



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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The mission of the American Monastic Newsletter is to be an instrument of communication and information for Benedictine monasteries of North America and members of the American Benedictine Academy.

BENEDICTINE MONASTICISM: THE PAST RECEIVING THE FUTURE

July 24-27, 2014
Conception Abbey
Conception, Missouri

It is the age of “new monasticism,” as well as a surge in lay appreciation of Benedictine spirituality and the reconfiguring of many traditional monastic communities. It is appropriate, then, that the American Benedictine Academy has chosen for its convention theme “The Past Receiving the Future.” The current president of ABA, Rev. Martin Shannon, is himself a member of a community that is uniquely innovative and yet very much in the Benedictine tradition. Speakers for the convention will approach the topic from a number of perspectives, and a day-long pre-convention conference will look specifically at the role and experiences of Benedictine oblates.

The pre-convention event will take place during the morning and afternoon of Thursday, July 24, before the convention's evening opening. Consisting of a series of “mini-presentations” made by various oblate members of ABA, the aim will be to facilitate conversation around the convention theme, particularly as it applies to Benedictine oblates. Details about the speakers and topics are provided inside this issue of the newsletter.

The convention speakers bring a broad range of experiences to the conversation. “Today's Artisans of Tomorrow's Monasticism” is the topic of Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB. She is a member of the monastery of Mount St. Benedict in Erie, Penn., where she has held a number of leadership positions, including twelve years as prioress and three years as president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR).

Father Joel Rippinger, OSB, a monk of Marmion Abbey in Aurora, Ill., is a teacher and retreat leader who has shared his contagious love of the monastic tradition with many religious and lay communities and in his work with new members and with oblates. His subject will be “Transmitting a Common Core of Benedictine Monasticism: A Survival Kit for the Future.” He is a long-time member and past president of ABA, and author of *The Benedictine Order in the United States: An Interpretive History*.

Sister Julia Upton, RSM, is a member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and has been a member of ABA since 1990. An oblate of Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira, N. Y., theologian and researcher, she will speak on

(continued next page)

President's Message

Recently my community launched a new website designed specifically to be one of the formation tools for our oblates: for those preparing to make their oblation (we call it a "covenant" here), and for those who want to continue their formation as oblates of the Community of Jesus. After a couple of weeks of introductory material, the first "course" to be presented on the site will be a 50-day study of the Paschal Triduum. The study will conclude in Holy Week, after which those oblates able to join us here at the Community will come for our observance of the Triduum, to share in the experience of the texts and the music and the actions that the course describes. In her letter introducing this material to our oblates, one of our oblate directors wrote of the Triduum: "This is the high point of our liturgical year, as these services demonstrate and define our lives as Christians and as monastics."

I have been thinking about her choice of words in light of the upcoming ABA convention in July (yes, only five months away!). The issues being raised by our presenters about monasticism's past and future in conversation revolve around the question of what best "demonstrates and defines" our lives as Benedictines. We would all agree, I think (and it is not just the liturgist in me who says this), that the "event" of the Paschal Triduum is the most formative influence in our lives, as Christians and as monastics. As we enter a new Lenten season, and pray ourselves through another holy three days, we are reminded

(Convention, continued from p.1)

her study "Benedictine Oblates, Profile and Analysis: Glorifying God by Their Lives."

Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove's life represents "Somethings Old, Somethings New: The Monastic Impulse Today." A Baptist minister in Durham, N. C., he founded Rutba House, a new monastic community that lives together, welcoming neighbors and the homeless. He speaks to both evangelicals and other audiences about the early Christian traditions and modern spirituality and is author of the book *New Monasticism*.

In addition to the speakers, there will be a business meeting to elect ABA board members, section meetings for librarians, archivists, visual artists and monastic researchers, a display of art by monastics, as well as ample opportunities for conversation and getting to know others who are enthusiastic about the past and future of monastic life. One need not be a member of the ABA, nor a Benedictine, Cistercian or oblate to attend. Registration information and form are included in this newsletter and will be posted on the ABA website.

that the past and the future meet regularly in the eternal "now" of Christ's death and resurrection. Traditional monastics, new monastics, oblates, married couples, children – we will all "start afresh from Christ" in late April.

Beyond that, however, what else "demonstrates and defines" our monastic lives? On this score, I hope that you find Sister Christine Vladmiroff's column as thought-provoking as I have. Questions here seem to be her specialty, and there is no better way to start and continue a conversation. In the midst of them all she writes, "I believe there must be fidelity to essential aspects of our life as we enter into a process in which the past is to receive the future. Listening is the key."

The board had a very productive and enjoyable set of meetings at Conception Abbey in early January. We did a lot of listening (which required a lot of talking) about the July convention. We are aware that it takes a little effort to get to Conception, Missouri (for some of our board members, it took more effort to get out of Conception in the snow), but given the quality of our presenters, the material they have already offered, and the contributions we all have to bring, it will be worth the journey. In the meantime, on behalf of the board, I wish you a very blessed Lent, and the most meaningful of Paschal Tridiums.

