



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.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2024 ABA Convention
Liturgy of the Hours: the Evolution
August 7 - 11, 2024
St. Meinrad Archabbey
St. Meinrad, Indiana

Plans are well underway for the 2024 ABA convention, which will take place from August 7 to 11 of 2024. The event will be hosted by the monks of St. Meinrad Archabbey in St. Meinrad, Ind., at their ample and hospitable retreat and conference center. The ABA is grateful to be able to have an in-person meeting after two conferences held entirely in a virtual format. This will be a wonderful opportunity to renew friendships, meet new members and share in the networking and collaborating that can only happen when people are able to get together in the informal times between presentations.

The Academy is celebrating the history and development of the Liturgy of the Hours in Benedictine/Cistercian life. Thus far, several speakers have been confirmed. Sisters Joanna Burley, OSB, and Sister Cecilia Dwyer, OSB, are both members of St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, Va., and have many years of experience and expertise in liturgical practice. Brother John Glasenapp, OSB, of St. Meinrad Archabbey, is director of the Saint Meinrad Institute for Sacred Music and a noted musicologist. Dr. J. J. Wright, a fellow at Notre Dame University, is a conductor, pianist, composer, and producer.

In addition, there will be section meetings and other activities customary for ABA conventions. More extensive information about the presenters and their topics, along with registration information, will be in The February 2024 newsletter. Members and sponsor communities will receive a discount on their registration, so all are encouraged to make sure their membership is up to date and to invite other interested persons to attend.

President's Message

Greetings, ABA members and friends!

On the front page, you will see some of the preliminary details regarding our 2024 convention. More details will be forthcoming in the next issue. We hope that many members and non-members will attend.

As we move forward into our 76th year, many things are happening. Currently, we are revamping our web page and hope to have it up and running by the end of the year. Our goal is to utilize our electronic tools, incorporate them into the web, and make our site a resource for the membership and for anyone who wants to know more about the Academy. In addition, we are currently reaching out to our sections to see how we can help them stay in contact with their membership through portals, which will make our site more dynamic and a valuable resource for our membership.

In closing, I wish everyone a joyous new liturgical year and blessings for Christmas and the New Year.

Please submit your thoughts and comments to:

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Gregory Evans
ABA president



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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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

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 2025, 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.

CANON LAW COLUMN

New Juridic Structure for Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum (CIB)?

CIB is the international organization of Benedictine women which was begun approximately 40 years ago. It is made up of all Benedictine women's monasteries who have been accepted into the Benedictine Confederation. The Benedictine Confederation is the international organization of Benedictine monks.

Since its inception, the CIB has not had its own juridical status, that is, its own canonical recognition within the Church. Rather, it was formed under the aegis of the Benedictine Confederation of monks, though it had its own norms. The CIB and its member monasteries are seen as "consociated" with the Benedictine Confederation.

The CIB is currently discussing the possibility of having its own independent juridic status as a parallel organization to the Confederation. Imagine the Benedictine Order with two parallel structures within it – one for monks, one for nuns and sisters. Each would have its own Vatican liaison who would be the as-needed connection with the Holy See, but the two organizations would work together in cooperation as sisters and brothers who follow the Rule of St. Benedict.

Until now, from the point of view of the Vatican, the international organization of Benedictine women has been mostly invisible, since it has not had its own separate juridic reality. It is not that Benedictine women themselves have been invisible, but only visible in their separate monastic congregations and federations, without any umbrella organization that has had official recognition.

At the recent meeting of the CIB Conference of Delegates held at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Alabama, with delegates gathered from around the world, the discussions about a possible new juridical status for CIB was led by the four members of the CIB juridic study committee, which is chaired by Sister Scholastika Häring, OSB of Germany. Other members are Sisters Nancy Bauer, OSB of St. Joseph, Minn., Patricia Henry of Torreón, Mexico and Noemi Scarpa of Bastia, Italy.

