



# The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Published under the auspices of the American Benedictine Academy

[www.americanbenedictine.org](http://www.americanbenedictine.org)

Volume 46, Number 1

February 2015

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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.*

## *The Rule of St. Benedict Globalizing*

The previous issue of this newsletter described a way in which the monastic way of life is reaching into a new demographic in the United States. A recent talk by Abbot Primate Notker Wolf described how traditional Benedictine life is playing out in a new demographic around the world.

While Abbot Notker was in the United States to attend the national meeting of the abbots and prioresses, he accepted an invitation from Dr. Ruth Krusemark, professor at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas, to give the first "Mother Evangelista Kremmeter Lecture" at the college. After vespers and supper with the monks of St. Benedict's Abbey and the sisters of Mount St. Scholastica on the feast of St. Scholastica, he gave an address on the topic "The Rule of St. Benedict Globalizing."

In it, he pointed out the tendency of people to base their perceptions on their own personal experience. He spoke of a European monk, well versed in the spirituality of the *Rule of St. Benedict*, who commented that Americans have never understood monastic life. To this, Abbot Notker had responded, "Perhaps you have never understood American life." He noted that, because of the autonomy of monasteries, it is a strong temptation to think that one's own monastery has the authentic way of monastic life. To this must also be added that much of contemporary monastic life has been deeply colored by the nineteenth century Romantic era in which it was re-established.

In the time of St. Benedict, there were many rules and many small independent monastic ways of life. His genius was to create a lifestyle for both the weak and the strong. Throughout the centuries, there were manifold ways of living out this charism. In addition to the famous centers of culture and evangelization, there were vast numbers of smaller communities in different areas of Europe with their own local flavors. Silvestrines, Cistercians, Vallambrosians and Camaldolese became centralized and emphasized different practices in their monasteries. "Why then," asks the abbot primate, "if this was true in Europe, should we be astonished to see many more ways of living the charism as it spreads through the world? What binds us together is the Rule of St. Benedict. The way of living it out has developed in so many directions throughout the many centuries. And because it is so flexible, it fits into all kinds of situations."

European Benedictines have been going forth into the rest of the world since Portuguese monks traveled to Brazil to catechize colonists and their West African slaves in the sixteenth century. The monks' good relationship with the royal house was instrumental in ending slavery there. In the nineteenth and twentieth century,

*(continued on page 7)*

## President's Message

When I wrote the autumn president's letter, I began a column about the death of Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, with an acknowledgment of the coming frost. As I write this, Chicago is in the midst of a blizzard. Things change (like you need me to tell you that)!

While chiding myself about how prosaic it is to introduce this with another comment about the weather, I realized that this subject of "change" might not be so lame after all. In telling you about where and when we will be together in the summer of 2016, I am explicitly recognizing some changes that the American Benedictine Academy is undergoing and asking for your help in continuing to think about them.

First, the details: the next ABA biennial convention will take place from July 21 through July 23, 2016, at the Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center in Beech Grove, Ind. A ministry of Our Lady of Grace Monastery, this location should be fairly easy to reach by various modes of transportation and should fit the number of folks that have been coming to recent meetings.

These details reflect the shifting nature of the Academy and its gatherings. If you've been a member of ABA for a while, you'll recall that we always used to meet the second weekend in August. While many still long for that predictability, it has been increasingly difficult to

navigate calendars with community obligations, academic schedules, and fewer available venues. ABA has usually met on a Benedictine college campus, but given our recent demographics, a smaller facility will accommodate us. As I prepare for the meeting of the board (comprised of three oblates and three vowed Benedictines, with a fourth vowed member as executive secretary) in Chicago next weekend, one of the items I've put on the agenda is the formation of an ad hoc committee to consider the future of ABA. The last board talked about the need to consider questions of membership and purpose, but realized that the board's task of planning the next convention doesn't allow the time needed for this more philosophical discussion. Following through on that idea is what I consider to be one of this board's most important jobs.

As the wind blows and the snow piles up, I'm grateful for this quiet afternoon to imagine all of us talking about what we want the Academy to be. Believers as we are in the paschal mystery, our consideration of the theme "Keep Death Daily Before Our Eyes" in July 2016 should make us wonder about what kind of new life will come in 2018 and beyond. Whatever changes come, I'm glad we're in this together.