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The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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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

Furthering the Conversation

Each issue of the Newsletter before the convention will contain a reflection from one of the speakers.

Sister Christine Vladmiroff has been a member of the Benedictine Sisters of Erie, Penn., since 1957. She has served as director of initial formation, director of scholastics, member of the monastic council, and member of the council of the Federation of St. Scholastica.

Elected prioress of her community in 1998, Sister Christine served for three terms until 2010. She also served for four years as president of the Conference of Benedictine Prioresses. She is one of 19 delegates to the *Communio Internationales Benedictinarum* (CIB), an international body of women Benedictines worldwide under the abbot primate. In August 2003 she was elected president of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), representing over 76,000 women religious in the United States, where she served until 2006.

She has done graduate work in Scripture and theology and holds a master's in Spanish literature and a doctorate in Latin American studies from Universidad Internacional in Mexico.

Benedict tells us that the monastic leader “has a treasury of knowledge from which to bring out what is new and what is old.” (RB 64:9). If the past is to receive the future, how will we discern what we cling to and what we let go? How will the present be embodied in the future? What practices will carry the spirit? Who will lead us to that future?

In times of historical transition, the Benedictine legacy has been stretched to what appeared to be its limits. We are to be artisans of a new moment in the history of monasticism, as were our foremothers and forefathers. Can we learn from the Cistercians at Citeaux and the Cluniac Reform among so many others? Each took a posture and emphasis founded in the Rule and lived tradition. Each enriched our heritage. Whether they lasted, or did not, is not the question.

In the 1800's, our predecessors came to North America and a founding moment presented itself. Women and men Benedictines accepted American candidates and, though the strains of European monastic thought and practice at first predominated, change rose quickly in Benedictine monasteries in North America through the surrounding culture and the persons entering the communities. How did we discern when to adapt and what to change? How did we combine the European with the American character?

In the 1920s to 1950s, women Benedictines organized into federations and, for the first time, engaged in decision-making as a cluster of autonomous communities by means

of delegates representing individual communities. The tradition as it appeared in different regions of the country – the conservative East Coast, the pioneering settlers of the Great Plains and the freshness of the west coast – made for robust debate. Communities engaged in different ministries, with hospitals and schools predominating. How did they discern where to focus their attention in order to live in the present? Were prayer and community important? Was silence a value? Were work and holy leisure in balance as institutional building was at its height and the American proclivity toward activism at its peak? Could we maintain separation, liminal space, and practice hospitality in a land sometimes hostile to our presence?

Then came the Second Vatican Council. We grasped the movement and lived life with a heightened sense of responsibility for the centuries of tradition we stewarded. We were concerned with adapting to the situation emerging in Church and society at a rapid pace.

What was relevant? What was the best of our heritage? What would express the timelessness of the Benedictine charism? We defined the central beliefs and values of the charism with a new vocabulary in the hope that we could touch the ambient culture, a culture so confusing and conflictive in the globalization of our world in the 60s and 70s.

We stand now in a new moment. Monasticism is an experiential tradition, not a disembodied idea. It is people; it is communities that model the charism in the specificity of the local, national and worldwide environments of church and society.

The dialogical process takes place in response to the questions of our age. What are the challenges? What is the ferment of new ideas that causes us to question? What are the threats: decline, demographics, mediocrity of observance? What can guide us to raise new from old? Are we open to development of monasticism, not as a static prototype but, as a multiform and resilient experiment in the human goal of seeking God? How can we re-frame the monastic enterprise in our day? What will be the elements, in the Rule and in our lives, to guide us in the task?

I believe there must be fidelity to essential aspects of our life as we enter into a process in which the past is to receive the future. Listening is key. Our prayer, the Liturgy of the Hours prayed antiphonally, and a life with a certain marginality in church and society ought to heighten our capacity to listen and truly to hear. We need to live in a community that fosters communication among members, for Benedict urges us to listen to the young and those who may not be first to stand and share their thoughts (RB 3:2-3). We need to cultivate an expansive spirit of generativity. Some of us may need to move aside and encourage others to take over governance and leadership for the future.

We need leaders, not managers, as we open paths to a new time. But most of all our communities need to be human and loving oases in a world that seeks meaning and life in a community centered on Christ.

Benedict never offered us a closed system. The Rule and Scripture are our guide but in the end he urged us to go beyond them (RB 73). Where shall we go? How broad is our vision?

Christine Vladimiroff, OSB

Want to join the conversation?

Now that the “Members Only” page is on the website, we invite ABA members to think about and discuss the convention topic. This space will continue the tradition of pre-convention reflection papers which have been an opportunity for ABA members to consider the convention topic with the input of other contributors besides the speakers.

Two discussion strings are being started. Although the comment section is not yet up and running, the reflections are ready to be viewed:

- “Who is Benedictine?” This is a short comment from Very Rev. Donald Richmond, an Evangelical Anglican oblate who poses questions of definition.