It is envisioned that instead of a regional structure with representatives from the various regions of the world, the CIB will consist of presidents and

prioresses-general of all the women's congregations and federations. It is expected that having this congregational structure, rather than the regional structure, will make communication within the CIB more effective and functional, because already existing congregational communication structures can be used. In the past, with the regional model, there were often issues of too many different languages per region and, at best, a spotty communication to all the women's monasteries of the world. It is hoped that this change can make CIB a more effective instrument of service.

It is also envisioned that the role of the CIB moderator will be more robust, requiring a more full-time position. It is hoped that the CIB moderator will be of real service to Benedictine women in many ways, but especially as a sign of unity among Benedictine women, as a liaison with the abbot primate and the Benedictine confederation, and also as a representative of the CIB as an organization with the Holy See. Nevertheless, her role would not have any juridic authority. It was discussed that someone having pre-existing experience in the CIB and thus, at least having been a former superior, would be important for anyone serving in the role of CIB moderator in the future.

If this change of structure is to come about, there is much work yet to be done in writing statutes with more details of the practical inner workings of the CIB and its interface with other organizations. Then it will be necessary to present a petition to the Vatican dicastery for consecrated life (Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life) to recognize the CIB as a separate juridic reality. It is expected that this evolving structure will remain a work in progress as practical details get worked out in the natural ebb and flow of a new/renewed organization.

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The View from Germany: An Interview with Abbot Jeremias Schroeder

Fr. Vincent Schwahn OSB, is a member of The New Benedictine Community of the Holy Trinity, a dispersed Anglican community of women, men, laity and clergy. He had an opportunity to interview Abbot Jeremias Schroeder on a recent visit to Germany and shares his conversation here.

Abbot Jeremias Schroeder is one of the most knowledgeable persons on Global Benedictine life today. I interviewed him in his office at St. Ottilien Archabbey in Eresing, Germany, this late summer, curious about his opinions on modern Benedictine living and practice, and wondering what the future might bring to Benedictine life. I proposed these questions in Q & A format on Benedictine monasticism today.

Q. Abbot Jeremias, what has been your role in the Benedictine world?

I am a monk of the Sankt Ottilien Benedictine Missionaries. Since 2000, I am the Archabbot-President of our congregation. I am also a member of the Council of the AIM (Alliance for International Monasticism) and executive board of the same. I have also been a member of the Abbot Primate's Council (San Anselmo in Italy) and Vicar for the Abbot Primate. The Benedictine women in the world have formed the CIB (Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum). The Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum was born in 2001 in Nairobi, Kenya at a meeting of representatives from women's Benedictine communities world wide.

Q. How has Benedictine monasticism changed since you made your first profession?

I made my vows in 1985. I try to see the world as a whole. The biggest change has been a shift in vitality of the old countries - Europe and the USA - to the younger Churches of Africa and Asia, and somewhat so in Latin America. That is still underway. The global structures are still dominated by westerners but there is an emerging new force coming.

In Europe many communities are closing or winding down. In the 1980's, there was a

kind of ranking of congregations according to their seriousness or fame. We now respect all the expressions and diversity of the monastic charism instead of a hierarchy of position or just one style of life that outdoes the other (e.g. more contemplative or active).

Q. How has it stayed the same?

As always, buildings play a great role in Benedictine life. My community sold the Baroque monastery and moved to the medieval monastery in Austria which is smaller, and the community is small but thriving. Huge buildings can be a big burden. They define us in many ways; they can kill us, but they can also be life giving, but transformation is often needed and it is very hard.

Q. What role do you see that Benedictine monasticism has in today's modern world or society?

I would start from our German experience, where the church is in a serious crisis right now. There is a sense that we don't quite know where we are going. The Synodal movement has perturbed a lot of people. The sexual abuse crisis is still going on. There is great dissidence towards our bishops, the "official church." And it seems to me that our monasteries have managed to remain very relatable to all sorts of people: Catholics, good Catholics, lukewarm Catholics, and non-believers. The monasteries are still very credible. Our grassroots nature and lack of superstructure is what people see. We come from the basic experience of community life, prayer and work, and that's what people sense and can share and join when they visit our communities, which makes them relatable and very acceptable.

