

The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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New ABA President Presents Vision for Future

It is customary at ABA conventions for the incoming president to give an address outlining their vision for the upcoming two years of the Academy. Since there was no convention this year, we are choosing to provide a transcript of her recorded message in its entirety here.

Hello! For those who don't know me, my name is Sister Jeana Visel. I am honored to serve as the incoming president of the American Benedictine Academy. I am a Benedictine from Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana. I work at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology overseeing the non-seminary programs and teaching spirituality. I would like to take this time to give you a little sense of what I see at this point regarding where the Academy might be headed.

Many of you might have questions about this in view of the many changes in the monastic world. The American Benedictine Academy generally hosts a convention every two years. The convention of 2020 was held online at the start of the pandemic. In 2022, an in-person convention was planned but held online due to low enrollment. Our 2024 in-person convention was cancelled for the same reason. COVID certainly played a part in this, but it is also true that the average age in most Benedictine monasteries and some oblate groups has risen, making it difficult to participate in the kinds of activities the ABA has traditionally offered. It is clear that the ABA, like many institutions, is at a turning point. Through the collaboration of the officers and board you have elected, the membership and other supporters of the ABA need to chart a course forward in the coming years. We are an able team, and ready to undertake this work.

It may be reassuring that, over the decades, the organization has nearly ended multiple times. I'd like to take us through some of that history for the sake of context. In the June 2000 issue of the *American Benedictine Review*, Sr. Alberta Dieker wrote an article recounting the history of the American Benedictine Academy. In it, she explains that the American-Cassinense

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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.

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President's Message (continued)

Congregation had started a National Benedictine Education Association in 1918 for the purpose of keeping monastic educators aware of educational standards and trends.

By 1947, though, a new organization was proposed as a successor, to serve as “a medium of contact and stimulation among American Benedictine scholars.” The first official meeting of the American Benedictine Academy took place in December, 1947, where monastic leaders and representatives made final revisions to the constitutions and bylaws, and appointed an executive board. This board met for the first time in February, 1948. It designated eight sections covering a range of academic areas: Sacred Sciences, Philosophy, Social Sciences, Education and Psychology, Language and Literature, Natural Sciences, Fine Arts, and Library Science. In its early pre-Vatican II years, the ABA was an active force in the Benedictine world. It published several books, and the 19-volume series *Benedictine Studies*, which was a prelude to *American Benedictine Review*, started in 1950. In 1958, the ABA established the Benedictine Institute of Sacred Theology at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph, Minnesota, to make serious theological study available to sisters. Two years later, the ABA sponsored an Ecumenical Colloquy at St. John's Abbey, a first attempt at ecumenism, which

gave rise to the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at St. John's. This was ground-breaking service to the Church.

Yet even in the early years of the 1950s, the question emerged about whether the focus of the ABA might broaden beyond specialized topics to address themes of interest to all Benedictines, including sisters teaching at the elementary and high school levels. The constitution described the ABA's purpose as both “to stimulate and promote the interests and activities of American Benedictines, and to cultivate and transmit the best traditions of Benedictine life and scholarship.” As Dieker describes it, a core question emerged: “Was the focus to be upon Benedictine interests and activities or upon scholarship?” As the founding members weighed in on the question at the time, scholarship was most important.

This question arose, in part, due to changes in the educational environment. Educators, beginning in the late 1950s, needed to belong to other professional organizations. Supported mostly by sponsoring monastic communities, the financial burden of running the ABA and the *American Benedictine Review* (which were one organization at the time) fell unevenly among communities. The scholarship being shared was not always of the highest quality. But the Academy and the *Review* provided space for Benedictines to cooperate in scholarly efforts. Boards at the time revised the constitutions and reduced the number of sections; the work carried on.

After Vatican II, Benedictine-run colleges went through many changes, affecting the commitments of many monks and sisters. The Academy reconsidered limiting membership to those with advanced degrees. By the 1970s, membership had dropped significantly, from almost 800 in 1970 to 91 in 1976. President Fr. Bede Ernsdorff attributed this shift to a change in the interests of American Benedictines, especially sisters, from academic to more social apostolates.