- “Call No Movement New Until It Is Old: New Monasticism and the Practice of Stability.” This article by Gerald Schlabach appeared in *Pro Ecclesia* and raises a number of interesting issues.

Anyone else who wishes can pose a question or comment and start their own conversation about any aspect of the interest areas of the ABA, not just those that are convention-related. The ABA hopes that this service of the website will become the go-to place for getting in touch with others interested in things Benedictine. The page may be viewed only by current ABA members and will be carefully monitored.

Members who have not yet set up their access can go to the website’s “Members Only” page to sign up. When membership status has been confirmed, you will receive an authorization e-mail from the administrator, usually within a few days. Then you can read what others are saying, view additional pre-convention materials, and have your say.

Listening to the Oblate Voice Pre-Convention Conversation

Thursday, July 24
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Four oblates will share ways that the Benedictine charism is being carried into the world outside the monastery.

Laura Dunham: *Transmitting the Tradition through a School for Benedictine Spirituality*
Laura is part of the Benedictine Project Group at St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn. which is exploring effective ways to pass on the tradition as communities decline in numbers and strength.

Kathleen Norris: *An Oblate in the Middle of Nowhere*
The bestselling author will discuss how she found her neighbors, the Benedictines in western North Dakota, and how their lapsed oblate program found new life.

Greg Peters: *The Rule of Benedict in the University and the Parish*
As a Benedictine oblate and a historian of monasticism, Greg will explore the intersection(s) of the *Rule of Benedict* with his work as a professor at a Christian university as well as being the rector at an Anglican parish.

Judith Valente: *Business as Unusual: Monastic Wisdom and the Work World*
The author, poet, PBS television journalist, and producer at an NPR affiliate, asks how oblates like herself can take the “best practices” of Benedictine spirituality and apply them to their public discourse and their business and professional worlds.

While the aim of this day is to bring more oblates into the conversation, other convention attendees may also participate. Likewise, oblates may attend only this event, but are encouraged to stay for the convention as they will enrich, and be enriched by, the rest of the week’s activities. It is not a part of the convention registration package; separate fees are indicated on the registration form.

CANON LAW COLUMN

On Visitation in and of Monasteries

According to one writer, “The institute of visitation has a long history within the Church. In the New Testament, St. Paul sends Timothy and Titus to Ephesus and Crete ‘to preach the gospel and to teach sound doctrine, to correct errors, to reprove improper conduct and generally to build up the community.’” So in our monastic tradition, visitors from other monasteries are sent to a monastery to conduct a visitation with the community.

The visitation of religious houses by diocesan bishops (See canons 628§2, 683; see also canon 678) is not addressed here. Neither is apostolic visitation addressed here. But see *American Monastic Newsletter*, June 2010, in which the canon law column addressed the apostolic visitation of women religious in the United States. Here only canonical visitation of monasteries by other monastics is addressed.

Canonical visitation of monasteries and other religious institutes is directed in canon 628, which states: “The superiors whom the proper law of the institute designates for this function are to visit the houses and members entrusted to them at stated times according to the norms of this same proper law.” The first thing to notice is that canonical visitation here is seen as a duty of the superior. For monastics, it is the duty of the abbot, the abbess, prior or prioress, but also of the president of a congregation or federation of monasteries. Nevertheless, there are also corresponding responsibilities of the community members in a visitation: “Members are to act with trust toward a visitor, to whose legitimate questioning they are bound to respond according to the truth in charity. Moreover, it is not permitted for anyone in any way to divert members from the obligation or otherwise to impede the scope of the visitation.”

Visitations happen on a regular basis. For monasteries of the Federation of St. Scholastica, of which my monastery is a member, visitation happens every six years, as determined by our constitution. Note that the canon quoted above refers to the proper law of the institute for determining how often visitations are to be held. Ordinarily in our federation the president of the federation is one of the visitors. A team of two or more visitors comes to a monastery for canonical visitation.

What is the purpose of a canonical visitation? According to the constitution of the Federation of St. Scholastica, “[i]ts purpose is to provide a structure by which a community may evaluate the tradition.” This is echoed by a number of canonical commentators. Sister Sharon Holland, IHM (current LCWR president,

formerly served as a canonist in Rome at the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life - CICLSAL), in a presentation on the topic of visitation to the Canon Law Society of America, quoted the 1983 CICLSAL document “Essential Elements in the Church’s Teaching on Religious Life,” which stated that the purpose of visitation is “the building of a united community in Christ in which God is sought and loved before all things, and the mission of Christ is generously accomplished” (*Proceedings of the Sixty-First Annual Convention of the Canon Law Society*, October 1999, p. 161) Sister Sharon goes on to say, “While the correction of abuses remains one purpose of visitation, more important is the opportunity to inspire, to call to deeper spirituality and apostolic zeal, to consult on matters of importance for the institutes as a whole and for the house . . . being visited.” She goes on to say that, “[f]or those experiencing difficulty of some sort, the visit provides an ‘outside’ objective person with whom to speak.”

