



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Published under the auspices of the American Benedictine Academy

www.americanbenedictine.org

Volume 45, Number 2

June 2014

Inside this issue:

President's Message	2
Pre-Convention Program	3
Convention Reflection from Sister Julia	4
Alden Bass	5
MID Report	6
Convention Registration Form	7
Canon Law Column	9
News	10
Board Nominees	11
Kalamazoo Report	14

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

Thursday July 24

5:15 Vespers with community, dinner
7:30 Welcome followed by social

Friday July 25

8:30 Morning Prayer
9:00 Joel Rippinger, OSB
*Transmitting a Common Core of Benedictine Monasticism:
A Survival Kit for the Future*
10:30 Alden Bass
*"Bringing it to Completion":
American New Monastics and the Benedictine Tradition*
11:45 Eucharist with host community (optional)
2:00 Sections and/or optional oblate gathering with facilitator
3:30 Julia Upton, RSM
Profile of Benedictine Oblates: Glorifying God by Their Lives
5:15 Vespers and supper with community

Saturday July 26

8:30 Morning Prayer
9:00 Ephrem Hollermann, OSB
"Reflections on the Conversation"
10:30 Panel conversation with presenters
12:00 Lunch, tours
3:30 Business meeting
5:30 Mass, banquet with awards and installation of new board

President's Message

We are to be artisans of a new moment in the history of monasticism, as were our foremothers and forefathers.

So wrote Sister Christine Vladimiroff, OSB, in the column she contributed to the last issue of the *AMN* (February, 2014), lending her voice to the conversation ABA is advancing between the “past” and the “future” of Benedictine monasticism. Sister Christine was to have been one of our presenters at the convention this summer. However, her health issues forced her to withdraw herself from that role earlier this spring. In a letter informing the board of her decision, she wrote of this year’s theme, *Benedictine Monasticism: The Past Receiving the Future*, as “a topic so current and of interest to our historical moment.” Anyone who read her column in February knows that she was fully invested in the subject.

We are pleased to announce that before this newsletter went to press, we received word that Sister Ephrem Hollermann has agreed to give a reflection at the convention in the absence of Sister Christine. We are grateful to her for her generosity in preparing this on such short notice. A noted monastic historian and member of St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., she will no doubt add valuable insights to the conversation.

Under an entirely different set of circumstances, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove also had to withdraw from the convention. He and his wife are expecting a baby the week he was to have been with us at Conception Abbey (something totally unforeseen two years ago!). For obvious reasons, Jonathan elected to stay at home at the end of July. At his recommendation, the board has invited Alden Bass, co-founder of Lotus House in St. Louis, to speak in his place. Alden has provided this issue of *AMN* with a fuller introduction of himself, together with a synopsis of his presentation. From these paragraphs we can see why Jonathan recommended him, and we look forward to his contribution.

This issue of *AMN* also includes a piece by Julia Upton, introducing her presentation at the convention. She wonders why we thought that she might be “just the right person to take on a project like this and speak about it,” but from what you will read, I’m sure you will agree that the reasons are self-evident. In her research for ABA she heard back from hundreds of oblates. I am so very curious about what the data she collected might tell us!



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Submit any announcements or articles to:

Editor: Judith Sutera, OSB

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

Email: jsutera@mountosb.org

For all address changes, membership payments, 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

Email: ecarrillo@mountosb.org

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

Finally, let me return for a moment to Sister Christine’s comment about our role in the future of monasticism. She calls us “artisans of a new moment.” The metaphor is apt, for if there is anything that we would agree upon, as both “new” and “old,” it is that shaping monastic life is an art and not a science (as is preparing for ABA conventions . . . just ask any member of the current board).

We say in the *Rule of Life of the Community of Jesus* that “in the end, it is lives, not words, that are the true keepers of the monastic vision” (Prologue). And lives are fluid, flexible, bendable and even breakable. Yet, for nearly two millennia, women and men of each new generation have successfully passed on the tradition, handing over to the “new moment” the cumulative wisdom of countless moments past. I like to think that what we will be doing together at Conception Abbey later this summer might be remembered for playing a tiny part in that sacred conferral.

Martin Shannon, ABA President
Community of Jesus, Orleans, Mass.
shannon@c4.net

Benedictine oblates are invited to come to Conception for a special event prior to the convention opening. It is not a part of the convention registration package, so attendees are welcome to come just for that day. Those attending the convention must register and pay additionally for this program. Fees are indicated on the registration form found in this newsletter.

