.” Later he related that he realized after being there a couple of weeks that life seemed to be in balance. He mentioned a phrase to the other two, and all burst into laughter. That definitely was a private joke. Yet here they were, talking freely about prayer and work and being young adults with a stranger. There was no embarrassment or hesitancy. Each was able to share what is important to each of them.

Our time together was over too soon. Sister Hannah and I walked up to the convent meeting Sister Madeleine Mary on the way. We went to the convent’s library and Sister Madeleine Mary told me of how it all began. Her passion washed over me and I felt her excitement and love for what was once only a spark of an idea but now a viable ministry. Sister Madeleine Mary, like so many other women religious is the silent, strong mover behind the scenes. Through her determination, her dream came true and now many young men and women, middle-agers and even those in their golden years may experience what it means to be Benedictine in the 21st century.

Sister Hannah and I looked out over the mountains from the dining room. It was as if the very mountains proclaimed the life experienced here. Sister Hannah walked me to my car. We laughed and talked like old friends. Sister Hannah embodies Benedictine hospitality. I was welcomed and through her, the spirit of St. Mary’s was shared. The gospel tells us not to

hide our light under a bushel. The spark, the light in Sister Madeleine Mary’s heart and soul has already lit the lives of people too numerous to count. Through the impact of S.O.I.L., interns and St. Mary’s community have lit “fire” and the world is a brighter place.

Pat Pickett, Oblate
St. Benedict’s Monastery
St. Joseph, Minnesota

Oblate Pat Pickett, our roving reporter, contributes pieces that introduce various dimensions of today’s Benedictine world.



Father Michael Calhoun, OSB, has been elected abbot of St. Bede Abbey in Peru, Ill.

Abbot Joseph Wittstock, OCSO, was re-elected to continue his leadership at the Cistercian Monastery of the Holy Cross in Berryville, Va.; Abbot Augustine Myslinksi, OCSO, was re-elected at the Cistercian Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, Ga.

* * * * *

The Dorothy Day Canonization Prayer Network (www.DorothyDaySaint.org) and Casa Esther Catholic Worker, Omro, Wisc. (www.CasaEsther.org) are sponsoring a series of webinars on Servant of God Dorothy Day, a Benedictine oblate of St. Procopius Abbey in Lisle, Ill. The presentations are:

Saturday November 5th - “Exploring Dorothy Day’s Spirituality: Benedictine Influences”: What is it about Benedictine spirituality and charisms that attracted Peter and Dorothy? Which Benedictines of the 1930’s and 40’s impacted their ideas? Why might Dorothy Day have chosen to become an oblate of St. Procopius Abbey? Historian Anne Klejment will explore the answers to these questions and more! Anne is a Core Committee member of the Dorothy Day Canonization Prayer Network and professor emerita of History at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn. Among her publications are

(News - continued)

“Dorothy Day’s Socially Engaged Devotion to St. Joseph,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Spring 2022), 1-25 and “Staten Island Spirituality: Dorothy Day’s ‘True Story’ Columns,” *Commonweal* (14 June 2019), 9-11. Moderator is David Mueller, coordinator of the Dorothy Day Canonization Prayer Network.

Saturday November 12th - “A Panel Discussion with Catholic Worker Members who also Chose to Become Benedictine Oblates”: How did each become involved in the Catholic Worker movement? Why did each decide to become a professed Benedictine oblate? And with what community and why? How did they integrate Benedictine spirituality into their “Catholic Worker” lives? Panelists will be Rosalie Riegle, Catholic Worker historian and author, Core Committee member DD Canonization Prayer Network; Liza Apper, co-founder of St. Benedict Catholic Worker House, Fresno Cal.; Carmina Chapp, co-founder Dorothy Day Catholic Worker Farm, Haley’s Lake, Penn. Hear their stories and ask questions!! Moderator is Jeff Korgen, Coordinator of the Dorothy Day Guild (2014 - 2022)

Saturday November 19th - “A Panel Discussion with Leaders of the Canonization Cause”: What are the steps to becoming a saint? How and when did the cause start? What has been accomplished and were there any “bumps along the way”? What is the current status of the cause and what still needs to happen? What can I do to further the cause? Hear the answers to these questions and much more from George Horton, who was there from the beginning and led the efforts of the Dorothy Day Guild through the completion of the Diocesan Phase in December 2021 and Dr. Waldery Hilgeman, Postulator of the canonization cause for Dorothy Day, who is now responsible for moving the cause forward in Rome. Moderator is Kevin Ahern, associate professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College

For updates click on or go to www.oblatewebinars.org. For questions, call David Mueller 920-809-4282.

The General Chapter for the Benedictine women’s communities of the Federation of St. Scholastica was held in June in Atchison, Kan. June 15-19. Delegates from the 17 member monasteries heard presentations by Sisters Judith Sutera, OSB (Atchison,

Kan.) and Maricarmen Bracamontes (Torreon, Mex.) and celebrated the centennial of the final papal approbation of the group in 1922.

