



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Published under the auspices of the American Benedictine Academy

www.americanbenedictine.org

Volume 49, Number 1

February 2018

Inside this issue:

President's Message	2
Canon Law Column	3
Oblate Congress	5
Convention Registration	6
Convention Matters	7
News	8
Happenings	9
Essay Contest	10
ABA Member List	11
Membership Renewal	12

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.

Convention Schedule at a Glance

Artisans of the Monastery

July 19-22, 2018

St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, Minnesota

Thursday, July 19

5:30 p.m. Evening Prayer followed by dinner and a social

Friday, July 20

8:30 a.m. Morning Prayer

Kathleen Norris: "A Haphazard Formation: A Writer's Oblate Journey"

10:30 a.m. Br. Martin Erspamer, OSB, Artisan of St. Meinrad Abbey

12:00 p.m. Lunch

Presentation on Art Needlework Collection, tour of exhibit

3:30 p.m. Section meetings or oblate conversation

5:00 p.m. Evening prayer, supper with the community

7:00 p.m. Hymn sing of works of local artisans, ice cream social

Saturday, July 21

9:00 a.m. Departure for St. John's Abbey

Br. David Paul Lange, OSB: "The Intersection of Faith and Architecture: Designing an Abbey Church and Other Spaces for a Modern Era"

Visit to abbey church's crypt chapels

11:30 a.m. Mass and lunch

Tours of new Saint John's Bible Gallery, Saint John's Pottery and the Abbey Woodworking Shop

3:00 p.m. Departure for St. Benedict Monastery

ABA business meeting, Eucharist and banquet

Sunday, July 22

7:00 a.m. Breakfast and departures

President's Message

Much to my surprise I was invited by Paraclete Press to be part of a panel they were hosting at the annual convention of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in Boston the weekend before Thanksgiving. It is a massive meeting by anyone's standards with more than 1,000 events, 10,000 attendees, and about 150 publishers' exhibits.

I attended once before when the AAR was in New York City and I was a much younger professor; I quickly added it to my "once was enough" list (golf and motorcycle riding are also on that list). Smaller, more specialized academic organizations closer to my teaching and research interests are where I have invested time and attention. However, the Paraclete Press invitation was still enticing.

The panel was scheduled to discuss a book edited by Timothy Verdon, *The Ecumenism of Beauty* (Paraclete, 2017) which features a series of topics covered in the international symposium "The Arts and Ecumenism: What Theology Risks in Artistic Creation," which had been held earlier in 2017 in Paris, Strasbourg and Florence as well as at the Yale Institute of Sacred Music.

Since I was teaching our undergraduate course in "Religion and the Fine Arts" that semester, I had already read the book and looked forward to discussing these topics with others. It was also a wonderful prelude to this summer's ABA convention focused on "RB 57: Artisans of the Monastery."

You can get a flavor of what stimulated our conversation through this brief video: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=75vx6rL1Q8o>>.

The ABA board has been working on preparing the schedule and registration forms to get them to you as early as possible so that you can make plans to be with us in Minnesota this summer. We are hoping that members will also encourage oblates who are not yet members of ABA but might have an interest in our work to join or at least to attend the convention. You will find other information elsewhere in this newsletter.

Julia Upton, RSM
ABA president
uptonj@stjohns.edu



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, or any other ABA business, please contact the ABA secretary:

Susan Hooks, OSB

P.O. Box 577

Nashville, Ind. 47448

Email: ambenacad@gmail.com

The American Monastic Newsletter is published three times per year and it, as well as other ABA information, may be read online at:

www.americanbenedictine.org

CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

ON PAGE 6

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The ABA Biennial Convention in 2018

Artisans of the Monastery

July 19 - 22, 2018

Hosted by St. Benedict's Monastery

St. Joseph, Minn.