Another canonical commentator, Sister Margaret Mary Modde, in Jordan Hite’s, *A Handbook on Canons 573-746*, described visitations this way: “Visitations can be seen as opportunities for a mutual exchange of understandings and an honest evaluation of the life of the community. The visitor’s role often includes reviewing the life and work of members of institutes, their spiritual and financial condition, and the fidelity of the community to its spirit, charism, traditions and constitutions.”

A visitation doesn’t simply happen without substantial preparation by both the community and the visitors. The community, through various committees, does a self-study regarding community activity since the previous visitation. A self-study report is prepared and is sent to the visitors in advance, together with the previous visitation report, in order to help them to prepare themselves to meet the community. Upon arrival, the visitors are usually provided with more detailed information about community finances, minutes of various committees, etc. This allows the visitors to be more knowledgeable in asking questions of the members of the monastery.

Anyone who has lived in a religious community for at least a handful of years has experienced a canonical visitation. There are meetings of the visitors with the monastery council, with various committees, etc., along with an opportunity for individual members to meet with the visitors to express anything regarding the life of the community about which they may wish to comment. As mentioned above, canon 628 devotes a special section to the expectations of the members of the monastery being visited. They must be ready to speak the truth in love to the visitors and to be attentive to the ways that the community is being challenged by the visitors. No one is to discourage any member from freely participating and discussing with the visitors. Every member of the
5 monastery should feel free to approach the visitors, and

the visitators should also feel free to approach any member of the monastery.

In chapter 61 of the *Rule of St Benedict*, Benedict writes of visiting monks. While I don't think that St. Benedict foresaw the canonical concept of visitation of monasteries, he did see the value of someone from outside the monastery bringing a fresh perspective, someone who has the ability to view situations more objectively than the community being visited. St. Benedict writes: "[The visiting monastic] may, indeed, with all humility and love make some reasonable criticisms or observations, which the abbot should prudently consider; it is possible that the Lord guided him to the monastery for this very purpose." The attitude of humble listening to which Benedict urges the abbot here in RB 61 is something that befits all monastics, as indeed is indicated by the first word of the Holy Rule: "Listen." It does indeed take humble listening to hear possible criticism of one's community and to respond openly and truthfully, seeking only to improve the common life in the monastery. Sometimes it takes someone with an objective eye to truly see what difficulties there may be in the monastic life of a given monastery.

Visitations are an important tool in our ongoing conversion of life in the monastery. Both Benedict and the Code of Canon Law see the wisdom of having someone familiar, but not too familiar, with the life of the monastery to come and observe and ask questions. A similar practice within the monastery is for the monastic superior (e.g., the abbot or prioress) to have visitation with each and every member of the monastery, to inquire as to how the member is progressing in the monastic way of life. Something different occurs in the specialized time of visitation by the monastic superior with members that doesn't happen in the day to day life of the monastery. This should happen annually, and is in addition to and apart from the canonical visitation by monastics from outside of the monastery.

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NEWS

Sister Jacquelyn Ernster, OSB, has been appointed administrator of St. Gertrude Monastery in Ridgely, Maryland. Abbot Placid Solari, OSB, of Belmont Abbey will be acting as external administrator for Mary Mother of the Church Abbey in Richmond, Va.

Recent deaths of note:

Father Demetrius Dumm, OSB (St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Pa.), noted Scripture scholar and author of numerous books on biblical and monastic spirituality.

Once again the Visual Arts Section of ABA will mount an art show at the July convention. All artists from the monasteries will be invited to show their works whether or not the artist is an ABA member. More details will be forthcoming, but readers can begin now to encourage the artists in their communities to participate.

The Conference of Benedictine Prioresses gathered for their annual meeting at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison. They heard a panel of Benedictine women representing newer and younger members of monasteries, and engaged in a process facilitated by Sister Kerry O'Reilly of St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minn. Sister Irene Nowell of Atchison was the speaker for the inspirational portion of their meeting, reflecting on "Women of Hope."

The Benedictine Sisters of Elk County have announced that they are taking steps to close St. Joseph Monastery in St. Marys, Penn. The sisters of the community are still in process of discerning their future. This monastery was the first settlement of American Benedictine women in the United States and has been in their current location for more than 160 years. They are the original founding source of the majority of the North and Central American monasteries in existence today. A group of sisters representing daughter monasteries are in conversation regarding how to honor the patrimony and importance of this house and to preserve its legacy.

Benedictine oblates from around the world gathered in Rome in October of 2013 for their world congress. The topic: "Obsculta - the Oblate Listening in the World" was addressed by Sister Mary John Mananzan O.S.B., a Missionary Benedictine Sister concerned with women and the Third World from the Philippines, and Father Michael Casey, OCSO, noted Cistercian writer from Australia. The participants also enjoyed a papal audience, visits to Benedictine holy sites and an opportunity to meet people of many nations and races who share their love for the Benedictine way. The 250 delegates were allocated by populations and percentages to represent oblates from across the globe.