President Lynn McKenzie (Cullman, Ala.) was re-elected and will be assisted by the elected councilors Sisters Elaine Fischer (Atchison, Kan.), Susan Quaintance (Chicago, Ill.), Anne Wambach (Erie, Penn.), Kimberly Porter (Covington, Ky.) and Maricarmen Bracamontes (Torreon, Mex.).

Another important item of business during the chapter was the vote to change the group’s title from Federation of St. Scholastica to the Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica. Recent Vatican documents, which defined the terms federation and monastic congregation, made it clear that the group needed to re-claim the name that matches their canonical status as a monastic congregation. This name change will be reflected in the editing of their constitution, *Call to Life*, at the same time that the amendments to some specific norms, also made during the course of the general chapter, will be published. The website now reflects this new title and may be found at <Monasticcongregationss.org>.

The Federation of St. Scholastica celebrated the shift that led our foremothers to form the federation 100 years ago in the usual way with historical displays, celebratory meals and programs, a specially composed song, and an anniversary publication at our quadrennial Federation Chapter. Then we shifted the sands again by inviting oblates and seekers to join professed members for a two-day colloquium, “Benedictine Life: A Vision Unfolding.” It was a bold step to acknowledge that the Benedictine tradition is not solely the domain of those who have professed their entire lives to living it. It was visible proof that we are in a different place than we were 100 years ago, or even 50 years ago, and that there are varied ways to live Benedictine spirituality, and that interest in monasticism is growing even as the number of those who choose to make a lifelong commitment to living it in a monastery is decreasing.

The colloquium planners intentionally created a hybrid event, equally onsite and virtual, to include a broad range of participants and presenters and to recognize that technology has made geographical challenges amorphous even if we are still bound by time zones. Registrants included 250 followers

of Benedict: women, men, professed, oblate, and seekers. In an unfortunate reminder of our human vulnerability, COVID exposures caused the colloquium to adjust to being completely virtual. Some of the symbolism of the gathering was lost, but an even greater loss was our ability to be with one another, informally discuss ideas, sit in one another's real presence, and pray.

The planning committee, monastic women from six monasteries, spent months formulating goals for the four-year celebration that began in 2018. The goals were to: make our Benedictine way of life visible and accessible in new ways to today's seekers by celebrating our history and envisioning our future; share our lives as Benedictine women, past and present, what we stand for, and why we do what we do as we invite others to experience our charism and good zeal and to join us in "running while we have the light of life;" and support Benedictine life today so that it can continue to be the same kind of stabilizing presence in our cities and towns and light for spiritual seekers that it has been for more than 1,500 years.

They wrote and published a prayer and set up a website where 15 sisters from different monasteries took turns sharing weekly reflections during the four years leading up to the chapter and colloquium. They posted podcast interviews with sisters, oblates, benefactors and alums. The idea was to invite seekers into Benedictine life and spirituality, an invitation that would culminate in the gathering that took place in June. The key difference was the wide net they cast. This was to be a gathering of all those seeking God through the Benedictine charism.

Like the intended audience, the eight women asked to present papers and to respond to them represented different ways of living Benedictine life. The wisdom of participants was also gathered in small group sessions. The colloquium charged participants with seeing and thinking differently. Papers expertly examined the interpretation of history, presented models of change, addressed theories of emergence, testified to the value of Benedictine life in the world, and held up Benedictine monasticism, already being lived in new ways, as a path as useful for following the gospel today as it was 1,500 years ago.

The papers and responses will be published in a book supported by a grant from ABA and recordings

of the presentations will be made available through Benedictine networks.

Linda Romey, OSB
Mount St. Benedict
Erie, Penn.

* * * * *

Sisters from ten member monasteries of the Monastic Congregation of Saint Benedict gathered at St. Benedict's Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota in July. At that time, prioresses and delegates of the member monasteries elected Sister Nancy Bauer as president for a six-year term. The group has also changed its title from "federation" to "monastic congregation."

* * * * *

The North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors held their biennial meeting August 4-9 at St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana. Over 50 oblate directors and oblates heard talks by Father Thomas Gricoski (St. Meinrad's - St. Meinrad, Ind.), Sister Judith Sutera (Mount St. Scholastica - Atchison, Kan.) and Sister Kathryn Huber (Monastery Immaculate Conception - Ferdinand, Ind.), giving a presentation prepared by Sister Anita Louise Lowe, who was unable to attend. The attendees also shared information about their oblate groups and hopes for the future. Sister Priscilla Cohen (Sacred Heart - Cullman, Ala.) was re-elected as president of NAABOD and Father Meinrad Miller (St. Benedict's - Atchison, Kan.) was chosen to be vice-president.