CANON LAW COLUMN

Recent Legislation from the Holy Father on Enclosed Women Religious (Vultum Dei quaerere) – Part I

In June 2016, the Holy Father issued an apostolic constitution entitled, “Seeking the Face of God” or *Vultum Dei quaerere* (VDQ), directed to the world’s monasteries of nuns, i.e., enclosed women religious. Some will recall that in the 1917 Code of Canon Law there was a clear legal distinction between a “nun” and a “sister” (see *American Monastic Newsletter*, June 2015, on this distinction).

An apostolic constitution issued by the supreme legislator has the same status as the Code of Canon Law. In fact, this apostolic constitution specifically derogated some portions of the Code of Canon Law as they relate to nuns.

Even though this legislation was issued over 18 months ago, I have been waiting to write about it because an “instruction” from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (formerly called the Sacred Congregation for Religious; hereinafter abbreviated as “CICLSAL”) was expected to soon follow. Since no instruction has been published yet, I decided to write this column in two parts. This first part will address the text of VDQ, and the second part, when the time comes, will address the Instruction from CICLSAL which will interpret and give further elucidation to the terms of VDQ.

Most of us who do not live in enclosed monasteries are probably not well versed in the legislation and directives on the specific kind of cloister lived by nuns. Given that most of our sister Cistercians and Benedictines around the world live in enclosed monasteries, it serves us all well to at least have passing familiarity with the Church directives about their lives.

Briefly, most enclosed women’s monasteries have lived papal enclosure which was first instituted by Pope Boniface VIII in 1298. It was codified in the first Code of Canon Law in 1917. There was no change to the terms of this strict enclosure for nuns for almost seven centuries until, in 1950, Pope Pius XII issued *Sponsa Christi*, also an apostolic constitution. Since 1950 CICLSAL has issued four Instructions on contemplative life and enclosure of nuns, the last one being in 1999. Of course, there have been other Vatican documents in the interim that affected

enclosed women religious but that also had more general impact on religious life, such as Vatican II documents, the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and *Vita consecrata* (Pope John Paul’s apostolic exhortation in 1996 issued after the 1994 Synod of Bishops on consecrated life), among others.

In essence, strict papal enclosure means that nuns do not leave the monastery except in very exceptional circumstances with specific permission and no one other than the nuns themselves are to enter the cloister. There have been variations on what the exceptions to papal enclosure could be and by whom the permissions could be given. The earliest form required any permissions to go outside of the cloister to be given only by the Holy See. The most recent form allows permission to be granted by the superior of the monastery under certain conditions.

What led to this new apostolic constitution of VDQ? There were apparent concerns about formation and autonomy of enclosed women’s monasteries, especially given aging members, fewer vocations, and women seeking indulgences of departure (a.k.a. “dispensation”) from their solemn vows. In April 2014 CICLSAL sent a letter to the world’s monasteries of nuns informing them that Pope Francis was considering a revision to the legislation on contemplative and cloistered life. Enclosed with the letter was a questionnaire asking for comments from the nuns on issues of autonomy, formation and the “evangelical meaning of the wholly contemplative life in the Church.” One might imagine the various kinds of reception this questionnaire received in women’s enclosed monasteries around the world considering the reception of the questionnaire sent to American women’s apostolic communities at the time of the Apostolic Visitation in 2009.

Two years after the questionnaires were sent out, Pope Francis released his apostolic constitution in June 2016. In it, he addressed twelve issues which he called “matters calling for discernment and renewed norms.” The twelve topics, listed in this order, are: formation, prayer, the Word of God, the sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation, community life, autonomy, federations, cloister, work, silence, communications media and asceticism. The text is on the Vatican website, <https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_constitutions/documents/papa-francesco_costituzione-ap_20160629_vultum-dei-quaerere.html>.