By 1978, under the leadership of the late Fr. Colman Grabert of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, the Academy shifted its overall focus to Benedictine studies, though academic disciplinary sections remained. In 1984, the Academy started an essay contest to promote serious scholarship among young



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Submit any announcements or articles to:

Editor: Judith Sutura, OSB

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

Email: jsutura@mountosb.org

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

Email: abacadsec@gmail.com

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Benedictines. Through the 1980s and 90s, the ABA focused increasingly on current and future issues of Benedictine life. The *Proceedings* of those years reveal there were some strong conventions and some more disappointing years. By the 50th anniversary of the organization in 1998, membership had risen to 200. Some special interest groups were encouraged, including a group for archivists, a visual arts group, and a monastic researchers group that put out their own newsletter to keep each other updated about their studies. Dieker states that, though the identity of the ABA had shifted a bit from the vision of its founders, the organization was fairly healthy at the time of her article in 2000.

This history gives us a bit of context for where we stand today. In 2024 our current membership stands at 114, including 61 monastics, 4 other religious, 18 oblates, and 31 others. We have 14 sponsoring monasteries supporting the organization. The number of non-retired monastics is declining across the country, and some monasteries have ceased to receive new members. Vowed Benedictines know we are in a moment of demographic contraction, even as religious life is alive and well and growing in certain pockets of American life. At the same time, the number of oblates is constantly increasing, as is interest in and publication about monastic and Benedictine spirituality.

All this said, human and financial resources are not infinite, and we stand in a delicate moment. We need to steward well what we have been given, and to discern the future wisely in light of current demographics. For every organization, but especially those in times of stress, knowing one's mission and purpose is critical. Why waste energy doing things that are not core to one's purpose? In looking at the history of the ABA, it strikes me that this question of core purpose has arisen multiple times as the reason for our being has shifted with the times. We started as an organization for Benedictine academics of various stripes. When they were able to go to their own professional societies, we focused more on monastic studies. Sometimes the academy has had a more academic bent, and sometimes it has been more open to anyone interested in monastic topics. This core question of "Benedictine interests and activities vs scholarship" keeps coming back.

I think a big part of the challenge is the fact that we call ourselves an "academy." What is an academy? The *Oxford Dictionary* has defined an academy as "a place of study or training in a special field," or "a society or institution for the cultivation and promotion of literature, of arts and sciences, or of some particular art or science or branch of these." Scholars participate in an academy to help uphold standards of excellence. An academy is a space in which research can be shared, ideas can be tested, and connections can be made. To be useful to scholars, an academy needs to be a gathering of peers in the field. As we have seen in our own history, an academy can foster and support new research and writing with the presence of a journal, the undertaking of collaborative publishing projects, grants that support travel or other costs of research, and essay contests that encourage new voices to foray into the field.

We also have to be honest about why scholars might not join an academy. If their true peers are not there, or if there aren't enough scholars to warrant such an organization, things can stagnate. If the cost to participate isn't worth the return in terms of things learned, publications written, or useful contacts made, one might abstain. If the mission of the organization isn't clearly set on fostering quality scholarship, it might not be worth an academic's investment. We have to ask whether we are offering what is needed today.

These are hard questions, but they are realities we need to address honestly. If the ABA exists to foster exchange on "Benedictine interests and activities" more broadly, for anyone who is interested, that is one purpose, and perhaps a noble one. The Benedictine order is by its nature decentralized, so maintaining some kind of central space to foster conversation about Benedictine topics is a challenge, but important. The advent of the "Being Benedictine" gathering a few years ago seemed to represent a yearning for this kind of service, but as yet I don't believe the movement has continued in any stable way.

As important as that kind of exchange may be, if the ABA exists to be a true "academy" focused on promoting monastic studies scholarship at a high level, this may be a different mission. An "academy" cannot

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simply be a catch-all. I think we need to take some time to clarify our mission so that we can steward our resources well. If we don't need to be an "academy" per se, but something else, perhaps it's time to change our name. If we are to be an "academy," we may need to focus our energies a bit more specifically. Given demographic realities, it may also be that the American Benedictine Academy has fulfilled its mission and is no longer needed at this time.