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### *The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER*

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For all address changes, membership payments, purchase of ABA sponsored publications, or any other ABA business, please contact:

ABA Secretary: Elizabeth Carrillo, OSB

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

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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](http://www.americanbenedictine.org)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR  
The ABA Biennial Convention in 2016

*Keep Death Daily Before Our Eyes*

July 21 - 23, 2016

Hosted by Our Lady of Grace Monastery  
at their  
Benedict Inn Retreat and Conference Center

Beech Grove, Indiana

## CANON LAW COLUMN

### *Transfer of a Monastic from One Monastery to Another*

It is likely that no monastery is a stranger to having a member from another monastery seek to transfer his/her stability from the member's monastery of profession to a new monastery. The *Code of Canon Law* provides a specified procedure for such a transfer. St. Benedict presaged the code and also provided a procedure for transfer.

In chapter 61 of the *Rule of St. Benedict* on "The Reception of Visiting Monastics," Benedict addresses what was apparently a not uncommon situation. This chapter begins by saying that, "A visiting monk from far away will perhaps present himself and wish to stay as a guest in the monastery." In the very next paragraph of chapter 61, Benedict says, "If after a while he wishes to remain and bind himself to stability, he should not be refused this wish, especially as there was time enough, while he was a guest, to judge his character." In the last paragraph of this chapter, Benedict gives the proper procedure for accepting such a transferring monastic: "The abbot must, however, take care never to receive into the community a monk from another known monastery, unless the monk's abbot consents and sends a letter of recommendation, since it is written: Never do to another what you do not want done to yourself."

Canons 684-685 provide the universal law requirements for transfers between religious institutes as well as between monasteries of the same institute. Canon 684§3 states: "For a religious to transfer from an autonomous monastery to another of the same institute or federation or confederation, the consent of the major superior of each monastery and of the chapter of the receiving monastery is required and is sufficient, without prejudice to other requirements established by proper law; a new profession is not required." Note that this section of the canon begins "for a religious." It does not specify whether one is in perpetual vows or not, whereas canon 684§1 speaks of the transfer only of "a member in perpetual vows." Therefore, whether one is in first or final profession that member may transfer to another Benedictine monastery, as long as the other requirements are met. It is required that the transferring member receive the consent of the "major superior of each monastery and of the chapter of the receiving monastery." There was an authentic interpretation given by the Vatican in 1987 noting that religious in temporary profession were included in §3 for transfer among monasteries of the same tradition (such as Benedictines).

Another distinction for transfers of those from one autonomous monastery to another is that there is not a set period of "probation" as there is for other religious

transferring between religious institutes of different traditions. Canon 684§2 provides a probationary period of at least 3 years for other religious. But there is not a similar requirement for monastics going from one autonomous monastery to another. Rather, it is up to the proper law (i.e., the monastery's own law or constitution) to "determine the time and manner of the probation which must precede the profession of a member in the new institute" (Canon 684§4).

If, however, a monastic wishes to transfer to a non-monastic institute (e.g., a monastic to the Christian Brothers or to the Sisters of Mercy) or to a monastic institute of a different tradition (e.g., a Benedictine transferring to a Poor Clare monastery), then canon 684§1 requires the consent of the "supreme moderator of each institute and with the consent of their respective councils." In addition, a probation period of at least 3 years is required before "the member can be admitted to perpetual profession in the new institute" (Canon 684§2).

Perhaps the difference in treatment of monastics of the same tradition is rooted in the procedure set by St. Benedict himself as indicated above in chapter 61 of his rule. Benedict's rule predated by centuries any codification of canon law.

Canon 685§1 states that "until the religious makes profession in the new institute, while the vows remain, the rights and obligations which the member has in the former institute are suspended; however, the religious is obligated to observe the proper law of the new institute from the beginning of the probationary period." Therefore, for whatever probationary period is required, there exists a state of limbo for the transferring religious in which s/he has no right to elect or be elected in either his/her former institute or the new institute to which s/he is transferring.

The canonical reality of transfer is a recognition that sometimes a person's vocation evolves in such a way that remaining in the monastery to which the monastic professed stability is not possible or at least is not life-giving. In such cases, the law provides for a sufficient procedure that must be followed. Having such a procedure insures that a religious doesn't transfer too quickly because of some temporary difficulty that is likely to pass. The monastic promise of stability to a particular monastery is a serious commitment which is not to be changed lightly. The procedure established both in chapter 61 of the *Rule* and in canon 684 signifies the importance of this commitment and that changing one's stability must be done according to the required procedure.