Listening to the Oblate Voice A Pre-Convention Conversation with Oblates

Thursday, July 24, 2014

SCHEDULE

7:45 a.m.	Breakfast
9:00	Welcome and introduction
9:15	Judith Valente <i>Business as Unusual: Monastic Wisdom and the Work World</i>
10:15	Kathleen Norris <i>An Oblate in the Middle of Nowhere</i>
11:45	Eucharist with the Conception community (optional)
12:20 p.m.	Lunch
1:15	Greg Peters <i>The Rule of Benedict in the University and the Parish</i>
2:10	Laura Dunham <i>Transmitting the Tradition through a School of Benedictine Spirituality</i>
3:05	Panel Conversation
3:50 p.m.	Wrap-up

Furthering the Conversation

Each issue of the Newsletter before the convention has contained a reflection from one of the speakers. The last of these comes from Sister Julia Upton.

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. She is an oblate of Mount Saviour Monastery in Elmira, N.Y. She holds a doctorate in theology from Fordham University and is professor in the Department of theology and religious studies at St. John's University (N.Y.), where she has taught since 1980 and served as university provost from 2000 to 2013.

A member of the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese of Brooklyn (NY) since 1979, Julie also served as a member of committees of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States: as advisor to the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy (1978-1982) and consultant to the Committee for Divine Worship (2007-2010). She currently serves as a member of the Council for Mercy Higher Education, whose mission is the preservation and development of the core Catholic identity and mission of Mercy higher education in accord with the spirit, mission, and heritage of the Sisters of Mercy.

Her most recent book, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: The Life and Legacy of H. A Reinhold*, was published by Liturgical Press in 2009. Her current research is on the contributions of "Catholic Worker Artist" Ade Bethune to the liturgical life of the Church.

Two years ago Martin Shannon wrote to me proposing this research topic. Speaking for the Academy board, he explained that, although "there seems to be a good bit of anecdotal evidence suggesting a growing number of oblates from outside the Roman Catholic Church," there is no statistical evidence to confirm it. They further wondered how we might understand this growth if it were to be confirmed and "what implications it might have for furthering Benedictine life, for furthering the ecumenical agenda, and for the inner life of the monastery itself." For some reason they thought that I "might be just the right person to take on a project like this and speak about it" at the next ABA convention. To be honest, "Why me, Lord?" was the first thought that came to mind. After all I am a theologian, not a social scientist. It is true, however, that I am a strong believer in the benefit of interdisciplinarity.

Long ago when I was deep in the research that was to become my book on reconciliation, *A Time for Embracing*, I consulted Rabbi Larry Hoffman a colleague in the North

American Academy of Liturgy and author of *Beyond the Text*, frustrated that I needed to become a social scientist as well as a theologian in order to finish my work. "Not at all," he exclaimed in his inimitable style. "You are an artist! You use the social sciences to support your work not to define." Larry's sage advice has been nurturing my thinking and writing for several decades now and I will forever be grateful that I sought him out before giving up hope.

Although I still have no idea why the Academy thought that I would be the ideal person to tackle this project, it is true that I have the benefit of teaching at a huge, wonderful university with the resources and colleagues to help with such a project. The director, staff and graduate students of St. John's University's Office of Institutional Research became my partners in crime who helped me develop and design a survey instrument and compile the results, cutting the data in more ways that I could have imagined possible. Along the way they all developed an interest in the project as well, so someday the world might benefit from at least three more oblates.

Seven hundred and forty oblates from around the country responded to the survey, providing me with both quantitative and qualitative data: hundreds of pages of details on why they became oblates, why they continue to be oblates and what impact being an oblate has on their daily lives. The responses are both inspiring and energizing, and in addition to informing my paper and presentation for the ABA the data will also be available to others with related research interests.

At each ABA convention, special commemoration is made of recently deceased members of the Academy. If you know of someone who was a member and has died since the last convention in August of 2012, please send their name and community to the ABA secretary, Sister Elizabeth Carrillo (ecarrillo@mountosb.org).

Introducing Alden Bass

Below is a brief introduction and comment from Alden Bass, who has graciously agreed to replace convention speaker Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove.



Alden Bass was born in Kentucky and grew up in rural Waynesboro, Tenn., along with his wife of 9 years, Candace. In 2005 he earned a B.A. in religious studies from Yale University. He spent the next two years at Vanderbilt Divinity School, finishing with an MTS in early Christian history. After spending a year in El Zamarano, Honduras, working at a boys' orphanage, Alden began graduate studies in historical theology at Saint Louis University. He successfully defended his dissertation in 2014. In 2012, he and Candace adopted three children from the St. Louis area, Desiree, Destiny, and Dylan. Alden co-founded a Christian intentional community called the Lotus House in north St. Louis in 2008, where he currently lives with his wife, children, 5 housemates, and 30 chickens. Since 2010 he has served as a co-pastor for the North City Church of Christ.