It is important to note that, since 1975, *American Benedictine Review* now stands as a separate organization. Within the life of the journal, editor Sr. Colleen Maura McGrane continues to bring forth high quality issues with scholarly writing from both established and newer academics, both Benedictine and secular. I believe the *American Benedictine Review* continues to do fine work and is in many ways a space of true meeting of scholarly voices, even if it doesn't happen in person. Also within the American monastic tradition, *Cistercian Studies Quarterly* likewise provides peer-reviewed monastic scholarship.

It is important, too, to recognize that Benedictine and monastic studies scholars also have the opportunity to meet up in other organizations and in other places: at the Kalamazoo International Congress on Medieval Studies and the Center for Cistercian and Monastic Studies, the Leeds International Medieval Congress, the American Academy of Religion, the Monastic Institutes at Sant' Anselmo, Mepkin Abbey, or St. John's School of Theology-Seminary, the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Benedictine Pedagogy Conference of the Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities, and other groups and seminars focused in specialized areas. We exist against a wider horizon of academic Church life, and it is important to take these elements into account.

As we go forward, I would like to put these key questions before us:

- o First, does the ABA need to continue to exist?
- o If so, how can we focus its core mission so as to serve our constituents well?

Do we need to update our name and constitution?

- o Moreover, if the ABA should continue, should it continue to offer in-person conventions, or is it time to offer other kinds of opportunities to connect with people and content?

What kinds of services would be most helpful?

In order to discern well, we will need to take steps to survey our members, monastic leadership, monastic scholars, and others. What are your needs and desires for this organization? What seems to be the wisest course of action at this time? Once we have good data, the board can meet and begin to make decisions on how to proceed.

These are not easy questions, but as a board we have a responsibility to steward this organization as well as possible in light of the tradition we have been given, the current realities we face, and needs of those who are yet to come in Benedictine life.

Jeana Visel, OSB
Monastery Immaculate Conception
Ferdinand, Ind.
jvisel@thedome.org



The new ABA president, Sister Jeana Visel, is a member of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana. She lives and works at Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, where she is Dean of the School of Theology Programs and Director of the Graduate Theology Program. She also teaches courses on iconography and spirituality, and occasionally assists with chant programs. She has been on the ABA board for several years, and is also on the editorial board of the *American Benedictine Review*.

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NEW ABA BOARD

An important part of the biennial ABA convention is the election of ABA members to serve on the organization's board of directors. Since there was no in-person meeting, the election was held electronically in August.



The vice-president serves for a two year term, after which he or she succeeds to the presidency for the following two years. Sister Edith Bogue, OSB (Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Ala.) was the sole nominee for the position of vice-president/president-elect, and so she was automatically elected. Thus, a new board member had to be elected to complete the last two years of her term. In addition, there were two other board positions to fill.

Sister Virginia Jung, OSB (St. Scholastica Monastery, Chicago, Ill.) was completing her term, but was eligible for re-election, and was re-elected. She is community archivist and chairs the archives section of ABA.



The two new board members are Sister Joanna Burley, OSB (St. Benedict's Monastery, Bristow, Va.) and Brother Luke Devine, OSB (St. Martin's Abbey, Lacey, Wash.).



Sister Joanna is liturgist and former prioress of her community. Her particular interests lie in liturgy and music, monastic studies and research, and Benedictine education in schools.

Father Luke Devine is an associate professor of theology and religious studies at Saint Martin's University. He has been involved in Buddhist-Christian dialogue and served on the board of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue. His doctoral studies focused on the relationship between creativity and spirituality, especially in the visual arts.



The newly elected members join continuing board member Oblate Judith Valente (Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kan.). The ABA is grateful to Oblate Gregory Evans for his service as board member and president, and remembers with gratitude Oblate Tom Piazza, who died towards the end of his term on the board.

ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS

Another important activity associated with the convention is the essay contest for newer members of monasteries or oblates. The winner of this year's competition was Sister Jacqueline Sanchez-Small, OSB, of Mount St. Benedict in Erie, Penn., who wrote on the Benedictine response to poverty.