Q. What are some of the Benedictine "umbrella" groups that you have worked with? What is their role?

This is also a novel thing. The men used to be structured through our congregations, and what we have seen emerging in the last 50 years is that there are now these regional gatherings. Often combining

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many different congregations or expressions of the monastic charism, they have become meaningful for formulating and developing the monastic identity and for providing the services of network, formation, etc. For example, the Saltzburger Echte Conference in Germany, is one of the oldest regional meetings, which meets yearly amongst the different expressions of Benedictine monasticism. There is also EMLA, (Latina America), BUT (Benedictine Union Tanzania) and South Africa, and AVECA (Caribbean).

Q. How do male and female Benedictine monasticism differ from each other? Are there unique charisms?

Of course, there are biological and psycho-social differences between men and women, but in monastic circles, men are more in touch with and affected by issues that have to do with the exercise of priestly ministry in their communities. That obviously plays a role. Some communities are completely clerical; our community is about one third clerical (1/3 priest or ordained vs. 2/3 lay). This affects education, and many times community life, where members have pastoral roles outside the community. We men, because of this formation, may have sound knowledge but perhaps too much emphasis or reliance in Canon Law.

Whereas women are more flexible, they can create things in a more regional way, which can be very interesting and enriching. The CIB of Benedictine women has had three different leaders since their inception, with great political and religious diversity. The nineteen CIB regions send delegates to the annual CIB Conference, and a symposium is held every four years, which affords an opportunity for around one hundred Benedictine women from all over the world to meet together.

Q. Where do you see Benedictine life flourishing? Or dwindling?

Oddly enough, Benedictine life is always local. Even in the same context or country or culture you will have some monasteries doing very well, riding the waves, in an intelligently and in a good way and

others just going under. Quality and credibility of community life is important. Size can help. There are small communities that are doing fine and large communities that are dwindling. The communities in India, Africa, and Asia are younger in age, according to statistics. Korea is quite strong. The demographics in Asia have been horrible because of low birth rates. The question is whether there will be vocations in the future.

Q. Since you have traveled extensively, what do you think we can learn from each other as Benedictines, especially in global dialogue?

This is part of the daily bread of the St. Ottilien Missionary Benedictines. There is a lot of wisdom and learning and academic ability in the old countries. For example, Michael Casey is a recent luminary but embodies the broad knowledge of patristic, theological and monastic wisdom. That is something which the old world and traditional monasticism still has to offer. At the same time, we see a vitality, a dynamism, e.g. in African communities, that's really breathtaking. And there is a boldness in new ventures, in reaching out and trying new things, that's really impressive, whereas here in Europe there is now a more depressing mood like "take it slow, don't go too fast, don't make it big, this isn't sustainable." We are almost in danger of asphyxiating that kind of dynamism. If vitality is there we should not throttle it.

Q. In the Anglican Communion there are new forms of monasticism springing up, such as the dispersed communities to which I belong, also pop-up communities (monastic internships short and long term). For example, there is The Community of St. Anselm at Canterbury and a new community starting of young people (Community of the Crossing) at St. John the Divine Cathedral in New York City, where Archbishop Welby will participate in the installation of new candidates in September, which is modeled on St. Anselm's Community. Are there any new forms of monastic life in the Roman Catholic Church? What's the cutting edge, or is there a cutting edge?

Hamburg is a new and dispersed community. They are just beginning. I am impressed and love seeing this. In Reichenau, an island on the Bodensee, there is an impressive project, yet still fragile since

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it is so new. One question will be whether these new communities will be able to have longevity and stability. This is part of our charism, stability, a dimension of Benedictine life which is harder to replicate in these newer experimental communities. If that can be solved, ways to make them more permanent, that would be great. There is an experimental community in Austria, “Gut Aich,” that has matured. They are fresh yet more stable now and meaningful. There is a sense of solidification transitioning from the original leadership to the next generation.

What we sense everywhere is that we are not going anywhere without a strong network of friends, lay associates, oblates, companions, all who walk with us beyond the enclosures. This is essential to the future of our survival and well being. I have never experienced enclosure as something limiting in that sense. It helps us focus, but a monastery that does not have a lot of life around it is a sad place.