"Bringing it to Completion":

American New Monastics and the Benedictine Tradition

In the past 15 years, American Christians have witnessed a surge of independent "intentional Christian communities" arising largely from Free Church traditions and drawing inspiration from the Rule of Benedict and Franciscan spirituality. This most recent wave of community formation conforms to a pattern of radical communal living pioneered in the 1950s by Anabaptist founders of Reba Place Fellowship and in the turbulent years of the 1960s by the charismatic Jesus People USA. Precedent for these communities can be found in the American utopian experiments of the late 1800s, as well as the various expressions of community found in Europe after the Great War, such as Arnold's Bruderhof and Bonhoeffer's Confessing Church.

The New Monastic movement, which has developed under the leadership of the "Franciscan" Shane Claiborne and the "Benedictine" Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, is set apart from these earlier movements by its self-conscious appropriation of ancient and medieval monastic traditions. I attribute this in part to the post-Vatican II climate of re-sourcement and its evangelical manifestation in the "emergent/ing church." As denominational

structures continue to weaken in this "post-Christian" age, an opportunity for real convergence between old and new forms of monasticism has emerged which may contribute to the long-term viability and flourishing of all those called to radical discipleship.

CALL FOR ART WORK FOR CONVENTION

The Visual Arts Section of the ABA invites Benedictine artists to submit one to three pieces of their art work for the ABA Art Show, July 24-27, 2014 Conception Abbey, Conception, Missouri. One need not be a member or attendee to display.

Criteria for submission:

- Original art work in any medium
- Ready for hanging or display on a pedestal
- Each piece clearly labeled with artist's name, as well as name of community and its location

Ship in a returnable container with pre-paid return shipping included.

DO NOT SHIP ANYTHING WITH GLASS

Send art to arrive July 18-22, 2014 to:

ABA ART SHOW
Abbey Guest Center
Attention: Karen Ceckowski
Conception Abbey
37174 State Highway V V
Conception, MO 64433
Ph. 660-944-2909

Please note, the Abbey Guest Center is not responsible for returning shipments. Shippers will need to make arrangements for return shipping.

If you are bringing your work with you, please bring it to the Abbey Guest Center as soon as you arrive, and have it there by noon July 24, 2014.

The contact person for the 2014 art show is Gregory Evans: (571) 225-7745, greg.oblsb@gmail.com.

*Report from the Meeting of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue
with Leaders of the Monastic Interreligious Dialogue*

On June 4, 2014, eight representatives of DIMMID met with the Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, Rev. Fr. Miguel Ángel Ayuso Guixot MCCJ, the undersecretary, Rev. Fr. Indunil J. Kodithuwakku K., and five members of the PCID staff: Rev. Fr. Michael Santiago (Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism), Rev. Msgr. Lucio Sembrano, (Pro Dialogo), Rev. Fr. Markus Solo, S.V.D. (Islam in South, South-East Asia and Oceania), Rev. Fr. Michael Weninger, (Islam in Europe, Central Asia, Central and South America), and Dr. Maria Laura Marazzi (New Religious Movements and Sects). His Eminence, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, president of the PCID, was planning to attend, but was prevented from doing so because his travel plans had been disrupted. The meeting was called to provide DIMMID with an opportunity to inform the PCID of its particular approach to interreligious dialogue and its activities, and to discuss how DIMMID and PCID might collaborate more closely in the Church's ministry of interreligious dialogue.

Father Ayuso recalling the role the PCID played in the creation of DIMMID and the ways in which DIMMID has collaborated with the PCID in the past, concluded by saying,

Today's meeting is an occasion to show our gratitude and respect for our predecessors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit, read the signs of the time, and courageously, selflessly and tirelessly dedicated their lives to the mission of promoting monastic interreligious dialogue. May the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of mission, stimulate and re-energize all of us today to engage with the monks and nuns of other religions with a fresh zeal and urgency in order to promote world peace through inner peace.

Following his introduction, reports were given on the activities and programs of DIMMID in Europe and North America. Father Pierre de Béthune also reported on the recent meeting of the Belgian organization "Voies de l'orient," on intra-religious dialogue, which is dialogue at the level of religious experience and practice.

Following a break there was a report by the secretary general on the structure of DIMMID (making special note of the fact that there were also commissions for Monastic Interreligious Dialogue in India/Sri Lanka and Australia), and on three activities sponsored and arranged by the General Secretariat: the journal *Dilatato Corde*; on-going dialogue with Iranian Shi'a Muslims; and the documentary film on Monastic Interreligious Dialogue that is being made to mark the fiftieth anniversary of *Nostra aetate*.