Honorable mention went to Brother Matthew Marie of St. Benedict's Abbey in Benet Lake, Wisc., who wrote on the witness value of Benedictine life to the current age. Both received a book and membership in ABA as a prize, although they could not at this time take advantage of the free convention attendance.

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 2026, 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 payment link on the membership page of the website.

CANON LAW COLUMN

Brother Abbot

Recently the monastic chapter of Saint Anselm Abbey, Manchester, New Hampshire, postulated a brother of the community to be abbot. The chapter requested from the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life a derogation from the requirement that an abbot be a priest. The Dicastery granted the derogation. This article is meant to explain the significance of this derogation.

With the development of ecclesiastical law and new forms of religious life other than monasticism and canons regular, canon law began to distinguish between the various canonical forms of religious life. One of these developments was the distinction between clerical and non-clerical orders and congregations. Male monasticism was put in the category of clerical orders.

The 1917 Code of Canon Law codified the distinction between clerical orders and congregations and lay orders and congregations. In keeping with tradition, the Code required that the major superior of a clerical order or congregation must be a priest.

The 1983 Code of Canon Law continues the distinction between clerical and lay institutes.

Regarding clerical institutes, it states:

“That institute is called clerical which, by reason or design intended by founder or by virtue of legitimate tradition, is under the direction of clerics, assumes the exercise of sacred orders, and is recognized as such by the authority of the Church” (canon 588.2).

As in the previous legislation, the 1983 Code recognizes a major superior of clerical religious institutes of pontifical right as an ordinary who possesses “ordinary executive power” (canon 134.1). Ordinary executive power requires ordination and is termed “the power of governance” which is also referred to as “the power of jurisdiction” (canon 129.1). The power of governance is derived from the office the person holds (canon 131.1).

In contrast, a major superior of a lay institute has what in the past was called “dominative power.” It is based on the vow of obedience rather than on the office of the superior.

These distinctions do not affect the everyday relationships of superiors and members whether the institute is clerical or lay. However, canonically the distinction sometimes has import in the law.

The following is an example: A major superior of a women’s institute gave a member a directive under the canons on penal precepts. The directive, in the form of a penal precept, stated that if the member did not cease from certain behaviors, the major superior would impose a penalty. The member made recourse to the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. The Dicastery ruled that the major superior could not issue a penal precept since she did not have the power of governance. Subsequently, the major superior gave the same directive but as an obedience based on the member’s vow of obedience. The member again made recourse. This time the Dicastery upheld the obedience since it was not based on the power of governance but on the vow of obedience.

On February 11, 2022, Pope Francis granted the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life the faculty to “authorize, discretionally and in individual cases, the conferment of the office of Major Superior in clerical religious institute of pontifical right and in clerical societies of apostolic life of pontifical right in the Latin Church, and dependent upon it, in derogation of canon 588.2 CIC and the proper law of the institute of consecrated life or society of apostolic life, subject to canon 134.1.”

The rescript was published by the Dicastery on May 11, 2022, and was authorized to go into effect on the same day. The rescript provides that a non-clerical member of a clerical institute may be appointed local superior by the supreme moderator with the consent of his council. The application of this norm for men’s monastic communities depends on how in the proper law supreme moderator and the description of offices within a community are defined.

The rescript requires a “written license” from the Dicastery for a non-clerical member to be a major superior or supreme moderator. A written license is the granting of a derogation from the canons.

The rescript reserves the right to the Dicastery to evaluate individual cases and the reasons given for the “written license.” This provision indicates that the granting of the derogation is not a formality.

In the case of Saint Anselm Abbey, the capitulars had discerned the member was the best qualified to be abbot (canon 626). Since he was not eligible to be elected, the capitulars postulated him. The election chapter was held open while the Abbot President of the American Cassinese Congregation petitioned the Dicastery for a derogation from the requirement that the abbot be a priest. The Dicastery granted the derogation from canon 588.1 and the proper law. However, in keeping with the authority granted to the Dicastery by Pope Francis he was not recognized as an ordinary (see canon 134.1).