American Benedictine Academy Convention
July 24-27, 2014
Benedictine Monasticism: The Past Receiving the Future
Conception Abbey – Conception, Mo.

Registration Form

Date _____

Name for badge _____

Monastery and City _____

Personal Information

Full Name _____ OSB ___ OBLSB ___ Other ___

Mailing Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Gender () Female () Male

Registration Fee

Before June 1, 2014

After June 1, 2014

\$100.00 ABA member

\$115.00 ABA member

\$115.00 Non-member

\$135.00 Non-member

Total _____

Room and Board (room – Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights and board from Thursday supper through Sunday breakfast). *Please check room preference below:*

St. Gabriel (private room and bath): \$180.00 single ____ \$150 per person double ____

NOTE: *Space in St. Gabriel's is limited and will be first come, first served.*

Marian Hall (dorm with common bathroom): \$130 single ____ \$120 per person double ____

Extra nights are \$35 per night. I would also like housing on _____

I would like to share a double room with _____

Room & Board Total _____

____ I will not be staying overnight during the convention, but would like to purchase the meal plan (\$40 for 5 meals)

____ I plan to attend the pre-convention oblate event on Thursday (Registration fee: \$45 + \$8 per meal) Which meals? _____

TOTAL OF ALL ITEMS ABOVE _____

Assistance at Liturgies: Please volunteer! Check all that you are willing to do.

- Reader at prayers and/or Eucharist
- Prayer leader
- Cantor at prayers and/or Eucharist
- Play musical instrument - Type of instrument _____

Please indicate if you have any dietary or mobility needs. Please be specific.

Transportation

Airport is Kansas City International (MCI) and shuttle service is being arranged if needed (\$55 per person per trip. You will be notified of arrangements.

The following information will be needed for transportation services:

Arrival

Date _____ Time _____ Airline _____ Flight Number _____

Departure

Date _____ Time _____ Airline _____ Flight Number _____

___ Please check here if you are willing to have your flight and contact information shared with other travellers to coordinate transportation.

Please mail your registration form and check payable to “Conception Abbey, ” to:

Abbey Guest Center
 Conception Abbey
 PO Box 501
 Conception, MO 64433

Reports from Monastic Studies Grant Recipients

Each year, the Academy grants small amounts of money for support of projects which foster the mission of the ABA. Grant support may be used for research, travel, or other modes of exploring and promoting the Benedictine heritage. As a condition of receiving a grant, the recipient must submit an accounting of their use of the awarded money, a summary of which is published in this newsletter.

Sister Jeana Visel of Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind., received partial funding for a pilgrimage to Santiago Compostela.

As a monastic studies graduate student at St. John's University School of Theology, I joining the College of St. Benedict/St. John's University Hispanic Studies and Campus Ministry departments in pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago de Compostela across 800 kilometers in northern Spain. I wanted to research the Benedictine houses along the route, exploring how the ministry of providing hospitality to pilgrims has impacted the way the monastic life has been lived.

In the U. S., most Benedictine houses provide varying kinds of hospitality to visitors, but few of our monasteries have much contact with the people Benedict probably was imagining when he wrote of "pilgrims." In Spain, however, many Benedictine houses continue to experience pilgrimage as a living reality along the Camino. A popular pilgrimage route since the ninth century, pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has surged in the last 30 years. To meet the needs of over 100,000 pilgrims a year, new hostels, or *albergues*, have been built, but monasteries continue to be part of the infrastructure supporting the pilgrimage.

We had to bypass several monasteries I would have liked to have visited, observations are based on interviews at five women's monasteries, with translation assistance from Matt Jakubisin. I visited several other monasteries that no longer have living communities on the premises, and one which was closed to the public at the time. Other research was undertaken from the library or via the web. The communities were:

- *Monasterio de San Benito, Estella, Navarra*: Benedictine, with roots in the tenth century. Once located closer to the main route, it is now difficult to access from downtown.

The 12 sisters invite guests to participate in liturgy. *Monasterio de Santa María la Real, Irache/Ayegui*: one of the biggest pilgrim hospices before the 11th century. In 1985 the monks vacated the monastery and presently it is a museum.

- *Nuestra Señora de la Anunciación, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, La Rioja*: Cistercian, founded in 1610 from Las Huelgas, right on the Camino road. An 18th century

hostel is staffed part of the day by volunteers and operates on donations. Since the 1960s, they have also run a nicer guest house for those able to pay more. The albergue is connected to the church, and from the road, one can visit a glassed-in niche with two kneelers before the Blessed Sacrament. The door into the church opens for vespers and Mass. Four sisters help staff the reception area, take care of rooms, and assist in the kitchen.

- *Monasterio Benedictinas de San Jose, Burgos*: Benedictine nuns who maintain a hostel for religious groups and may accommodate individual pilgrims. In 1601 the community moved into the city to open a hospital for injured pilgrims. At present there are 19 nuns. Though on the main route, they do not offer a stamp for the pilgrim credencial, which suggests they do not expect pilgrims to stop.