One of the principal concerns expressed by Father Ayuso, a concern also expressed in the Council's recently published document "Dialogue in Truth and Charity," is that "'interreligious prayer,' meaning the joining together in common prayer by followers of various religions, is to be avoided" (82). It is perfectly appropriate, however, to express our respect for the attitude of others before the Divinity by assisting "with a respectful attitude, both interior and exterior" (83).

In his concluding remarks, Father Ayuso emphasized that interreligious dialogue should be marked by friendship, respect, and transparency, noting that monastic interreligious dialogue is a particularly strong witness to the monastic charism of hospitality. "Work to create spaces where we can live together without agenda. This is what Pope Francis wants," he said. He concluded by noting that "Friendship has to be at the core of our relationship to people of other religious traditions. It is there that we meet God."

The document which the PCID published, entitled "Dialogue in Truth and Charity: Pastoral Orientations for Interreligious Dialogue," expresses principles for productive dialogue and may be found via MID's website www.dimmid.org.

William Skudlarek, OSB
Secretary General of DIMMID
Rome

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

\$115.00 ABA 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:*

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

CANON LAW COLUMN

The Monastery Council

The February 2011 canon law column was entitled, “Taking Counsel.” Today’s column gives more specificity to one organ of counsel for the superior, that of the council of seniors, the monastery council. Even while St. Benedict speaks of the abbot taking the place of Christ in the monastery (RB 2:2) and the many venues of the authority of the abbot, St. Benedict also recognizes that the one who takes the place of Christ still needs help and needs to consult with others before making decisions that concern the whole community (RB 3). The Code of Canon Law, in addition to requiring consultation, also requires consent of others in certain circumstances.

The Code of Canon Law mandates the presence and action of a council to the religious superior. Canon 627§1 prescribes that “superiors are to have their own council, whose assistance they must use in carrying out their function.” The Code leaves it to the constitution of the particular religious institute to give norms about the council and when the religious superior must request counsel or even consent from the council before the superior acts. But the Code does prescribe some matters that, without seeking counsel and/or consent, render the action of the superior invalid. For example, a superior cannot unilaterally admit a candidate to the novitiate without the vote of the council (Canon 656). Neither can a superior seek to dismiss a member without the vote of the council (Canon 697, 699).

Commentator Rose McDermott, SSJ, says that, “The requirement that superiors have a council reflects and protects the collegial nature of a religious institute . . . and guards against unilateral decisions.” (*The Consecrated Life*, 102).

In our own monastic tradition, commentators on the Rule speak of this need for the abbot to consult the council, as well as other members of the monastic community. Thomas Merton, in his third set of conferences to the novices on the Rule, said that “[a] community in which there is no collaboration is not a true community.” Merton goes on to say that consulting the community is “not just a matter of form. As a truly humble man, [the abbot] recognizes that he himself does not know everything, and cannot settle everything all by himself. Even though he holds the place of Christ in the monastery, he knows he is not omniscient, and is capable of making mistakes. He admits he might very well be wrong and someone else right.

Terrence Kardong, too, at the end of his commentary on RB 3 in Benedict’s Rule, notes: “Although Benedict stresses the abbot’s initiative in calling for counsel and making the final decision, his role is still not totally predominant. Put in everyday language, the abbot is not the only one who should be expected to come up with good ideas. Much better that he encourage and solicit the insight of others, knowing that the Holy Spirit works through all the members and not just through the head.” Kardong observes that RB 3 marks a change from the teaching of the Rule of the Master, which focuses almost exclusively on the abbot for all decisions, with very little reference to the contribution of the other monks. He agrees with an earlier commentator, Borias, that the version of RB 3 that we have is “a later reworking of the question by the mature Benedict.” Kardong comments that, “Benedict creates a more collegial mode of operation.” He goes on to say that seeking counsel from the monastics “is completely natural to cenobitism or any truly communal life.”

RB 3 speaks of a council of seniors. This is what has become known in most monasteries as the monastic or monastery council, sometimes also called the abbot’s or prioress’ council. The council is usually a mix of members appointed by the monastic leader and members elected by the chapter of the monastery. This decision of the makeup of the council is determined by the norms of each individual monastery. They serve the monastic leader through discussions and giving advice and consent on matters, as required. Canon 627 requires that superiors are to have their own council and they must use the council to carry out their responsibilities as superiors. Margaret Mary Modde, OSB, in *A Handbook on Canons 572-746* (p. 85), says: “Probably the most important point to keep in mind on councils is that the role of its members is that of councilor to the superior. The advice given to superiors comes from hearing the concerns of members.”