VDQ is written in two sections. The first and longer part is what might be described as the doctrinal/spiritual portion which has considerable, some would say flowery, language. The second more succinct part, which is entitled, “Conclusion and Regulations,” has clear directives. In the second part, the Holy Father makes clear that VDQ is addressed to CICALSAL and to “individual cloistered monasteries of nuns, whether wholly contemplative or not, and whether part of a federation or not” (Article 2, §1).

There has been considerable study and discussion of VDQ among enclosed women monastics, as well as canonists and others interested. Much that is left unclear or unanswered in VDQ is expected to be filled in by the yet to come Instruction from CICALSAL. In fact, in its “final provision,” VDQ specifically directs CICALSAL to issue a new Instruction dealing with the 12 topics, “in accordance with the spirit and the norms of the present Apostolic Constitution” (Article 14 §1). Further, VDQ directs that “Once they have been adapted to the new regulations, the articles of the constitutions or rules of individual institutes are to be submitted for approval by the Holy See” (Article 14§2).

The number and variety of topics addressed in VDQ cannot be given any detail in this short column. However, here are some highlights about which much has been written and much more will be written. I highly recommend an article by Nancy Bauer, OSB, JCD, an assistant professor in the School of Canon Law at the Catholic University of America, “*Vultum Dei Quaerere: New Norms for Nuns*,” in *The Jurist* 76 (2016) 379-414, for a clear and masterful presentation on VDQ and its historical precedents.

She makes the important observation that VDQ is not brand new, but rather a progression of what has gone before. “[W]hat Pope Francis decrees in the apostolic constitution is not so much a departure from previous legislation as movement along a continuum that was initiated by Pope Pius XII in the 1950s” (p. 380). In the new legislation, there is to be a choice given to each monastery to determine the type of cloister it will observe (Article 10 §1).

There is a requirement that all monasteries be part of a federation (Article 9 §1). This establishment of federations was initially called for by Pius XII in *Sponsa Christi*. The hope is that there can be mutual assistance of monasteries within federations, including “assistance in formation and in meeting concrete

needs through the exchange of nuns and the sharing of material goods” (Article 9 §3). Formation, both initial and ongoing, is given considerable attention. VDQ even calls for common houses for initial formation in order “to ensure a high quality of formation” (Article 3 §7). The apostolic constitution foresees formators being able to attend “specific courses on formation outside their monastery” (Article 3 §4).

There is a warning about “recruitment of candidates from other countries solely for the sake of ensuring the survival of a monastery,” saying it “is to be absolutely avoided” (Article 3 §6). Considerable attention has been given to the autonomy of monasteries, which is recognized even along with the requirement of formation of federations. In stating that “juridical autonomy needs to be matched by a genuine autonomy of life,” there is expressed concern for shrinking and aging communities that might no longer be able to remain independent to govern themselves. The capacity for “genuine autonomy of life” includes a certain number of sisters, “provided that the majority are not elderly, the vitality needed to practice and spread the charisma, a real capacity to provide for formation and governance,” etc. (Article 8 §1).

In classic Pope Francis style, he emphasizes throughout the document the evangelical nature of monastic life, and calls for many and varied ways for the sisters to evangelize through their lives, including through sharing *lectio divina* with priests, deacons, other consecrated persons and the laity” (Article 5 §2) and in inviting the local faithful to take part in Eucharistic adoration (Article 6 §1).

In summary, VDQ is an important piece of legislation for the life of enclosed women monastics. There is much yet to be learned about the ways it will affect the way life is lived in these monasteries, and how their constitutions are written. When the expected Instruction from CICALSAL is published, the full impact of this new document will become much more clear.

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

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

Report from the International Oblates' Congress

Excerpted from a longer version of Judith's narrative that will appear in Benedictines magazine.

The sight of African oblates dancing down the aisle as they carried communion gifts of bread and wine to the altar. The beautiful sound of people from around the world praying the Lord's Prayer, each in their native tongue. The sight of former Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, at age 78, giving an impromptu flute concert during lunch. The fidelity of oblates who met daily at 6:30 a.m. for lectio and prayer, and were in chapel again at 9:30 at night for compline.