- *Santa Maria la Real de las Huelgas, Burgos*: Besides decorating porcelain, the sisters support themselves by doing laundry for local hotels. They have a 10-room hospederia for women to spend a few days. There are around 40 members, including several novices.

- *Santa Maria de Carbajal, León*: Benedictine sisters with a large pilgrim albergue and a nicer hospederia. The community of 20 nuns is over 1000 years old. At least since 1400 they ran a pilgrim hospital; in 1600 they moved to León, where they receive 23,000 pilgrims a year. *Monasterio de San Martin Pinario, Santiago de Compostela*: former Benedictine monastery hospederia and also the home of the major seminary. About 100 years ago, the monks were suppressed by the state; the local Church bought back the property to make it a seminary.

- *Monasterio de San Pelayo de Antealtares, Santiago de Compostela*: Canons had care of the body of St. James in the cathedral. In 1498, it became a monastery for cloistered nuns. Today there are 35 sisters with a student residence hall and housing for groups, a small sacred art museum and early childhood education center, and the sisters do baking and embroidery.

The most dynamic communities, regardless of size, appear to be those that keep their focus on the gift of the Benedictine charism itself. They seem to understand that the charism is not limited to those in monastic profession, but is a set of values to be nourished among others as well. Some also provide a great example of how to empower volunteers and others to help live out the Benedictine charism. They work to make their prayer beautiful and accessible. They are not afraid to preach a little.

A spirituality of pilgrimage should be a reminder that as Benedictines, we are seeking God. It is easy to lose sight of this in the everyday rush of life, but it is so important that as followers of Benedict, we be aware of this point of reference and model it for other Christians. In a time saturated by so many messages, so many options, so many paths to take, we need to keep the basic goal of life explicit and clear. Like the pilgrims who come, we are seeking

COMING OPPORTUNITIES

Oblate Institute - July 17 - 20, Sophia Center of Mount St. Scholastica, Atchison, Kansas

This year's annual institute for oblates will feature Kathleen Norris on "Discovering the Desert: Early Sources for Benedictine Spirituality." The weekend will include four presentations, an evening of readings and conversation with the bestselling author, and an opportunity to share with other oblates. The event is for oblates only and space is limited (and filling quickly). For information, contact Sister Mary Elizabeth Schweiger - maryliz@mountosb.org.

ENJOY A DOUBLE FEATURE! The oblate institute in Atchison ends the Sunday before the ABA pre-convention session for oblates on Thursday, July 24. Conception Abbey is only 90 minutes away and both monasteries are served by the same airport. Arrangements for interim housing may be possible if anyone coming from a distance wants to attend both events.

* * * * *

God's Love Portrayed in Art - June 25 through October 1, Savior Pastoral Center, Kansas City, Kansas

Artists are invited to exhibit at a national show and juried exhibition of visual arts, written word, and music created by clergy, members of religious communities (including Third Orders), and seminarians.

If you would like to have your art, writing or music considered for this exhibition, entry information is at the website: <http://www.contemporaryreligiousartists.org/> or from

Elizabeth Zeller, Contemporary Religious Artists Assoc.
(816) 833-3312
elizabeth@elizabethzeller.com

The deadline for submissions is May 15, 2014; selection decisions by May 31, 2014.

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Benedictine Re-Connection: A Pilgrimage to Germany and Austria - July 6-22

Father Volker Futter, OSB, of the Benedictine Mission House in Schuyler, Nebraska invites Benedictine oblates and friends to join him for 17 days in Germany and Austria. The pilgrimage will include Vienna, Dresden, Prague, Frankfurt, and visits to many of the famous Benedictine monasteries including 3 nights stay at Munsterschwarzach and 3 at St. Ottilien. For more information, contact Father Volker at P.O. Box 528, Schuyler, NE 68661, (402) 352-2177.

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Imagining the Future: Monastic Life in 2020 - June 29 - July 3, 2014, Saint John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minn.

The call to community offers an alternative to the fluidity, fragmentation, and isolation weighing upon many in our fast-paced global society. Speakers bringing a wealth of experience and a diversity of perspectives on the importance of monastic life will be: Sister Jeana Visel, Abbot Matthew Leavy, Dr. Bonnie Bowman Thurston, Dr. Lawrence Cunningham and Dr. Victor Klimoski. More information, contacts and registration are at <http://www.csbsju.edu/SOT/Events/2014MonasticInstitute.htm>.

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BOOK REVIEW

Judith Valente. *Atchison Blue* (South Bend: Sorin Books, 2013) ISBN 978-1-933495-58-3, \$15.95.

It's not everyone that can quote the desert abbas, the Rule, Thomas Merton, and Yoda with equal facility. Nor is it everyone who has people such as Terrence Kardong, Kathleen Norris, Richard Rohr, and Macrina Wiederkehr saying wonderful things about one's book in its opening pages. But Judy Valente can, and does, in *Atchison Blue*, a memoir chronicling substantial time spent with the sisters at Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kansas.