Benedict was wise in recognizing that the abbot needs to seek counsel before making decisions. The Code of Canon Law also wisely requires that the religious leader have a council that the leader must consult and sometimes must receive the council’s consent before acting. Collaboration among monastics living together seems to be just common sense, and, as Merton said, there is no true community without collaboration. The Code also wisely leaves much to the constitutions of the particular religious community on what types of decisions for which the religious leader must have the counsel and sometimes consent.

The monastery council serves an important role in the life of the community. At times the members of the

council serve a representative role of other members of the community, that is, the council can be seen as a microcosm of the community that represents the views of the whole. At other times the members of the council are advisers to the monastic leader. Oftentimes these functions are blended.

The monastic leader who seeks the counsel of the council, as well as others as necessary, is wise indeed. Those who do not seek or ignore the good counsel of the members of the council tread in dangerous territory. Hopefully the monastery's leader and the council, as well as every member of the community, is guided by the good zeal of which Benedict speaks in RB 72, supporting each other and pursuing the good of the whole rather than the good of themselves individually. "Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life" (RB 72:11).

Lynn McKenzie, OSB
Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, Ala.
lynnmckenzieosb@gmail.com



NEWS

The annual conference of abbots and priors met in late February at St. Bernard's Abbey in Cullman, Ala., amid winter weather that prevented some from attending. Speakers were Archbishop Rino Fisichella, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, and Father Jeremy Driscoll, OSB, of Mount Angel Abbey, Mount Angel, Ore. The archbishop spoke of the need for internalization of the gospel and deeper Christian identity rather than merely more programs. Father Jeremy used Benedict's vision of the world as a single ray of life to connect evangelization to the daily paschal mystery and the core values of the monastic life.

Abbots Brian Wangler OSB (Assumption Abbey, Richardton) and John Klassen OSB, Saint John's Abbey, (Collegeville, Minn.) will aid in planning the next meeting. The meeting will be, as it is in alternating years, a joint conference with Benedictine prioresses. The 2015 meeting will be at Cullman, Alabama, in conjunction with the sisters of Sacred Heart Monastery there.

* * * * *

WHO IS BENEDICTINE?

A pre-convention reflection from a member

The question "Who is Benedictine?" can at times elicit complicated answers. As Saint Benedict and his Rule have been so influential, and as there have been nuanced interpretations and applications of his Rule for 1500 years, assorted answers are inevitable. This might be illustrated by my own evangelical Anglican monastic journey. What is "Evangelical?" No comprehensive and cohesive definition has been agreed upon. What is "Anglican" or "Episcopalian?" Again, as evidenced over the past forty years, no agreement has been reached. What is a "lay monastic?" Does such a category even exist? And yet, although no universally agreed upon definitions exist, I am unabashedly Evangelical, Anglican and Benedictine.

As we examine the four Gospels we are repeatedly challenged. Jesus did not in any way embrace the status quo. He was not in any way complacent or socially "correct." If anyone was countercultural, radically countercultural, our Lord certainly was. Walking with God, and being responsive to God's will, is not socio-psycho-pneumatically comfortable or comforting.

The Apostles were repeatedly challenged by our Lord's rather unorthodox approach to almost everything. Theirs was not a comfortable discipleship. Cost was connected to following Christ. And this is the point. The Gospels repeatedly tell us that "his disciples followed him." Whether it was to hear a sermon, step into a boat or accompany him into areas of danger, "his disciples followed him."

Maybe this, at least partially, offers an answer to "Who is Benedictine?" A person is "Benedictine" when she or he follows Saint Benedict by striving to follow the "master's precepts" in the "school of the Lord's service" as found the Rule. Certainly there are those who might endeavor to live more or less stringently according to the Rule. Certainly there are those who might emphasize one "precept" above another – as may be appropriate to their own personal, cultural and contextual milieu. But, regardless, all Benedictines follow Benedict. All Benedictines seek to live according to the Rule.

Maybe defining "Benedictine" is not as important as Benedictine discipleship. Disciples follow.

Donald P. Richmond, ObIOSB
recpriest2@verizon.net

The Very Rev. Dr. Donald P. Richmond, ObIOSB, is a priest-oblate associated with Saint Andrew's Abbey in Valyermo, California.

NOMINEES TO THE ABA BOARD

At the biennial convention of the American Benedictine Academy in Conception, the ABA membership will elect a vice-president of the board who will succeed to the presidency in 2016 and three at-large members who will each serve on the board for a term of two years. One of the at-large members must be an oblate.