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# COMING EVENTS

## INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON MEDIEVAL STUDIES

Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
May 14-17, 2015

The American Benedictine Academy and Cistercian Studies are among the many organizations that sponsor sessions at this worldwide gathering of those interested in all aspects of the medieval world. A full catalogue of the 567 sessions (plus plenary lectures and special events), as well as registration information is on the congress website: <http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress/index.html>.

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## ARCHITECTURE FOR LITURGY - Liturgy Week 2015

St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchison, Kansas  
May 26-29, 2015

The workshop is designed for parishioners preparing to renovate or build a church or chapel, architects desiring to deepen their appreciation of the liturgical dimensions of design, diocesan directors of offices of worship or commissions that govern the building or renovation of churches, or oblates and anyone else desiring a deeper appreciation of their prayer life in its context. (*Details are in the October 2014 issue of this newsletter*). More information and registration is at the event's website: <http://architectureforliturgy.com/liturgy-week-2015/>.

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## MONASTIC INSTITUTE

Saint John's School of Theology  
Collegeville, Minnesota  
June 28-July 2, 2015

"Monastic Life and the New Evangelization" is the title for the 30th Monastic Institute. Thus far three speakers have been confirmed: Thomas Rosica, CSB (<http://saltandlighttv.org/about/rosica.php>), Sebastian Gomes (<http://saltandlighttv.org/about/sebastian-gomes.php>), and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre (<http://marilynmcentyre.com/>). Once all speakers are confirmed, the registration process will begin.

To celebrate the 30th anniversary, there will be three opportunities for monastic communities and participants to share in the institute. Participants are being sought who might want to contribute to three special evening sessions. *Monday evening*: Seeking monastic communities who will share how their community ministers to people on the

margin. Do you have a particular ministry on the margins that your community is committed to? Each community would have about 10 minutes to share.

*Tuesday evening*: Poetry reading. Are you a poet? Do you have 1-3 poems you would like to share?

*Wednesday evening*: Artists, Monastic Life and the New Evangelization Do you have art that you have created and would like to share it with other participants?

If you would like to present briefly on one of these evenings, please sign up and share what you might do here: <https://www.csbsju.edu/forms/CLGVEP976A.aspx>.

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## 2015 MONASTIC WORSHIP FORUM CONFERENCE

Monastery Immaculate Conception  
Ferdinand, Indiana  
July 6-10, 2015

The Monastic Worship Forum is an organization for liturgists and musicians in a monastic context. Its planning committee reviewed suggestions given by participants at the last conference and decided to focus on the Liturgy of the Hours and chant for this year's conference. Speakers will be Father Godfrey Mullen, OSB on "Praying With Hearts Expanded: Participation in the Liturgy of the Hours" and Sister Irene Nowell, OSB on "Psalmody."

For more information and registration contact Sister Anita Louise Lowe, OSB ([allosb@thedome.org](mailto:allosb@thedome.org)).

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## NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BENEDICTINE OBLATE DIRECTORS

Subiaco Abbey  
Subiaco, Arkansas  
July 10 - 15, 2015

The theme for the biennial meeting of oblate directors is "Nurturing Benedictine Spirituality: From Theory to Practice." Presenters will be Sister Karen Joseph, OSB (Ferdinand, Ind.), Abbot Jerome Kodell, OSB (Subiaco, Ark.) and Sister Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB (Fort Smith, Ark.). If the oblate director of a monastery is unable to attend, up to 2 oblates may be sent by the director to represent the community. Scholarship money is available if a director has financial need. The NAABOD conference provides an opportunity for enrichment and renewal for all who attend, more effective networking between and among monasteries with oblate chapters, and the development of new leaders not only among directors but among oblates. There is an excellent cohort of keynote

speakers and the organization has made every effort to keep expenses down. As at previous conferences, there will be guided tours of the hosting site, prayer, tours, and an evening meal at St. Scholastica Monastery, Fort Smith, and opportunities to visit points of interest in the region. Information may be found at NAABOD.org.

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**OBLATE INSTITUTE**  
Mount St. Scholastica  
Atchison, Kansas  
July 16-19, 2015

The annual institute for Benedictine oblates has as this year's theme "The Psalms Belong to You." At this annual event, Benedictine oblates from communities across the country have an opportunity to hear prominent speakers and to share the experience of Benedictine spirituality in everyday life.

This year's speaker, Sister Irene Nowell OSB is a renowned scholar and an engaging speaker. She served on the translation team of the revised Old Testament of the *New American Bible* and the committee on illuminations and texts for the *Saint John's Bible*, and is the author of numerous books. Her presentations will include: telling your story, crying out your pain, giving thanks to God and singing your praise. More information will be available through oblate directors. The event is for oblates only and space is limited. For information, contact Sister Mary Elizabeth Schweiger (maryliz@mountosb.org).