Q. What is your impression of North American monasticism or Benedictine life? What would be some words of encouragement?

I don't think I am called to give words of encouragement. I look to the U.S. as a source of inspiration. I still have this sense that there is this frontier spirit there, this get going and do things, where we in Europe are always inhibited looking back or at our history. You have new ventures. Monasteries that impressed me a lot, are St. Vincent's, St. Meinrad, Mt. Angel, and the women in Erie Pa. This is a very unusual community. When I visited I was impressed, I had a caricature in mind, but when I saw it, I said, there is life there, energy there and Benedictine values. The U.S. is a source of inspiration and an energy force. We have had 4 American abbot primates in all, and also in the CIB the leaders have mostly been American. This speaks highly of American monasticism.



American Benedictine Academy Monastic Studies Grant Report

One of the requirements for receiving a grant from the Academy is that the recipient share the results of their work in this publication.

Project: Publication of *Benedictine Life: A Vision Unfolding* Colloquium Papers and Responses

The Monastic Congregation of St. Scholastica held a Centennial Colloquium in June of 2022. The speakers addressed three areas of an unfolding vision:

WISDOM (the past): “Benedictines: Est. 480 - ‘Serving you for 1,500 years’” - Judith Sutera OSB, Mount St. Scholastica; and “Changing the Future Past of Benedictine Life” - Linda Romey, OSB, Erie, Pa.

WITNESS (the present): “Bearing Witness in the 21st Century: An Integral Exploration” - Deborah Asberry, CommunityWorks, Inc.; and “What We Stand For” - Patricia Fawkner SGS, Good Samaritan Sisters, Australia

WAY FORWARD (the future): “Living the Future of Monasticism Now: Monastic Impulse, Communal Experimentation, and Collective Imagination” - Katie Gordon, Nuns & Nones; and “Building a Way Forward” - Edith Bogue, OSB, Cullman, Ala.

With the help of the ABA grant, we published a compilation of the six papers, the responses that were presented at the end of the days by Judith Valente, oblate of Mount St. Scholastica, and Joanna Burley, OSB, Bristow, Va., along with an introduction by Sister Joan Chittister.

The grant was used to cover stipends to the editors and authors of the papers in the book and other publication costs. It was independently published and is available for purchase. The book is 124 pages and a copy of the book was submitted to the ABA.

I am grateful to the ABA for recognizing the importance of making this valuable and thought-provoking material available to the broader public.

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



Elections

In recent elections, the following have been chosen for monastic leadership:

Abbot Joel Rippinger, OSB - Marmion Abbey, Aurora, Ill.

Abbot Filipe de Jesus Hernandez, O.S.B., Abadia del Tepeyac, Izcalli, Mexico.

The General Chapter of the Swiss-American Congregation has elected Abbot Justin Brown of Saint Joseph Abbey, Covington, La., as the new Abbot President.

Sister Jennifer Mechtild Horner, OSB, has been appointed as pastoral administrator (commissary) of St. Martin Monastery in Rapid City, S.D. She will also act as the offsite pastoral administrator for Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Crookston, Minn.

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Report on the ABA Archives

The repository for the ABA archives is at St. Benedict Monastery in St. Joseph, Minnesota. Our collection has about 40 boxes of materials going back to the beginnings of ABA in 1947, with material in all the many formats that monastics have used to create content and keep records over the last 75 years.

The ABA archives hold the records of leadership whether the Council, the Executive Board, or the Board of Directors, and the records of the Offices of the President, Vice-President (minimal), and Executive Secretary. There are also records related to special meetings, finances, and membership. Records of the activities of the ABA sections or special interest groups, committees, and newsletters are represented in the archives. There are binders of slides from the presentations of monasteries of men and monasteries of women, as well as binders of some of the art shows.

The ABA Board is considering which materials should be available online; we would likely apply for a grant to help carry out this work after the 2024 convention. The archivist at the St. Benedict Monastery Archives is Erin Ryan. If you have questions about the ABA archives collection, please contact her at eryan002@csbsju.edu. If you are a

section convener or a past president with material to send to the ABA archives, please contact Erin to discuss best practices for the transfer.