This highly readable account takes the reader from Valente's initial exposure to the monastery when she and her husband went to give a retreat for busy professionals through three years' worth of week-long stays during which she learned how to "cultivate silence," as the "Atchison blue" chapel windows had exhorted her to do. Each chapter begins with a wisdom story as told by Sr. Lillian Harrington, one of the author's most important guides in her monastic formation. Describing Triduums, Christmases, retreats, deaths, and a profession, among other events in the life of the community, give Valente the means to express what she has learned and how these have changed her.

Most compelling, however, is the honesty and vulnerability with which the author writes. The specific moments in which she struggles with her stepdaughters or colleagues turn out to be the ones with the most universal truth. "I read incessantly, take workshops and periodically go into therapy or receive spiritual direction all out of a desire to know the true self. And yet, I waste so much time stifling that self, hiding my defects so that the face I show the world will not appear flawed." Though I suspect many readers who know the community will have fun seeing how closely their observations jibe with Valente's, these articulations of a spiritual journey are what really make *Atchison Blue* worth reading.

REMINDER:

ABA memberships are available for one or two years at a time and expire on the first of January. If your name is not on the list below, it's time to join or renew.

MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN BENEDICTINE ACADEMY 2014

Abel, OSB, Sister Rebecca, Ferdinand, IN
Bakken, Jon, Batavia, IL
Barfknecht, OSB, Father David, Waialua, HI
Biermaier, OSB, Sister Ann Marie, St. Joseph, MN
Bingham, OSB, Sister Penny, Yankton, SD
Bratsovsky, OSB, Sister Mary, Lisle, IL
Branigan, OSB, Sister Renée, Richardton, ND
Brune, OSB, Father Meinrad, St. Meinrad, IN
Carlson, Helen, Richfield, MN
Carrillo, OSB, Sister Elizabeth, Atchison, KS
Carruth, OSB, Sister Shawn, Moorhead, MN *
Christensen, Katherine, Berea, KY
Clay, OSB, Sister Corinne, Mt. Angel, OR
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Cottle, Rev. Drew, Kingston, PA
Cooper, OSB, Abbot Mark, Manchester, NH
Crowley, OSB, Sister Patricia, Chicago, IL
Curley, OSB, Augustine, Newark, NJ
Daniels, Dr. Marilyn, Newport, VT
DeAngeli, OSB, Sister Maria, Fort Smith, AR
Devine, OSB, Brother Luke, Lacey, WA,
Dieker, OSB, Sister Alberta, Mt. Angel, OR,
Dirkes, OblSB, Paul, Daphne, AL
Dohn, OSB, Sister Rita, Clyde, MO
Dwyer, OSB, Sister Cecilia, Bristow, VA
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Hammack, Robert, St. John, MO
Hastings, Elizabeth, Bergvliet, South Africa
Hawkins, OSB, Sister Mary, Canyon, TX
Hensell, OSB, Father Eugene, St. Meinrad, IN
Hill, Robert, Lawrenceville, GA
Hill Baroch, OblSB, Dorothy, Leavenworth, WA
Holmes, OSB, Father Caedmon, Portsmouth, RI
Howell, OblSB, Rev. Laura, Bethlehem, PA
Hunkler, OSB, Sister Marie, Wahpeton, ND
Jenniges, OSB, Brother Bradley, Collegetown, MN
Jett, Jan, Indianapolis, IN
Joyce, OSB, Father Timothy, Hingham, MA
Kalcic, OSB, Abbot Dismas, Lisle, IL
Kardong, OSB, Father Terrence, Richardton, ND *
Kehrwald, OSB, Sister Jennifer, Crookston, MN
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Kleiman, OSB, Sister Hilda, Mt. Angel, OR
Macul, OSB, Abbot Joel, Newton, NJ
Massam, Dr. Katharine, North Melbourne, Vic., Australia
McGrane, OSB, Sister Colleen, Clyde, MO
McKenzie, OSB, Sister Lynn, Cullman, AL
Meadows, OSB, Sister Lynn Elisabeth, Cullman, AL
Miller, OSB, Sister Diane, Watertown, SD
Morales-Perez, Francisco, San Juan, PR
Neuhofer, OSB, Sister Dorothy, San Antonio, FL
Neuman, OSB, Father Matthias, Beech Grove, IN
Neville, OSB, Sister Eileen, Yankton, SD
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Novecosky, OSB, Abbot Peter, Muenster, Sask.
Nuce, OSB, Sister Mary Anne, Jonesboro, AR
O'Brien, Diane, St. Louis, MO
Odermann, OSB, Father Valerian, Richardton, ND
Olson, OblSB, Carol, Lincoln, NE
Oliver, OSB, Brother Richard, Washington, DC
O'Ryan, OSB, Sister Mary Ann, Chicago, IL
Osika, OSB, Sister Lynn, Yankton, SD
Palm, OSB, Sister Rose, Watertown, SD
Paschke, OSB, Sister Lenore, Crookston, MN
Peak, OSB, Sister Julie, Yankton, SD
Pelletier, OSB, Father Gerald, Enfield, CT
Peters, OblSB, Greg, La Mirada, CA
Peterson, OblSB, Kenneth, Seattle, WA
Pratt, OSB, Sister Mary, Nassau, The Bahamas
Purcell, OSB, Sister Antoinette, Beech Grove, IN
Quaintance, OSB, Sister Susan, Chicago, IL
Radelmiller, OHC, Prior Nicholas, Santa Barbara, CA
Rader, OSB, Sister Rosemary, St. Paul, MN
Ranek, OSB, Sister Jeanne, Yankton, SD
Rau, OSB, Sister Renee, St. Joseph, MN
Raverty, OSB, Brother Aaron, Collegetown, MN
Reuter, OSB, Sister Mary, St. Joseph, MN
Richmond, OblSB, Rev. Donald, Apple Valley, CA
Rinehart, OSB, Sister Barbara, Nanaimo, BC
Riola, OSB, Father Peter, Blaine, MN
Rippinger, OSB, Father Joel, Aurora, IL
Riyeff, Jacob, South Bend, IN
Roh, OSB, Father Raymond, San Luis Obispo, CA
Rose, Sister Karen, St. Joseph, MN
Sampel, OblSB, Pamela, Port Townsend, WA
Sautner, OSB, Sister Adel, Pierre, SD