## NEWS

The Board of Directors of the American Benedictine Academy held their annual meeting on February 6 and 7 at St. Scholastica's Monastery in Chicago. The board discussed the evaluations submitted by participants in the 2014 convention and then took up planning for the 2016 convention.

They heard a number of reports about the website, newsletter and various awards, and made recommendations. There was one application for a monastic studies grant. Sister Marianne Burkhard was awarded \$300 towards her travel for a research trip to Europe.

Another area of discussion was the financial status of the ABA. They hope to convene a finance committee

that will advise them about strategies for generating and optimizing use of income. In addition to trying to find creative ways to increase membership, the board looked at the dues structure and made the following recommendation: "To keep up with our commitment to organize a convention every two years and to support monastic research, the ABA Board decided that the time has come for a small increase in the dues. An increase of \$10.00, from \$25.00 to \$35.00 for one year and from \$35.00 to \$50.00 for two years, will allow us to generate some additional income which will allow us to be good stewards of the ABA's assets. This becomes effective January 1, 2016."

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The Benedictine nuns of Regina Laudis Abbey (Bethlehem, Conn.) elected Rev. Mother Lucia Kuppens, OSB, as their abbess. Dom Paul Mark Schwan, OCSO, was re-elected abbot of the community of New Clairvaux (Vina, Cal.) for a second six year term.

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The abbots and prioresses of the United States, as well as some from neighboring countries, attended their annual meeting in Cullman, Alabama during the first week of February. The theme of the meeting was "Monastic Leadership in a Complicated, Rapidly Changing Time" and they heard two speakers on the topic. Dr. William Cahoy is dean of the School of Theology at Saint John's University in Collegeville, Minn. Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks, Sharon Daloz Parks is principal of leadership for the New Commons and Senior Fellow at the Whidbey Institute in Clinton, Wash. With her doctorate from Harvard Divinity School, she speaks and consults nationally in the area of leadership and ethics for corporate, non-profit, and other professional groups.

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Just missing the deadline to be included in the October newsletter, a meeting at the end of September of 2014 is also of note. The annual gathering for the subprioresses and house coordinators of women's monasteries was hosted by the sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, S.D. The theme of the conference was "All God's Children Got a Place in the Choir: Tools for Working with Each and Every One." Presenters were Yankton Sisters Jeanne Ranek and Mary Jo Polak.

Sessions reviewed the enneagram and dynamics of community life, as well as challenges faced by administrators in working with various personalities. Fifteen sisters were present from 13 monasteries.

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*Dilatato Corde*, the international on-line journal of DIMMID has been accepted for indexing in the ATLA Catholic Periodical and Literature Index (CPLI), recognizing the value of this digital scholarly journal.

At the North American MID board, a redesigned website is taking shape (monasticinterreligiousdialogue.com), and so are plans for Gethsemani Encounter IV, a conversation between Buddhist and Christian monastics held at Gethsemani Abbey in Kentucky. This year's event, May 27-31, will celebrate the centenary of the birth of Thomas Merton and the dialogue will be on the topic of spiritual maturity.

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This year's Lenten appeal from The Alliance for International Monasticism (AIM) will be primarily to assist Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries with education of their members. One of the greatest needs of the monasteries in developing countries is to provide formation opportunities and education. Without formation programs, the Benedictine way of life will not be instilled in new members. Without an education, the members of these monasteries will find it difficult to be viable and self-sufficient. This year they are hoping to help communities by providing for scholarships for 13 sisters in Vietnam to study theology, a Cistercian monk in Ethiopia to study, a professional infirmarian in Togo, West Africa, to receive education, and a monk from Sri-Lanka to study in Rome. Two other grants will help Benedictine Sisters in Benin, West Africa, create an apiary at their monastery and sisters in India to purchase a building to house women entering the community. Contributions may be sent to AIM USA, 345 East Ninth Street, Erie, PA 16503.

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Father Terrence Kardong OSB, editor, is pleased to announce that through the collaborative efforts and resources of the University of Michigan, Google Books, and the Hathi Trust Digital Library, all back issues in full text of *The American Benedictine Review* from v.1 (1950) through v. 58 (2009) are available online at <<http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000598411>>. The *ABR* is a unique resource for monastic scholars. The HathiTrust is a partnership of academic and research institutions, offering a collection of millions of titles digitized from libraries around the world.