It is interesting that the rescript did not raise the issue about the authority of a non-clerical member regarding the priests of the monastery. This previously had been cited as the reason a brother could not be a major superior in a clerical institute. The rescript stated that the granting of the derogation was subject to canon 134.1, that is he is not an ordinary.

While a brother as abbot is an “exception” under the present law, it opens the dialogue in monastic communities about the qualifications for an abbot. By extension, it expands the pool of candidates for abbot. It also points to a fact recognized in the Code of Canon Law for the Eastern Churches, that monasteries, whether women or men, are neither clerical nor lay, but a “house in which the members strive for evangelical perfection by observance of the rules and traditions of monastic life (canon 433.1). But, this is a discussion for another day.

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

Daniel J. Ward, OSB
Saint John’s Abbey
djaward44@gmail.com



NEWS

At their worldwide general chapter in Rome, the Missionary Benedictines of Tutzing elected Sister Rosann Ocken, currently serving at Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk, Neb., to be their prioress general. Prioress Andrea Westkampf, OSB was elected by the sisters of St. Benedict’s Monastery, Bristow, Va., as their new prioress. Re-elected to continue in

leadership was Mother Rebecca Stramoski, OCSO, abbess of Our Lady of the Mississippi (Dubuque, Ia.)

On 14 September 2024, Abbot Jeremias Schröder OSB, of St. Ottilien Archabbey in Eresing, Germany, was elected abbot primate of the Benedictine Confederation at the Congress of Abbots meeting in Rome. Abbot Schröder, a Benedictine monk for 40 years, succeeds American Abbot Gregory Polan (Conception Abbey, Conception, Mo.). He studied philosophy, theology, history and archivistics at the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant’Anselmo and at St. Benet’s Hall in Oxford. He has also been a visitator to around sixty monasteries.

The youngest cohort of Benedictine women gathered at Sacred Heart Monastery in Yankton, S.D., from July 5 to 8 for their “Under 55” meeting, “Vision for the Journey: Living into our Emerging Future.”

They were tasked by the presidents of all the monastic women’s congregations in North America to engage in a three-year process of visioning under the title of “Embracing Our Future with Joy.” Year 1 was a meeting in Beech Grove, Ind. “Fire for the Journey: Engaging Our Charism,” which took place in April of 2022. The 2023 gathering at Norfolk, Neb., “Companions on the Journey: Building Bridges of Hope,” focused on the topic of collaboration within the cohort, between monastic communities and congregations, and beyond. Working groups emerged with the task of designing and proposing a collaborative project. For the past year, the sisters have been divided into special interest groups to study issues and directions for the future.

This year, the groups presented their reports and three were selected to move forward. Topics to be further explored are Specialty Support Teams, Benedictine Leadership Training, and Benedictines for the Environment. These ongoing projects will be undertaken by small groups of members chosen by the gathering, who will be accountable to the presidents of the monastic congregations, who were also in attendance at the meeting.

The core committee for the past three years, each representing a different monastic congregation, has consisted of Sisters Maria Victoria Cutaia (Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, Mo.), Sarah

Elizabeth McMahon (Missionary Benedictines, Norfolk, Neb.), Elizabeth Carrillo (Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kan.), Carmella Luke (Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.D.), and Raphaela Cady (St. Placid Priory, Lacey, Wash.). Sister Candyce Chrystal (Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.D.) has been the facilitator for the past two years. Sister Jeanne Weber (Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.D.), president of the Monastic Congregation of St. Gertrude, is the liaison with the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses. The group receives generous support from a grant from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR). In addition to assisting with meetings, the grant has helped the sisters to reduce registration costs, offer registration scholarships, and purchase a tech kit to enhance meetings.

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The annual Benedictine Junior Institute for monks of the American Cassinese Congregation was held at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn. from July 15 – 24, 2024. The theme of the program was "Synodality and Eucharistic Revival: What do these contemporary movements mean for Benedictine monks?" The instructors in the program included Dr. Kristin Colberg, Ph.D., professor of systematics at Saint John's University / School of Theology and Seminary and member of the Vatican theological commission assisting the Synod of Bishops; Fr. Anthony Ruff, O.S.B., Ph.D., professor of liturgy and liturgical music at Saint John's University / School of Theology and Seminary; Fr. Columba Stewart, O.S.B., Ph.D., director of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML) and professor of monastic studies at Saint John's University / School of Theology and Seminary; and Br. David Paul Lange, O.S.B., M.F.A., M.Min, vocation director of Saint John's Abbey.