These are some of the indelible memories I carry from the Fourth International Oblate Congress in Rome last November.

Oblates stand at an important crossroads in history. We currently outnumber monks and sisters living within a monastery's walls. This development marks both a historic opportunity and a significant challenge. If the nearly 1,600-year-old Benedictine tradition is to survive, lay associates will need to play an increasingly critical role in passing on that tradition. That challenge emerged as the central theme of the congress, which drew 260 people from six continents.

There are currently an estimated 25,000 oblates compared to 21,000 Benedictine monastics. In his opening remarks at the congress, Abbot Primate Gregory Polan said it is time to "give wings" to the oblate community.

In her keynote address, Sister Joan Chittister was even more emphatic about the unfolding role. "Oblates are not meant to simply be consumers of the Benedictine tradition," but carriers of that tradition, she told the gathering. "You are to be Benedictinism in the nucleus of the world – a veritable critical mass of new life and new hope and new expressions of the spirit of The Rule of St. Benedict." Oblates, Chittister emphasized, "are the hope in this century [that] the life and values of the Benedictine vision can be born in us again and anew."

The first international oblate congress took place 16 years ago in Rome. As Notker Wolf noted in one of his homilies at this year's gathering, oblates have moved in less than two decades from a kind of spiritual childhood to the portal of adulthood. Indeed, oblate life in the past largely centered on following the rituals of the monastery itself and

deepening one's personal spirituality under the direction of monks and sisters. Now, Wolf said, oblates are required to become not only witnesses to the values espoused in the Rule, but to be the active bearers of those values.

"How can we hide in our spiritual Jacuzzis, our pious spas, and say that we carry the charisms of those before us," Chittister told the group. "Let there be oblates who will carry these values beyond the monastery to city hall and Congress, to corporate offices and city streets – even if necessary into monasteries themselves that have become too quiet, too comfortable with the world as it is, rather than committed to shaping a world as it must become."

Much of the congress focused on how the oblate life will unfold over the long term. Because oblates commit to offering their services to a particular monastery, a key question is what will happen to oblates whose monasteries close or merge because of declining numbers. How can oblates better support their monasteries? In an increasingly global world, how can oblates form an international network?

Most of us who attended likely would say the relationships we formed with oblates from other countries proved the most significant takeaway. However, we did complete some important work. Congress participants voted on a five-point vision statement for the future, culled from ideas that emerged in formal small-group discussions. The vision statement reaffirmed our dedication to a "living tradition" in which we seek to model the Benedictine values of community, consensus, peace, balance, hospitality, humility, simplicity and care of the planet in our daily lives.

Joan Chittister reminded us that in every age, there is a dream that is dying and a new dream emerging. On the final evening, Father Edward Linton, an American Benedictine at Sant'Anselmo in Rome and the leader of the congress, urged all of us to discover for ourselves our place in the great, centuries-old Benedictine narrative.

I parted from my new oblate friends contemplating Linton's words in my heart. Today's oblates must forge a new dream where their passion for the Rule and Benedictine values becomes a flame through which the rest of the world can see a better way to love and live.

Oblate Judith Valente
Normal, Ill.



ABA Biennial Convention
 Artisans of the Monastery
 July 19-22, 2018
 St. Benedict Monastery
 St. Joseph, MN

Date: _____

Registration Form
(Please Print!)