### Audio CD Recordings from Convention

The major presentations from both the recent convention and the pre-convention day for oblates are still available on audio CD at a cost of \$5.00 for each (includes shipping).

#### Convention

*Joel Rippinger, OSB* - Transmitting a Common Core of Benedictine Monasticism: A Survival Kit for the Future  
*Alden Bass* - "Bringing it to Completion": American

New Monastics and the Benedictine Tradition

*Julia Upton, RSM* - Profile of Benedictine Oblates: Glorifying God by Their Lives

*Ephrem Hollermann, OSB* - Reflections on the Conversation

#### Pre-Convention

*Laura Dunham* - Transmitting the Tradition through a School for Benedictine Spirituality

*Kathleen Norris* - An Oblate in the Middle of Nowhere

*Greg Peters* - The Rule of Benedict in the University and Parish

*Judith Valente* - Business as Unusual: Monastic Wisdom and the Work World

Specify which talks you would like and send payment to:

Sister Judith Sutera  
801 South 8th  
Atchison, KS 66002

An order form may also be downloaded and printed from the ABA website.

The Library Section of ABA believes that Benedictine libraries, building upon 1,500 years of culture and heritage, contribute to, nourish, and are integral to the spiritual and intellectual life of Benedictine communities. The Section promotes networking among American Benedictine libraries to support this tradition. The vision is to network among American Benedictine libraries.

To establish resource sharing practices among them, we are in the investigative stage right now, and I request your assistance in helping to identify the members of your communities responsible for library support. Please send me their contact information or have them contact me directly so we can begin the work of identifying linkages and possibilities as we move forward: Jack Fritts, University Librarian, Benedictine University, 5700 College Road, Lisle, IL 60532, [jfritts@ben.edu](mailto:jfritts@ben.edu)

(continued from page 1)

Benedictinism spanned the globe. The mid-nineteenth century expansion to Australia and North America was spurred not only by the movement of immigrants in need of pastoral care, but also the persecution or suppression that monasteries had experienced in Europe. By the twentieth century, Africa and South America, Asia and the Middle East would all be touched by Benedictines.

Today there are almost 7,000 Benedictine men and nearly 15,000 women. The globalization continues, with recent foundations in such diverse locations as Cuba and Kazakhstan. The abbot primate's own Ottilien congregation has its constitution in 6 languages: German, French, English, Spanish, Korean and Swahili.

Vocations are booming in many areas of the world. He cites one example from another branch of Benedictine life outside his own confederation: "The Cistercians have 1,000 monks in Vietnam, so that it becomes nearly a Vietnamese order, but the problem becomes formation. This growth is changing the monastic culture, but not all monastics are comfortable with this."

With globalization comes attention to the many differences of culture that affect those who come to monastic life. Some examples are the relative importance of family in the culture, or the priority of having offspring. It is more difficult to communicate the choice for monastic life in such cultures. Another example is the monastic interest in interreligious dialogue. This is something that the abbot primate values highly but, as he has discovered, this viewpoint is not always shared in places where the monastics have recently converted to Christianity. He recognizes that monastics in these areas need to be well rooted and have some distance from the tension before they can appreciate the dialogue.

There are places where the practices of community life are very different because they have to reflect the local customs and understandings. He cited several examples, such as the fact that in Zaire the Mass is 4 hours long. In places in Africa, the rite of monastic profession has incorporated other rituals, such as funeral symbols that are different from going under a pall. Even tattooing with a symbol of the monastery may be a useful option if this is something that helps tribal people understand that the monastic has chosen a new and special family.

The essential question Abbot Notker asks is, "Has the monastic mentality globalized or do we imagine that there is no difference, that there is a 'species' *homo monasticus*?" His answer seems to be that there is some truth in both options. He points out that every culture influences the monastics who come from it, whether that culture is Chinese Confucianism or American consumerism. He notes that American culture seems to have permeated the

ends of the earth, especially as technology has brought all people the opportunity to connect. "People from Korea to Togo are glued to their cell phones," he observes. "We must baptize all cultures, even the secularism of the United States and Europe." He says that monastic communities around the world are struggling with the same issues of the positive use of technology and the habits of members who have become so dependent on it.

At the same time, he believes that when it comes to core Benedictine values, "We are not so different. I travel all over the world and I see many differences, but they are actually small. When you enter a Benedictine house, you can 'smell' it in the air. There is something in the stability, something in the idea of choosing to live in community under a rule and an abbot, under the guidance of the Gospel, that is there. The basic monastic principles and values are everywhere."