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The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University welcomed representatives from nine other higher educational institutions for the annual Association of Benedictine Colleges and Universities (ABCU) conference, June 24-26, 2024. The conference included the Benedictine Leadership Formation Institute, the Benedictine Pedagogy Conference and ABCU annual meetings.

In addition to faculty, staff and administrators from Saint Ben's (CSB) and Saint John's (SJU), conference participants represented Benedictine University, the College of St. Scholastica, Donnelly College, Mount Marty University, Saint Anselm College, Saint Leo University, Saint Martin's University, Saint Vincent College and the University of Mary.

The opening keynote presentation was given by Sister Michaela Hedican, O.S.B., director of mission advancement for Saint Benedict's Monastery. Session presenters included CSB and SJU professors Adam Kluck, Kathryn Droske, Brittany Merritt Nash and Rodger Narloch, director of the Benedictine Institute; Jessie Bazan, ObLOSB, associate director of the Benedictine Institute; Valerie Jones, CSB executive director of alumnae relations; Sydney Andringa, executive assistant of CSB Institutional Advancement; Dan Whalen, president of the Whalen Family Foundation and member of the CSB and SJU boards of trustees; Sandra Mitchel, CSB and SJU senior diversity officer; Kathleen Norris, ObLOSB; Marcus Long, ObLOSB, president of Mount Marty University; Sophia Geng, Saint Vincent College professor; Walter Baehrend, Benedictine University professor; Jeremy Delamarter, Saint Martin's University professor; and University of Mary professors Mike Taylor and Chad Prosocki. The closing keynote presentation was given by Father Paul Taylor, O.S.B., president of Saint Vincent College.

* * * * *

AIM-USA, the U. S. Secretariat of the Alliance for International Monasticism, welcomed new members to its board in 2024. Sister Kathy Ulrich OCSO, is superior of the Trappist community of Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Crozet, Va.; Father Augustine Kelly, OSB, is prior of St. Anselm's Abbey in Manchester, N.H.; Bishop Elias Lorenzo, OSB, is a monk of St. Mary's Abbey in Morristown, N.J. and auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark, N.J.; and Father Anastasius Reiser, OSB, is a Missionary Benedictine of St. Otilien, originally from Munsterschwarzach Abbey in Germany, but currently serving at Christ the King Priory in Schuyler, Neb. In addition, Sister Dianne Sabol, OSB from Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Erie, Penn., has been added to the AM staff as coordinator of the Mass Stipend Ministry.

FROM THE ABA ARCHIVISTS' SECTION

The Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) hosted its triennial conference in St. Louis, Mo., this September. The event brought together archivists and leaders from various religious communities to discuss all matters of collaboration needed to express and preserve the rich history and the charisms of these communities.

During a session titled "Preserving Today's News for Tomorrow Together," Sister Virginia Jung, OSB, the archivist for the Benedictine Sisters of Chicago, joined Andrea Hetley, the archivist for the Sisters of the Presentation from San Francisco, Cal., and Kim Westerman, the congregational communications director for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet from St. Louis, Mo., for a panel focused on the importance of two-way collaboration.

The session also included table discussions of key questions, led by Sister Virginia with Sarah Aisenbrey, the archivist for the Sisters of the Precious Blood from Dayton, Oh., as the ACWR moderator and scribe.

The commitment was made to continue these valuable discussions at the upcoming Communicators for Women Religious (CWR) conference in Chicago in October. This is some of the wisdom that emerged from the group that you can adapt to your circumstances:

Communication is key! Communication between offices is a weak link among many archives/communicator teams.