The following nominations have been accepted, and all ABA members present at the convention will cast votes at that time. Members are asked to give prayerful consideration to the introductions of the candidates in preparation for the election.



FOR VICE-PRESIDENT (President-elect):

Luke Devine, OSB, a member of St. Martin's Abbey in Lacey, Wash., since 2001, attended the 2012 ABA conference where he presented on the

topic "Themes from a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue on Peace," and displayed computer art illustrations on Thomas Merton. He has served as the manager of his community's museum and one of its art collections, on the vocation team, as campus minister, and as an instructor in the religious students department at St. Martin's University. Having received a master's degree in theological studies in 2008, he is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Christian spirituality at the Graduate Theology Union in Berkeley, Cal. He also served one term as a board member for the North American Monastic Interreligious Dialogue from 2010-2012.

"As president of ABA, in addition to assuming the duties and responsibilities of the office, I would be interested in continuing and advancing our visibility to our own Benedictine communities and to those in the general public interested in monasticism. I would explore possibilities for expanding visibility for both the ABA and the American Benedictine Review, in attracting readers and contributors, through the increasingly omnipresent variety of social media options available on the World Wide Web."



Julia Upton, RSM, is a member of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, and has been an oblate of Mount Saviour (Elmira, N.Y.) since 1979. She holds a doctorate in theology from Fordham University and is distinguished professor in the Department of Theology and Religious

Studies at St. John's University (N.Y.), where she has taught since 1980 and served as university provost from 2000 to 2013. Her most recent book, *Worship in Spirit and Truth: The Life and Legacy of H.A. Reinhold*, was published in 2009, and her current research is on the contributions of Catholic Worker artist Adé Bethune to the liturgical life of the Church. A member of the Liturgy Commission of the Diocese of Brooklyn since 1979, Julie has also served as a member of committees of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. As a member of the ABA since 1990, Julie has attended most of the conventions and has been an active member of the Monastic Researchers' Group.

"I have always found the ABA conventions to be holistic, engaging, and energizing. If the membership wants, I am willing to lend my experience and talents to continue that tradition."

FOR MEMBER AT-LARGE OF THE BOARD



Rebecca Abel, OSB, is a fifty-year member of the Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Ind. Having earned a B.A. in education and a master of library science degree from Ball State University, she worked for 25 years in the public school system as a librarian and director of media services, and then served for 17 years as head librarian at the North American College in Rome. Since returning to the States in 2013, she has worked as a library consultant for small libraries. She also became a member of ABA, though her knowledge of, and acquaintance with, the organization has been long.

"I am not a scholar, but I promote scholarship by my assisting in the preservation of knowledge and making it available to those seeking information. ABA promotes scholarship through its publications and promoting the projects of scholars. Therefore I would like to work with ABA in the preservation and promotion of knowledge in the world of monasticism."



Marianne Burkhard, OSB, a member of St. Mary Monastery in Rock Island, Ill., was born in Switzerland and obtained a Ph.D. in German and French literature from the University of Zurich. Having worked as a literary editor at a daily newspaper, a coordinator of religious education, and a German professor at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, she has used her licentiate in canon law for the last 20 years as a judge and director of the marriage tribunal for the Peoria Diocese. The co-translator and sole editor of three books by Sister Aquinata

Boeckmann, she has also served on the editorial board of the *American Benedictine Review* for 20 years. She has attended ABA conventions since 1990.

“As Jean Leclercq said, ‘For the old thoughts to remain fresh, each generation must think them through and rediscover them anew.’ The Benedictine tradition has always considered this its mission. This is what I see as the mission of ABA: to sift through the old and the new in order to be true to the Benedictine tradition while also adapting to a new set of circumstances. This is especially important in our present time as Benedictine communal life must be re-thought, adapted to very different cultural conditions and is being established in a number of new forms by people who have not gone through a traditional monastic formation.”



Gregory Evans, has been an oblate of St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, Va., since 2004, and a member of ABA since 2009. Retired from a career with the Federal Aviation Administration, Greg volunteers in many capacities at the monastery, but especially in music, art and environment, crafts, landscaping, and as a speaker/presenter for the Benedictine Pastoral Center. Along with facilitating the monastery’s “Knitting as Prayer” group, Greg acts as “Steward of the Earth” at the death of a sister and ministers to elderly community members. He has been ABA Visual Art Convenor since 2013.

“I would like to serve as a board member to increase my knowledge about ABA and to be an example for oblates in hopes that more oblates will join and be active participants in the rich offerings of ABA.”