"European monasticism began to spread originally not with inculturation but with colonialism," the abbot primate explains. "But inculturation, in a way, is a projection. We think that the other is different. The skin is different but the bones are the same. It really doesn't matter so much what color we wear or are. We are far more united than we think. Really, there is no first, second and third world today but one whole networked world."

He acknowledges that monastic life has to respect the different cultures and expressions of a people, but the core monastic values will come into whatever place where there is a desire to live them. He describes it as an "osmosis." Gradually, he feels, a monastic identity develops that is built on the way that each monastery takes its cultural values and integrates them with what Benedict was teaching. "The community is the special place where the members develop their own community life, their prayer, silence, lectio, work, and their ongoing reform, but it is in all places rooted in the Rule of St. Benedict."

"The Rule was written for men or women who want to live together according to the Gospel. They are people who are convinced that the Gospel is the way to the center and the true joy of one's life. Those who believe this find their own way in their own culture, but all reflect the same essential principles." This is globalization at its best and this is the abbot primate's hope for the future.

See a very impressive map of the locations of all Benedictine monasteries at <[osbatlas.com](http://osbatlas.com)> and lists of all Cistercians at <[www.ocso.org](http://www.ocso.org)> (Trappist OCSO) and <[www.ocist.org](http://www.ocist.org)> (O. Cist.)

*A letter has recently been sent by ABA to the initial formation directors of all Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries. Please help promote this contest by speaking to your formation and oblate directors and encouraging newer members in your community to participate.*

## ABA Monastic Essay Competition

One of the goals of the American Benedictine Academy is to encourage newer monastics and newer oblates to do monastic research. Therefore we are enlarging the pool of those who are eligible to participate in the monastic essay competition. Monastics in initial formation and up to ten years after their first monastic professions, as well as oblates up to ten years after their oblation, are eligible to participate in this competition. All monasteries are asked to encourage participation in this competition as a means of promoting monastic scholarship for the future.

Encouraging monastic research at this early stage of monastic and oblate life is important because, as Benedict indicates in RB 3.3, younger/newer members may see things more clearly, or differently, because they bring both the enthusiasm of the newcomer (*feror novicius*) and their own individual experience in the world into the monastery and, in the case of oblates, into their thinking of how to apply Benedictine values to their life in the world. Building on their specific experiences they may be able to open some new questions or new ways of looking. It is also important for the ABA to do what it can do nurture new scholars in the field of Benedictine monasticism.

The purposes of the contest are:

- To stimulate interest in and study of monasticism and monastic history
- To acquaint newer members/oblates with the rich sources of monastic writings which are now much more easily available in print or even electronically
- To acquaint newer monastics with the history of the community, the purposes and personalities of founders, significant events, developments and challenges
- To foster use of local archives in monastic communities
- To focus on productive ways of integrating traditional monastic practices with the needs of 21st century Benedictine living, especially with the participants' own previous experience outside the monastery
- To encourage the collection of personal memoirs
- a discussion of the difficulties/possibilities of integrating tradition and current environment and possible new solutions
- a review of various adaptations of traditional practices in the past to new situations, their effectiveness in the past and possibly their significance for the current situation.

The essay is to be submitted as a double-spaced and computer-generated Word document.

Awards are given only in convention years, so the deadline is March 31st, 2016, i.e. the year of the next convention. It is to be sent to the chair of the Monastic Essay Competition:

Sister Marianne Burkhard OSB  
smarianne@cdop.org

### Project requirements

Within the theme of "the monastic tradition," the essay of 2,500-3,000 words may take a variety of forms, such as:

- the connection of a monastic topic to the writer's own monastery, or at least to the writer's own interpretation of how traditional monastic practices could be authentically and productively lived out in our time either in the monastery or in the oblate life

Winner/s will be notified by May 10, 2016. The prize for the winning essay is a 2-year membership in ABA, a waiver of registration and hospitality fees at the 2016 convention, and a book of interest to monastics/oblates.

Mentoring by ABA members will be available to those who participated in the competition in order to help them to develop their thoughts for possible publication in a scholarly journal, such as *The American Benedictine Review*.



## BOOK REVIEWS

The second volume of Adalbert de Vogüé, *A Critical Study of the Rule of Benedict, Vol. 2*, translated by Colleen Maura McGrane OSB (Hyde Park, N.Y.: New City Press, 2014) ISBN 978-1-56548-494-8, 257 pp., paper, \$39.95, is now available. It deals with the Prologue and chapters 4, 6, 7, and 73.