- Have regular meetings with communications staff.
- Hold meetings with various departments (e.g., development, vocations, peace & justice, archives, and communications) regularly. How do we document the departments?
- Have shared drives with availability for all staff with policies.
- Have policy manual as protection – include requirements for what photos go into the archives.
- do not take information while it's being used.
- Paper is better than nothing – born-digital is not always an option.
- Establish a workflow with the communications departments and archives departments.
- Keep what you send communications department succinct (not getting into the weeds).

- It's okay if it's a work in progress – keep an open dialogue with communications staff.

- Focus on documenting the present is good.
- It is important to document the continuing mission of the congregation.

If you would like to start or deepen this conversation with the leadership, communicators, and archivists at your monastery, here are some questions to get you started:

1. What content does the communications department create at your monastery? In what file formats?
2. Communications creates content for many different platforms in diverse formats. Much of it appears to be redundant. In light of collections policies, the cost of digital preservation, and the question of access, what is important for the archives department to preserve far into the future?
3. How often and how does the content get to the archives? What metadata comes along with it?
4. Who curates the collection? Does the communicator send select material or send everything and then the archivist chooses what to keep?
5. What challenges are you facing with preserving content?
6. How can ACWR and CWR collaborate to support each other better on this topic?

Virginia Jung, OSB
Archivist Section Coordinator

The following announcement from ACWR may be of interest to those communities transitioning their archives to another location:

Archivists for Congregations of Women Religious (ACWR) is pleased to share the Religious Archives in Transition Toolkit, a free 150+ page guide to assist congregations of women religious in transitioning their archival collections to a successor repository.

The toolkit is divided into three sections, which address the process of transition from start to finish. Each section functions within a timeline-based framework called the Spectrum of Fulfillment.

Part 1 - “Assessing Your Archive” encourages you to explore your current archival reality and to begin critically thinking about who you are and what your collection represents.

Part 2 - “Discerning Your Archival Future” leads you through a practical workflow to explore and discern potential options for a successor repository. We ask you to define your own “good fit” repository.

Part 3 - “Transitioning Your Archive” involves everything from preparing your collections to move, navigating the physical move, and dealing with the extraneous “stuff.” This information-dense section will surely provide some tips, tricks, and practical advice for your archival move.

Additional features of the toolkit include:

“How-To” Guides

Case Studies

Special Topics Discussions

Worksheets and Reflections

Links to Resources

Although this guide relates primarily to archives of women religious, the tools and methodologies within this toolkit can be readily applied to other repositories facing transition to another entity. We hope our members, and others, will utilize this toolkit in a way that is most useful and meaningful to each congregation. The toolkit emphasizes the essential role of leadership in ensuring that the historical legacy of Catholic sisters and nuns is preserved in perpetuity.

Please be aware that the toolkit may be revised, edited, or updated in the future. New editions will be uploaded to the ACWR website.

We would like to thank the Society of American Archivists Foundation for a Strategic Growth Grant, which enhanced our capacity to complete the toolkit. We would also like to thank the National Archives Project for Women Religious (NAPWR) which, through the Sisters of Charity Foundation and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, provided funds to support attendees at the Religious Archives in Transition workshop.

ACWR welcomes feedback on the toolkit or the workshop experience. Please be in touch with the ACWR National Office at archivistsacwr@gmail.com.

Here at Assumption Abbey in Richardton N.D., with the help of David Gray, professional archivist, the Father Terrence Kardong papers have been catalogued, which includes research files and sermons that cover 30 cubic feet of archival space, even after a good deal of his papers were turned over to Sister Colleen Maura McGrane in Clyde, Mo., who followed him as editor of the *American Benedictine Review*. Most of these papers are written in Terrence's own handwriting, which, if you knew of it, was script-like and beautiful.

Brother Bertrand Vogelweide, Archivist
Assumption Abbey
Richardton, N.D.