Cheryl Crozier Garcia, is an associate professor of human resource management at Hawaii Pacific University where she serves as program chair of the master’s degree program in human resource management. Her research interests include workplace ethics and spirituality, gender and leadership, and personal development. She has presented her research in many countries and is currently the only certified Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR) in the state of Hawaii. Cheryl is an oblate of St. Benedict’s Monastery in St. Joseph, Minn., where she has spent part of every year since 1999 as a Scholar in Residence.

“My particular interest is in making the Rule of St. Benedict accessible to people in every aspect of their lives – professional, personal, and spiritual – and this has been the focus of most of my research. There is great value in

both the Rule and the Benedictine lifestyle outside the monastery’s walls, and I want to help tell that story.”



Greg Peters has spent the last 20 years studying monasticism and advocating for its re-introduction into Protestant and Evangelical churches, most recently as a professor of medieval and spiritual theology at Biola University in La Mirada, Cal., and as an oblate and retreat leader at St. Andrew’s Abbey, Valyermo, Cal. After 15 years of ordained ministry in the Baptist tradition, Greg became an Anglican in 1995 and was later ordained a priest, serving in five different churches since 1999. A member of ABA for several years, and the recipient of a monastic studies grant in 2010, he is married and has two children.

“As a Protestant who desires to see monasticism re-introduced into the Evangelical Church tradition, I am certain that the ABA can take a role in helping to accomplish this task. I would like to serve on the ABA board to assist the Academy in its ongoing work and help to extend its reach into the larger Protestant and Evangelical tradition, to bring the richness of monastic history and spirituality to a largely untapped audience.”



Antoinette Purcell, OSB (current board member eligible for re-election), has been a professed member of Our Lady of Grace Monastery in Beech Grove, Ind., since 1964, and holds master’s degrees in education from Ball State University and pastoral studies from Loyola University. She has served in leadership positions with the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors, Benedictine Inn Retreat and Conference Center, the Center for Ministry Development, the Archdiocese of Indianapolis, and in several archdiocesan parishes and schools. Currently she serves as her community’s director of oblates and on the monastic council, as well as ministering as a spiritual director, speaker, retreat leader, and group facilitator.

“I have enjoyed membership in ABA for a number of years because of the opportunities for connections with others who share my love for and interest in the monastic way of life, and for the opportunity it provides for keeping up with Benedictine themes. I have enjoyed working with the board these last two years and would consider it an honor to serve a second term to lend continuity and to assist in the continuing work and growth of the organization.”



Phoebe Schwartz, OSB, grew up and lived in South Dakota most of her life before entering Sacred Heart Monastery in Richardton, N.D. in 1995. Most of her professional background before entering was in working with adults with developmental disabilities. Since coming to the monastery, she has worked as administrator for her community's independent living facility for the elderly and as a DRE and liturgist for a nearby parish. For the last year and a half she has been working at the monastery as director of the spirituality center, liturgist, part-time accountant and is also responsible for the museum. Phoebe has a master's degree in public history with an emphasis in archival work.

"I have been a member of the ABA for 4 years, so I am new to this organization. I have long admired the work of the ABA. The Academy fosters Benedictine scholarship and values and this is very important to me. I would be honored to help with this work as we continue to move into the future, sharing our Benedictine heritage."



Judith Valente is an author, journalist, poet, retreat leader and guest lecturer. Her most recent book *Atchison Blue: A Search for Silence, a Spiritual Home and a Living Faith*, chronicles her experiences as a regular visitor to Mount St. Scholastica in Kansas, the community of which she

is an oblate. She is a contributing correspondent for the national PBS news program *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly* and the senior correspondent/producer at the National Public Radio affiliate in central Illinois. Judith holds a master's degree in creative writing and a bachelor's degree in English literature and classical languages. She lives with her husband and frequent writing collaborator, Illinois Circuit Court Judge Charles Reynard, in Chicago and Normal, Ill.

"I would like to cooperate with vowed Benedictines across the country (and hopefully the world) to spread the word about Benedictine spirituality and its deep relevance. As I have often said, I went to Atchison expecting to find a hopeless throwback to the past. What I discovered was a window to the future we desperately need in our society – one that stresses community over competition, simplicity over consumption, consensus over conflict, and listening over constant chatter in our lives."



Jeanette von Herrmann, OSB, is a member of Queen of Angels Monastery in Mt. Angel, Ore., with an M.A. in theology from Mt. Angel Seminary and a Ph.D. in biblical studies from Catholic University of America. She teaches and gives

retreats in parishes and at her community's Shalom Prayer Center, is on the staff and regularly contributes articles to *Spirit and Life* (published by the Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration) and other publications, teaches in her community's formation program, runs the community library, is responsible for her community's blog "Seeking God: A Benedictine Blog" and other online publications, and works with the Benedictine Foundation of Oregon.