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Cristiana Piccardo OCSO, *Living Wisdom: The Mission and Transmission of Monasticism*, trans. Erik Varden OCSO (Collegeville, Minn.: Cistercian Studies, 2014) ISBN 978-0-87907-033-5, 174 pp., paper, \$19.95.

At the same time that there is a growing interest in new forms of monasticism, there are interesting renewals going on within traditional monasticism. A vibrant Cistercian community has been growing in Italy at Vitorchiano and has spread to several other locations. The first part of the book is a retrospective not only of the community's history in the twentieth century, but a summary of what was evolving in the broader Cistercian world. The pivotal point is the Second Vatican Council.

The community also seems to be part of the wider movement that has been occurring in Italy, a movement that has sparked numerous religious and lay communities. Its theme is the primacy of love, expressed in community with others and service to the world. The second half of the book is about this spirituality as it may be expressed in a contemporary monastery, but rooted in centuries of tradition.

The author, Mother Cristiana, speaks to the reader in a simple conversational tone about the way a community guides today's new members in the ways of true love and charity. She is forthright and practical about modern attitudes and how they must be addressed. As she describes the development of the community's recent foundations, from South America to Indonesia, she shows the same practicality and spiritual wisdom in addressing the challenges of mission. This book typifies what is happening to monastic life in this time of change and globalization, and also celebrates the universal wisdom of monasticism that can continue to give meaning to modern lives.

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Cyprian Consiglio OSB Cam, *Spirit, Soul, Body: Toward an Integral Christian Spirituality* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2015) ISBN 978-0-8146-3557-5, 208 pp., paper, \$19.95.

Although the book's title emphasizes "Christian," the book has Christianity very much in dialogue with other spiritual traditions. This is the strong bent of Father Cyprian, a leader in interreligious dialogue and well versed in Eastern religions. He tackles the body and soul duality of Christianity not only through its own theology, but in comparison with other ideas about the nature of consciousness. He especially focuses on the important work of Father Bede Griffiths.

One can sense the author's enthusiasm for the changes going on in culture and global consciousness. The word "new" is everywhere: new consciousness, new humanity, new asceticism, new vision. His book is a call to rethink what it means to be human. All the elements of being must be in right relationship, and the self in right relationship with "Sister Earth, our Mother" (the title of one section of the book). This, he says, is the new asceticism: to change our lifestyle so that our bodies proclaim the same truths as we say we believe in our spirits.

This book is for anyone interested in Bede Griffiths, comparative religions, the future of creation, or, most importantly, integrating their own spirit and body.

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Jesse D. Billett, *The Divine Office in Anglo-Saxon England* (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2014) ISBN 978-1-907497-28-5-97-7, 463 pp., hardback, \$99.00.

This book explores the evolution of the Benedictine and non-Benedictine practices of the liturgy of the hours from the year 597 to around 1000. The author uses extensive documentation to craft a narrative that steers away from some of the traditional simplification that assumed all monks, from Augustine of Canterbury on, were Benedictine and thus the liturgical prayer was also.

The author follows a number of historical threads and carefully parses numerous manuscripts to go from Latin roots to the tenth century Benedictine reform. There are multiple charts and tables, and even indexes of biblical readings and of Latin incipits from a vast array of sources. With this kind of technical breadth and depth, along with a hefty pricetag, it is probably most suited to academic libraries and those with a serious interest in the history and practice of liturgy.

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*Bury St. Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. Tom Licence (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2014) ISBN 978-1-84383-931-6, 266 pp., hardback, \$99.00.

This is another Boydell book that is probably best suited as a library purchase, but less technical and with a broader appeal than the one mentioned above. It is an interesting collection of essays by well respected medieval historians about one of the famous monasteries of the Middle Ages.

The essays explore a number of facets of medieval monastic life, including liturgy, architecture, medicine and political influence. One that is more unexpected is an essay by Elisabeth van Houts entitled, “The Women of Bury St. Edmunds.” One may not think immediately of women in regard to this major men’s community, but she explores the relationship of the abbey to women. She includes identification of some religious women who were attached in some way to the monastery, but she also expands the study to include the influence the abbey may have had in arranging certain marriages among nobles that were to influence the political scene. Another point is the effect that the abbey’s system of free peasantry had on the lives of women in general and even on particular women whose names and assets are known from the records.