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:

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sum requested from the ABA

Send applications to:

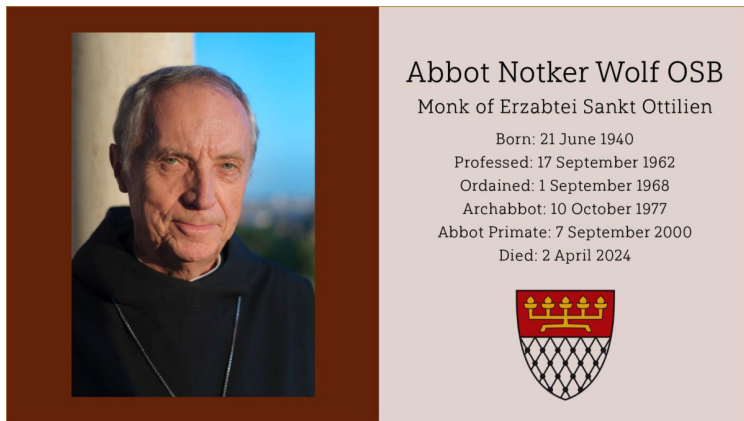
Sister Edith Bogue, OSB

Sacred Heart Monastery

916 Convent Rd NE

Cullman, AL 35055

edithosb@gmail.com



We remember fondly and gratefully the life of Abbot Notker Wolf, OSB, former abbot primate. According to the notice from his monastery he “died unexpectedly in the airport hotel in Frankfurt am Main in the late evening of 2 April. He had been accompanying a pilgrimage in the footsteps of St. Benedict in Italy since Easter Monday. As he was increasingly feeling unwell, he took a flight home to St. Ottilien early. During the necessary overnight stay in Frankfurt, he died of a heart attack in his room.”

About his birth in 1940 and his early life, the obituary says, “His childhood was characterized by deprivation and a lack of nutrition, so that the boy’s growth was stunted and he was to suffer from stomach problems for the rest of his life. He only met his father after his return from captivity as a British prisoner of war in 1947.”

He became a Benedictine monk in September of 1962, and took the name "Notker" in honor of St. Notker the Stammerer, who was a noted musician and scholar of his time.

Abbot Notker’s own life of scholarship began with study in Rome at Sant'Anselmo, and then at the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich where he concentrated in the interdisciplinary fields of theology, philosophy, and natural sciences (zoology, inorganic chemistry, and the history of astronomy). He was ordained a priest in 1968 at St. Ottilien Archabbey. In 1970, he returned to Rome to be professor of natural philosophy and philosophy of science at the Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo. In 1974, he received his doctor of philosophy degree.

On 1 October 1977, he was elected as the fifth archabbot of St. Ottilien Archabbey, and thus also Abbot President of the worldwide Benedictine

Congregation of St. Ottilien with its numerous monasteries and foundations. At the time, the congregation had over twenty monasteries and over 1,100 monks.

On 7 September 2000, over 260 abbots of the Benedictine Confederation gathered in Rome and elected him as the ninth Abbot Primate of the Order of St. Benedict. The position is well described by the Wikipedia entry about Abbot Notker: “Although an Abbot Primate possesses little real authority over autonomous monasteries or congregations of monks, this position does allow him to serve as the visible presence of the Benedictine Order to the larger world. The office of Abbot Primate was created by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 to serve the Benedictine community as its liaison to the Vatican and civil authorities, to promote unity among the various autonomous Benedictine monasteries and congregations, and to represent the order at religious gatherings around the globe. The Abbot Primate resides at the primatial abbey of Sant'Anselmo all'Aventino in Rome, as well as serves as the "Grand Chancellor" to the Pontificio Ateneo Sant'Anselmo.”

Like his patron saint, Notker was also known for his musical skills. He always took his flute along when traveling, often giving impromptu concerts wherever he was staying. He also played flute and sometimes electric guitar with his longtime friends in the rock band Feedback in concerts and recordings, and in one famous onstage appearance with the band Deep Purple (certainly a unique part of the resume of an abbot primate).

After sixteen years of service to the Benedictine Confederation, his term ended and Abbot Gregory Polan was elected as the new Abbot Primate in 2016. Returning to his home abbey of St. Ottilien, Abbot Notker pursued his interests in interreligious dialogue, environmental issues, responsible immigration policies, and ethical leadership and management. Many lectures and numerous books kept him in the public eye and public dialogue up to his untimely end.

American Benedictine Academy

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