* * * * *

From June 6-16, Belmont Abbey was host of the Benedictine Junior Summer Institute. Twenty-six junior monks from twelve different monasteries attended. Over the nine day program, they joined the local community for prayer and liturgy, participated in monastic classes, learned about the history of the Catholic Church in North Carolina, and had recreational outings to the Biltmore House and the National Whitewater Center. Along the way, the junior monks got to know each other and form friendships with monks from other houses, and had many opportunities to talk to each other about their monastic experiences.

* * * * *

The abbots and elected delegates from each of the monasteries of the American Cassinese Benedictine Congregation held their general chapter at St. Benedict's Abbey in Atchison, Kansas, from June 19 to 24. The theme for the conference portion was the effects of the pandemic. It began with a presentation by Dr. Emily Cash from St. Luke's Institute on "The Impact of the Pandemic on our Culture." Father Francis McCarty, OSB, from St. Anselm Abbey focused on the impact of technology and video conference meetings. Brother John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, a monk and professor from St. Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana spoke on "How Do We Help Community Members Live Celibate Chastity?: New Challenges Through the Pandemic." There was also a virtual presentation by Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB: "Monasticism at this point in time."

The meeting also included reports on institutions and projects that the congregation supports, discussion of business matters, and election of officials. The chapter elected Father Jonathan R. Licari, OSB, a monk of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn. as the new Abbot President. The members of the congregation council are Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, (St. Gregory's Abbey - Shawnee, Okla.), Abbot Marion Nguyen (St. Martin's Abbey - Lacey, Wash.), Father Edward Mazich (St. Vincent Archabbey - Latrobe, Penn.), Father Elias Correa-Torres (Belmont Abbey - Belmont, N.C.) and executive secretary Father Michael Patella (St. John's Abbey - Collegeville, Minn.).

Most recently, Fr. Jonathan has served as administrator of Mary, Mother of the Church Abbey, Richmond, Va. The abbots and delegates also approved a proposal for that monastery to become once again a dependent house on Belmont Abbey in North Carolina, which originally founded them.

* * * * *

The General Chapter of the Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO) was held in Assisi, Italy, in the third week of September for delegates from all the member communities of women and men from around the world. The chapter conducted business regarding the monasteries and heard addresses from Dom Bernardus, their abbot general, and Gregory Polan, OSB, abbot primate of the Benedictines.

* * * * *

The Cushwa Center administers five funding opportunities to support scholarly research in a variety of subject areas. The next application deadline for all five programs is December 31, 2022. The Cushwa Center invites applications for: Research Travel Grants for archival research at Notre Dame; D'Agostino Grants for research in Rome; the Cyprian Davis Prize for works-in-progress on the Black Catholic experience; Guerin Grants for historical research centering on Catholic women; and Hibernian Awards for Irish and Irish-American history. Specific contact information for each grant is on the Cushwa website at: <https://cushwa.nd.edu/grant-opportunities/>.

* * * * *

The Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) has been sponsoring a series of leadership-centered webinars that address the role of the archives in religious communities now and for the future. They also address various models of curating archives of religious communities that have come to completion. Whether you are in leadership, research, libraries, the arts, or archives, these talks speak to you and your work. They are relevant to men's archives as well!

You can watch these presentations from earlier in the year on Vimeo.

Securing the Legacy, Sharing Our Wisdom: Sisters' Archives as Bearers of Charism with journalist and historian, Eileen Markey - <<https://vimeo.com/675687059>>

Spectrum of Fulfillment with archivists Sharon Casey, OP and Lisa Schell - <<https://vimeo.com/720876687>>

Initiatives: What Are the Options? was held on Oct. 20 and should be available on Vimeo soon.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2024 ABA Convention

Liturgy of the Hours: the Evolution

August 7 - 11, 2024

St. Meinrad Archabbey

St. Meinrad, Indiana

ABA Convention News

Election of Officers

At the July convention, a new vice-president (who becomes president in two years) and board members were elected. The new vice-president is Sister Jeana Visel, OSB. She is a member of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, and works at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology as Dean of School of Theology Programs and Director of the Graduate Theology Program. She also is an accomplished iconographer and teaches courses on iconography and spirituality. A member of the ABA since 2016, she has served on the ABA board for several years, and is also on the editorial board of the *American Benedictine Review*.

There are both familiar and new faces on the ABA board. Sister Colleen Maura McGrane of the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Mo., completed her term and was not eligible for re-election. Board member Tom Piazza remains on the board for another 2 years. Sister Edith Bogue had been serving a 2-year term to complete the board term of Gregory Evans, who was elected vice-president in 2020. This year, she was re-elected for a full four-year term. Sister Edith is a sociologist, spiritual director, and social worker who is in the process of transfer to Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Ala., where she currently serves as the associate director of the retreat center.