Schima, OSB, Sister Margaret Mary, Warren, OH
 Schlabach, Gerald, St. Paul, MN
 Schumacher, OSB, Sister Theresa, St. Joseph, MN
 Schwartz, OSB, Sister Phoebe, Richardton, ND
 Serna, OSB, Abbess David, Bethlehem, CT
 Shannon, CJ, Father Martin, Orleans, MA
 Smith, Rev. Dr. John, North Melbourne, Vic., Australia
 Smith, OSB, Sister Lynne, Middleton, WI
 Solari, OSB, Abbot Placid, Belmont, NC
 Wright, OSB, Abbot Charles, Oceanside, CA
 Stasyszen, OSB, Abbot Lawrence, Shawnee, OK
 Stoner, OSB, Sister Dorothy, Erie, PA
 Sutera, OSB, Sister Judith, Atchison, KS
 Swan, OSB, Sister Laura, Lacey, WA
 Tenney, S. M. Matthew, Salem, OR
 Tewes, OSB, Sister Mary, Villa Hills, KY
 Tomaine, Rev. Jane, Mountainside, NJ
 Valente, OblSB, Judith, Normal, IL
 Varga, OSB, Sister Hildegard, Canyon, TX
 Vest, Norvene, Charlottesville, VA
 von Herrmann, OSB, Sister Jeanette, Mt. Angel, OR
 Walgenbach, OSB, Sister Mary David, Middleton, WI
 Wambach, OSB, Sister Anne, Erie, PA
 Wangler, OSB, Abbot Brian, Richardton, ND
 Ward, OSB, Father Daniel, Silver Spring, MD
 Ward, James, Sahuarita, AZ
 Wenstrup, OSB, Sister Mary Catherine, Villa Hills, KY
 Yunker, OSB, Sister Judy, Martin, KY
 Zeller, Elizabeth, Independence, MO

*Egregia recipient

ABA EGREGIA AWARD NOMINATIONS

The Egregia Award, (*from the Latin: distinguished, exceptional, with outstanding praise*), formerly the Fellowship Award, is the principal award conferred by the American Benedictine Academy upon individual members. This award is conferred on persons

1. who have been members of the Academy for a minimum of eight years;
2. whose achievement or contribution to the Academy's purpose is long-standing in one of the following:
 - leadership in, or outstanding contribution to, conferences, symposia, programs of study or research projects that focus on monastic interests or themes;
 - publication of research that has a significant impact upon the understanding and development of monastic life;
 - long-term service in leadership capacities in the Academy;
 - development of and participation in creative expressions of monastic life in contemporary cultures.

An Academy member who wishes to nominate a person for the 2014 Egregia Award may submit the name of the nominee, together with a description of the nominee's achievement to

Antoinette Purcell, OSB
 antoinette_46107@yahoo.com

by **March 1, 2014**

Nominations will be submitted to the president and board of directors for selection and conferral of the Egregia Award at the July, 2014, convention at Conception Abbey in Conception, Mo.

AMERICAN BENEDICTINE ACADEMY NEW/RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____ City State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Community Affiliation _____

Please choose: ___ \$25 one-year membership ___ \$35 two-year membership

Mail check (payable to American Benedictine Academy) or payment to:

Elizabeth Carrillo, OSB
 801 South 8th Street
 Atchison, KS 66002
 (ecarrillo@mountosb.org)