The book includes a number of tables and charts, photos of manuscripts and artworks, bits of chant, and architectural drawings for a substantial overview.

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*Joan Chittister - Essential Writings* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014) ISBN 978-1-62698-091-4, 239 pp., paper, \$22.00.

There is little doubt that Sister Joan Chittister is the most prolific and best known Benedictine writer living today. She has now been added to a series from Orbis called the “Modern Spiritual Masters” series. So far it includes over 50 writers that form a who’s who of twentieth century spirituality from Therese of Lisieux to Thich Nhat Hanh. The books are samplers of short selections from key thoughts of each person.

Now Sister Joan joins the ranks with selections chosen by Mary Hembrow Snyder and Sister Mary Lou Kownacki (who also wrote the introduction). The titles of the sections could be a description of the author: passion for God, passion for life, passion for justice. Besides excerpts from her many books, there are also columns written for *National Catholic Reporter* and major speeches. All are in a down-to-earth, prophetic and hopeful voice that is clearly rooted in her Benedictine calling.

## MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACADEMY

Below is a list of all those who are members of the American Benedictine Academy as of the end of February, 2015. An application for new and renewing members is on the back page.

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Sister Renée Branigan, OSB, Richardton, ND  
Donald Brennan, Obl., Manchester, N J  
Tom Brewer, Obl., Uniontown, OH  
Sister Marianne Burkhard, OSB, Peoria, IL  
Sister Joanna Burley, OSB, Bristow, VA  
Helen Carlson, Obl., Richfield, MN  
Sister Elizabeth Carrillo, OSB, Atchison, KS  
Sister Shawn Carruth, OSB, Moorhead, MN  
Anthony Cernera, Fairfield, CT  
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Sister Corinne Clay, OSB, Mt. Angel, OR  
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Father Augustine Curley, OSB, Newark, NJ  
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Sister Alberta Dieker, OSB, Mt. Angel, OR  
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Sister Mary Lou Dummer, OSB, St. Paul, MN  
Laura Dunham, Obl., Ewing, NJ  
Sister Cecilia Dwyer, OSB, Bristow, VA  
Sister Jacquelyn Ernster, OSB, Yankton, SD  
Sister Robin Lynn Evans, OSB, Mount Angel, OR  
Sister Ramona Fallon, OSB, Pierre, SD  
Sister Mary Feehan, OSB, Elizabeth, NJ  
Sister Mary Forman, OSB, Collegeville, MN  
Sister Ruth, Fox, OSB, Richardton, ND  
Sister Marielle Frigge, OSB, Yankton, SD  
Cheryl Crozier Garcia, Obl., Honolulu, HI  
Sister Janet Goetz, OSB, Erie, PA  
Father Colman Grabert, OSB, St. Meinrad, IN  
Carol Griesemer, Neosho, MO  
Steven, Gromatzky, Obl., Atchison, KS  
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Sister Mary Hawkins, OSB, Canyon, TX  
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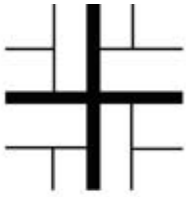
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 Sister Dorothy Stoner, OSB, Erie, PA  
 Rt. Rev. Dr. Robert Straitt, Jonesboro, AR  
 Father Raymond Studzinski, OSB, Washington, DC  
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 Sister Mary Tewes, OSB, Villa Hills, KY  
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**DON'T FORGET: ABA MEMBERSHIP IS CONCURRENT WITH THE CALENDAR YEAR.**

ALL MEMBERSHIPS, REGARDLESS OF WHAT TIME OF YEAR THEY WERE PAID,

ARE DUE FOR RENEWAL ON THE FIRST OF JANUARY.

PLEASE RENEW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO BECOME MEMBERS.



## **The American Benedictine Academy**

ABA website: [americanbenedictine.org](http://americanbenedictine.org)

### **Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred email: \_\_\_\_\_

Community: \_\_\_\_\_

Oblate affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Academic/Other affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any interest or expertise to share with the Academy? \_\_\_\_\_

*Please check if you wish to participate in one or more of the following ABA sections:*

Monastic Research \_\_\_\_\_ Visual Arts \_\_\_\_\_ Archives \_\_\_\_\_ Library \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ \$25.00 for one year membership \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 for two years membership

**MAIL TO:**

**Elizabeth Carrillo, OSB  
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Atchison, KS 66002-2724**

email: [ecarrillo@mountosb.org](mailto:ecarrillo@mountosb.org)