Sr. Virginia Jung, OSB
St. Scholastica Monastery
Chicago, Ill.
archives@osbchicago.org

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Synod of Abbots President

From 28 August until 2 September, the annual Synod of Abbots President was held at Conception Abbey, Missouri, USA, the home monastery of Abbot Primate Gregory Polan. The participants discussed the following topics: the upcoming Abbots Congress in 2024, including procedures for the election of the next abbot primate; a new Order of Saint Benedict Confederation calendar; recent experiences with the election of brothers as major superiors; the development of an online *Catalogus* for the Benedictine Confederation; Collegio Sant'Anselmo, which boasts full occupancy this year; Ateneo Sant'Anselmo; the finances of the Confederation and Sant'Anselmo regarding inflation and commensurate contributions; the *Communio Internationalis Benedictinarum* and the developments regarding Benedictine women; and individual reports from the 19 congregations.

According to the report on the "osb.org" website, "The hospitality at Conception Abbey was very impressive. One abbot president expressed appreciation for the 'American generosity' of 'one of the great monastic houses of our time.'" The abbots president also visited the nearby community of Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, Missouri, for vespers and supper on 30 August.

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The Monastic Formators' Program

The Monastic Formators' Program, founded at the instigation of the 2002 Congress of Abbots and supported by Benedictines, Cistercians and other orders, has been the go-to program for dedicated monastic training. The MFP is where monastic men and women from all over the world have the experience of being instructed by some of the important monastic teachers of our time. The program is designed to meet the needs of those working in the field of monastic formation, or are preparing to

do so in the future. So far, there have been nearly 360 participants from every continent and diverse monastic traditions. In 2022, 26 participants took part.

This program is intended for monks, nuns and sisters:

- who follow the Rule of St Benedict;

- who are solemnly professed (exception can be made for simply professed in particular cases);

- who are working in or intended for some area of formation;

- with a good working knowledge of English;

- who would benefit from a broader exposure to monastic tradition in order to integrate it in the light of their own experience and learn to communicate it.

Some bursaries are available to communities that would find it difficult to meet the costs.

The first part of the program takes place at Sant'Anselmo in Rome. It offers a peaceful environment to study. It welcomes monastic students from all over the world who come to Rome to study and was founded to strengthen links between the Benedictine congregations and houses.

The second half of the program enjoys the peace and tranquillity of Assisi, where participants stay at the Oasi Sacro Cuore, beautifully situated amongst the olive trees on the hillside below the town.

MFP is an intensive program that demands a serious investment of study over a period of three months through lectures and group reflection. The aims are threefold:

ACADEMIC: to provide a deeper appreciation of the monastic tradition and its values.

PEDAGOGICAL: to reflect on how we communicate this tradition with love and enthusiasm.

PASTORAL: to deal with questions of discernment and human and spiritual development.

Participants form a monastic community, studying and praying together, but with a sense of pilgrimage to special places of Christian and monastic heritage. These include Norcia, Subiaco and Monte Cassino. It offers the opportunity to share experience with those from different countries and backgrounds. The regular framework of prayer is part of the program.

Father Brendan Thomas OSB, director, is a monk of Belmont Abbey, England where he served as novice master for 22 years while running the monastery's

retreat ministry. He has been the director of the Monastic Formators' Program since its inception in 2002. His co-director is Father Javier Aparicio OSB, a monk of St. Ottilien Abbey and missions procurator of the St. Ottilien Congregation. Previously he was prior of the community of Rabanal del Camino in the north of Spain. He has been involved in formation work in the St. Ottilien Congregation and regularly visits its communities throughout the world.

The program is currently in preparation, but the following teachers are expected to deliver lessons this year: Fr. Michael Casey OCSO (Tarrawarra Abbey, Australia), Br. Colmán Ó Clabaigh OSB (Glenstal Abbey, Ireland), Abbot Primate Gregory Polan OSB, (Conception Abbey, USA), Br. John-Mark Falkenhain OSB (St. Meinrad Archabbey, USA), Sr. Carmel Posa SGS (Good Samaritan Sisters, Australia), Fr. Mauritius Wilde OSB (Sant'Anselmo, Rome), Fr. David Foster OSB (Downside Abbey, UK), Sr. Manuela Scheiba OSB (Abbey of Saint Gertrude, Germany); and Fr. Luke Dysinger OSB (St Andrew's Abbey, USA,). The program is taught in the English language.