"Being on the west coast, there is little opportunity to interact face to face with other monastics, so being elected to the ABA board would be a blessing both for me and my community, and perhaps provide a 'western viewpoint.' I would bring backgrounds in biblical and monastic spirituality as well as social media and fund raising and would enjoy working with others to promote the ABA."

NEWS

The following have recently been elected to leadership in their communities:

Prioress Paula Hagen, OSB - St. Paul's Monastery (St. Paul, Minn.)

Abbot Richard Cronin, OSB - St. Mary's Abbey (Morristown, N.J.)

Prioress Mary Feehan, OSB - St. Walburga Monastery (Elizabeth, N.J.)

Prioress Sharon McDonald, OSB - St. Placid Monastery (Lacey, Wash.)

Prioress Annie Thompson, OSB - St. Martin Monastery (Nassau, The Bahamas)

Prioress Karen Brink, OSB - St. Benedict Monastery (Pittsburgh, Pa.)

Prioress Mary Catherine Wenstrup, OSB, of St. Walburg's Monastery (Covington, Ky.) has been re-elected to continue her service.

The Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration have a new prioress general of their congregation, Sister Dawn Annette Mills, OSB.

* * * * *

AIM USA, the U.S. secretariat for the Alliance for International Monasticism, has named Sister Theresa Zoky, OSB, as its new director, succeeding Sister Stephanie Schmidt. The group has also added Father Dominic Tran Thiet Hung, O.Cist., to the board. He is prior of Our Lady of Son Sacramento, a new community in Walnut Grove, Cal., founded from Vietnam.

Summary of the ABA Session at the Congress of Medieval Studies
Kalamazoo, Mich.. May 8-11, 2014

The theme of the session was *lectio divina*. The first paper was by Jacob Riyeff, a doctoral student at Notre Dame, and an oblate of the Benedictine Sisters of Clyde, Mo. He is preparing a critical edition of the Old English version of the *Rule of Benedict*. His paper concerned the epilogues to the Old English poems of Cynewulf, a tenth-century English poet, who may not have been a monk himself but was at least influenced by monastic thought and practice. In his epilogues, Cynewulf tells us that he thought of his poetic endeavors as a ministry. Cynewulf reflects on Biblical teaching, applying it to his own life, then exhorts his readers to a similar reflection. He is prompted to perform and to request intercessory prayer, in a communion that includes the poet, his readers, and the company of saints in heaven.

Hugh Feiss, OSB, of the Monastery of the Ascension spoke of Peter of Celle's little studied treatise *De panibus* (On breads). The treatise is the fruit of Peter's own *lectio divina* and was written for others to read as their *lectio*. He says that God sets three tables: natural, sacramental, and mystical. Scripture is a table of the Lord, enmeshed in a web of nurturing nature and grace. Both writer and reader must pray for grace to hear the word, and bring effort and a good disposition to their task. Referring what they read to themselves, as a mirror, the result must be both prayer and action. Peter and his readers interpret Scripture in the light of a monastic, and societal context, and in a theological context centered on grace, Christ, and charity, which nurtures every virtue.

Torsten Edstam, a doctoral student in history at the University of Chicago, spoke about abstinence and *lectio*

regularis among the observant or reforming Benedictines of fifteenth-century Melk (Austria), particularly Joannes Wischler, who wrote a book entitled *Libellus de studio lectionis spiritualis et ejus impedimentis* (Short Work on Spiritual Reading and Obstacles to It). According to Wischler, ascetical behavior (particularly fasting and abstinence) is a presupposition for spiritual reading, which in turn is the foundation of prayer and praise. He combed the rule of Benedict for indications that eating meat was forbidden. Spiritual reading suppressed the inordinate desire for knowledge, substituting useful, God-directed knowledge for curious, vainglorious, and power-seeking knowledge.

For the 50th International Congress in 2015 the topic of the session (or two, if we are allowed them) will be Benedictines and Victorines. During its heyday in the 12th century the canons regular of the Parisian Abbey of St. Victor developed a customary that drew on Benedictine sources. Hugh of St. Victor's commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius seems to have influenced Abbot Suger's theology of art; Benedictines sought Victorines books for their libraries and vice versa; Anselm's theology influenced several Victorine authors, and so forth. 2015 will see the appearance of a companion to Victorine Studies (Brill), which makes this topic timely. If anyone is interested in presenting at this or a future conference, or for more information on the conference, contact Father Hugh.

Hugh Feiss, OSB
hugf@idahomonks.org

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)