The second board member who will serve for four years is Judith Valente, an oblate of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas. She is a creative writer, nationally recognized reporter and has previous experience as a board member.

Since Sister Jeana was elected vice president, a third board member had to be elected to finish the last two years of her board term. She will be replaced by Sister Virginia Jung, OSB, a sister of St. Scholastica Monastery in Chicago, Ill. She is a pastoral counselor in private practice and her community's archivist. She has been the convenor of the ABA's Archivist and Librarians Section for the past several years.

Egregia Award

The Egregia Award is the principal award conferred by the American Benedictine Academy upon individual members. This award is bestowed on persons who have been members of the Academy for a minimum of eight years; and whose achievement or contribution to the Academy's purpose is long-standing. This year's award recipient was Sister Judith Sutera. In his remarks, ABA president Greg Peters said, "This year's recipient has not only been an active member of the ABA for more than 30 years, but she has contributed to Benedictine life and scholarship for many years.

"Sister Judith entered Mount Saint Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas, in 1974, serving as a school counselor and in the monastery's maintenance department. Taking an interest in monastic theology, she attended St. John's School of Theology, earning a master's degree. Her thesis became the book *True Daughters: Monastic Identity and American Benedictine Women's History*, published in 1987. She has continued to publish books and articles throughout the years, including *Vinedresser's Notebook: Spiritual Lessons in Pruning, Waiting, Harvesting and Abundance* and, most recently, the first inclusive language English version of the Rule of St. Benedict with commentary from Liturgical Press. She is editor of *Magistra*, an academic journal of women's spirituality in history, and of our own *American Monastic Newsletter*. She has served on the editorial board for *American Benedictine Review* and on the steering committee of the National Conference on the History of Women Religious. She is a speaker and retreat leader for religious communities, academic conferences, non-Catholic theology schools, initial formation groups and lay retreat centers. She's been a director for lay oblates, and also teaches novitiate courses in monastic spirituality and works with the Sophia Retreat Center in Atchison. Sr. Judith also holds a masters' degree in counseling.

"She often jokes about being the institutional memory of the ABA but it is less of a joke and really just the truth. Over the years she has served the ABA as its web master, newsletter editor, recorder of convention talks and all-around cheerleader. When it comes to the

ABA, Sister Judith has modeled well the motto of Pope Gregory the Great: servant of the servants of God. As well, in her early years in the Academy she won the first young monastic essay contest.

"Anyone who knows Judith (and most of us do) knows that she is a wonderful person, with a wonderful spirit; an embodiment of all things Benedictine. It is a privilege for me to present this year's Egregia Award to her on behalf of the ABA Board. Sr. Judith, thank you for all you have done for the ABA, for all you do and for all you will do in the future. You are a gift to this Academy."

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 ten years. In keeping with this year's ABA conference theme of "Give Me a Word," entrants were encouraged to submit essays that explore how God speaks in monastic tradition, the Rule of Benedict, and monastic life, and what word (wisdom) Benedictine life has to share with the world.

From several entries on this topic submitted by both vowed members and oblates the committee selected the essay, "Loving the Young in Every Orientation" by Miriam Perkins, an oblate of St. Walburg Monastery, Villa Hills, Kentucky. The committee appreciated its gentle, reflective style and integration of monastic sources in encouraging readers to help the young navigate the perplexing waters of sexuality and gender with intention and wisdom.

For her winning essay, Miriam received the book *Coenobium* by Michael Casey, a 2-year membership in the ABA, and free registration and hospitality for the next ABA in-person convention.

Sister Colleen Maura McGrane
ABA Board's Essay Contest Coordinator

DON'T FORGET

All ABA memberships run concurrent to the calendar year, regardless of when the membership began. If your membership is not a 2-year membership that extends to 2024, it's time to renew for the coming year. The membership form is on the last page of this newsletter and at the ABA website. Please 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.

The Terrence G. Kardong MONASTIC STUDIES GRANT

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:

Gregory Evans

greg.oblsb@gmail.com

American Benedictine Academy

Membership Form



Type of Membership:

Individual/1 Yr (\$35) _____ Individual/2 Yrs (\$50) _____ Student/1 Yr (\$15) _____

New _____ Renewal _____

Payment: Check _____ Paypal _____

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Country (if not USA) _____

Work Phone _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Religious Community/Oblate Affiliation/Academic/Other

Areas of Interest You Wish to Share with the Academy

Please check if you wish to participate in one or more ABA Sections:

Monastic Research _____ Visual Arts _____ Archives _____ Library _____

Send form to:

Julie A. Ferraro - ABA
Mount St. Scholastica
801 South 8th Street
Atchison, KS 66002
Email: ABAcadSec@gmail.com

ABA Use Only

Date Rec'd	Amount	Payment	Year

V. 2022