The next program will be from 11 March-1 June, 2024 Information is at the b page : bit.ly/monastic_formators_program.

Sister Jeana Visel, OSB, will be teaching a 3-credit course on Benedictine Spirituality at Saint Meinrad School of Theology with online coursework starting May 20, and an intensive residency June 21-25, 2024. Prospective students should apply for non-degree status by February 15 in order to register by April 20.

"55 AND UNDER" WEEKEND

Forty-nine sisters age 55 and under from 23 monasteries in the U.S. and Mexico recently attended their second in a series of three annual meetings exploring the future of Benedictine life. The meeting was held July 21-23 at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk, Neb., and was also attended by the presidents of North American women's Benedictine monastic congregations.

The theme for this meeting, which focused on collaboration, was "Companions on the Journey: Building Bridges of Hope." The meeting was facilitated by Sr. Candyce Chrystal from Sacred Heart

Monastery in Yankton, S.D. Sr. Lynn McKenzie from Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman gave the keynote address. The weekend included collaborating on two service projects during the meeting, as well as breaking up into interest groups which will create project proposals to be vetted at the third meeting in this series.

That meeting will be held July 5-8, 2024 at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton. The planning team for all three meetings consists of Sr. Maria Victoria Cutaia from Clyde, Mo., Sr. Elizabeth Carillo from Atchison, Kan., Sr. Raphaela Cady from Lacey, Wash., Sr. Carmy Luke from Yankton, S.D., and Sr. Sarah Elizabeth McMahan from Norfolk, Neb. The group has been successful in securing significant grant funding from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., hosted the biannual conference of the Monastic Worship Forum from July 31 to August 2. It was a hybrid event, with ten participants on site and numerous participants via Zoom. Sr. Michelle Sinkhorn served as technology support. Sr. Kathleen Harmon, SNDdeN, was the presenter on the topic of "Becoming the Psalms."

Nearly 200 oblates from around 90 monasteries assembled from around the world for the Fifth International Congress of Oblates from September 9-16, 2023 at the Primatial Abbey of Sant'Anselmo in Rome.

Three keynote presentations were offered by Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB, Abbot Donato Ogliari, OSB, and Sr. M. Madeleine Casseau, O.S.B. In addition, a panel spoke about "the "Islands of Silence" concerning restraint of speech in the Rule of St. Benedict, ch. 6. That panel included Thomas Brunnhuber (Douai Abbey), Elba Rodriguez (World Community of Christian Meditation), San Helkvist (Prinknash Abbey) and Jordi Gubern-Prat (Montserrat Abbey). The highlight of the congress was a private audience with Pope Francis on September 15, 2023. The address that he gave may be read at <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/september/documents/20230915-congresso-oblati-benedettini.html>.

Benedictine author and oblate Judith Valente will once again be offering her "Benedictine Footprints" contemplative, cultural, culinary retreat/pilgrimage to little-known Benedictine sites in the Abruzzo region of Italy. The dates for the upcoming retreat are Aug 29 to Sept 12, 2024.

In addition to visiting Benedictine sites few tourists ever see, the journey will allow for an experience of small-town Italian life, as the lovely Medieval village of Guardiagrele will serve as our home base. From there, we will visit such sites as the dramatic gorges and springs of Faro San Martino where a 9th century ruin of a Benedictine monastery is tucked between the gorges and the Oratorio San Pelligrino, known as the "Sistine Chapel of Abruzzo," with stunning murals painted by 13th century Benedictine monks. We will also spend a few nights with one of the last remaining shepherds in Europe, have a cheese-making lesson, and share a meal on one of the unique Trabocci restaurants -- old fishing huts built on stilts that stand in the Adriatic Sea, a site found only on the coast of Abruzzo. There will also be time for daily morning and evening contemplative prayer. For more information, please contact Judith at jvalente17@msn.com.

RECORDINGS OF 2022 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

ABA ESSAY CONTEST

Each convention year, the Academy holds an essay contest to encourage scholarship and appreciation for Benedictinism among those who have been professed religious or oblates for less than 10 years.

The word essay comes from the French *essayer*, which means to try, test, probe. We are looking for personal essays of no more than 2,500 words that are built on solid reasoning and research, but also include vivid anecdotes that support the premise of the essay and show the author's personal involvement in, or attraction to, the chosen topic.

Essays are not academic or research papers. However, they include both the objective (that is, research elements) and the subjective (such as the author's personal reaction to or struggle with the topic). The essay does not have to be the final word on a topic but rather show the author's thinking process and how he/she came to their conclusions.

Some possible topics, are, but would not be limited to:

- A reflection on a particular Benedictine value that offers a fresh perspective on that value (such as community, consensus, humility, hospitality, conversatio)
- A verse/chapter of RB that has been a particular gift/challenge been to you
- Living RB in a concrete way in your daily life
- How chapters on humility or leadership or discipline are relevant to issues facing today's world
- Whether contemplation is possible in the age of social media
- How the monastic call can be re-imagined for the 21 century
- Considering how persons (not professed Benedictines) can manage to live out the Rule in the secular world

Deadline: March 30, 2024

Competition is limited to professed members and oblates who have been part of their community for 10 years or less

Award: A book relevant to Benedictine life and free registration for the next ABA conference
Send essays to Sister Jean Visel at JVisel@thedome.org and Judith Valente at JValente17@msn.com

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:
Sister Edith Bogue, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery
916 Convent Rd NE
Cullman, AL 35055
edithosb@gmail.com

Dr. Greg Peters, ObLOSB received a Monastic Studies Grant for travel to conduct archival research at the Herbert Kelly Institute for Anglican Religious Life in Durham, UK and at Pusey House in Oxford, UK. Both institutes contain archival material for Anglican religious orders that has been neither fully investigated or published. Spending time in these archives will yield further details about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Anglican monasticism, especially its dependence on and influence from Roman Catholic monastic orders. This would lead to further research and publications.

Dr. Peters, former ABA President, is professor of Medieval and Spiritual Theology, Torrey Honors College at Biola University and a priest in the Diocese of Mid-America, Reformed Episcopal Church.

ABA members can look forward to reading about the fruit of this research in future newsletters.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Sayings and Stories of the Desert Fathers and Mothers, Vol. 2, translated and introduced by Tim Vivian (Cistercian Publications, 2023) 541 pp., ISBN 9780879072926, \$49.95.

Tim Vivian continues his masterful work on the desert stories in this second volume of the alphabetical sayings, theta to omega. They are rendered in a readable conversational style as they might have been conveyed to the original readers and listeners.

What Vivian’s work adds that many other popular versions do not, is a meticulous scholarship regarding the original language and cultural nuances. In fact, if there is any downside to this, it is that the copious footnotes can at times be a distraction and take up half of the page. Nevertheless, this makes the work a substantial asset for those wishing to do serious study.

In addition to the texts, there is an encyclopedic glossary and short biography of each of the abbots and ammas, plus an extensive bibliography, general index and scriptural index.

Loving Jesus: Monastery Talks on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew by Mark A. Scott, OCSO (Cistercian Publications, 2023) 203 pp., ISBN 9780879070656, \$34.95.

Father Mark Scott is a scripture scholar who is a monk of Our Lady of New Clairvaux in Vina, Cal., but has also served as abbot of two Trappist monasteries. This book shows how these elements of his life interact. His reflections on the Gospel of St. Matthew show his appreciation for the meaning of the texts within the scriptural context, but his “talks” are just that. They have the comfortable tone and practical applications that one would expect from a monk sharing insights with his confreres.

There are 44 reflections, each around 4 pages long, covering only the first eight chapters of the gospel. With their length and tone, they could be a good accompaniment for one’s lectio on this gospel.

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 Bristow, VA 20136*

Email:

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