Last Name _____ First Name _____ OSB___ Oblate___ Other ___

Preferred name on badge: _____

Abbey/Monastery and City _____

Street/PO Box Address _____

City, State, Postal Code _____

Primary Phone _____ E-mail _____ Gender: F () M ()

Registration Fee: *mark your choice*

	<u>Before May 1, 2018</u>	<u>After May 1</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> ABA Member	\$200.00	\$225.00	Day rate: \$100 per day (includes meals)
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-member	\$225.00	\$250.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Friday = \$100 Saturday = \$100

Room and Board: Includes Thursday evening dinner through Sunday morning breakfast

Private Room: **\$150** (\$50 per night) Double Room: **\$105** (\$35 per night)

I would like to share the double room with _____

Addtl nights at the above per night rate selected: # _____
 (Specify nights: ex. Sun, Wed)

Please specify dietary restrictions or mobility assistance needed:

Liturgy: Please volunteer and check as many as you like!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader for Liturgy of the Hours/Prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Cantor for Liturgy of the Hours/Prayer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reader for Mass/Eucharist | <input type="checkbox"/> Cantor for Mass/Eucharist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer Leader for Liturgy of the Hours/Prayer | <input type="checkbox"/> Eucharistic Minister |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Musician - Type of instrument _____ | |

+++++

Registration Fee _____ + **Room & Board** _____ = **TOTAL Paid:** _____

Please make check payable to "American Benedictine Academy" and submit with your registration form to:

Sister Julia Upton
 600 Convent Road
 Syosset, NY 11791

Call for Artwork

The Visual Arts Section of the ABA invites Benedictine artists to submit one to four pieces of their artwork for the ABA Art Show at the convention in St. Joseph, Minn. There will also be a digital art gallery for which artists may submit one to three digital images.

Criteria for submission:

- original art work in any medium (fiber, ceramic, woodworking, stain glass, photography, etc.)
- pieces ready for hanging or display on a pedestal or table
- each piece clearly labeled artist's name
- name of artist's community and its location
- shipped in a returnable container with pre-paid return shipping included

DO NOT SHIP ANYTHING WITH GLASS

Bring art to the convention or ship to arrive at the convention site by 12 noon, July 19, 2018. ABA is not responsible for returning shipments. Shippers will need to make arrangements for return shipping with Gregory Evans. Send art to:

S. Ann Marie Biermaier, OSB
St. Benedict Monastery / ABA
104 Chapel Lane
St. Joseph, MN 56374-0220

Digital submissions for the digital gallery need to be sent in JPEG format. Please email files to <greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com> by June 16, 2018. Please contact Gregory Evans with questions or concerns: Phone (571) 225-7745, Email: <greg.oblsb@gmail.com>.

Board Nominations

It is time for ABA members to place nominations from among current ABA members for vice-president and board members to be elected at the convention.

In 2016, Sister Renée Branigan, OSB of Sacred Heart Monastery (Richardton, N.D.), and Sister Marianne Burkhard, OSB of St. Mary Monastery (Rock Island, Ill.) were elected for two year terms. Sister Marianne is not eligible for re-election. Oblates Greg Peters and Judith Valente were elected for four year terms so will remain on the board for two more years unless one is elected vice-president. The vice-president becomes president after two years. At least

one of the board members must be an oblate. Duties of the board can be found in the by-laws.

Nominations may be submitted to the current vice-president, Sister Antoinette Purcell, OSB, in advance or made from the floor during the business meeting. Having nominations in advance helps to ensure that there is a sufficient slate for the election process. It also allows for information about the candidates to be published in the *American Monastic Newsletter* in advance of the convention for the members' deliberation and prayer.

Please take time to give this serious right of membership your energy and initiative. Members may submit names for vice-president or board members by email: <antoinettep1964@gmail.com>, or by hard copy to Antoinette Purcell, OSB / 1402 Southern Ave / Beech Grove, IN 46107.

MONASTIC STUDIES GRANTS

ABA members are invited to apply for Monastic Studies Grants, which provide funds to support projects that "cultivate, support and transmit the Benedictine heritage within contemporary culture." Applications will be selected on the basis of quality of the proposal (originality, feasibility, clarity of purpose), potential benefit for monastics, and relevance to the purposes of the Academy.

More details are on the ABA website.

To apply for a grant please supply the following information:

Name, address, phone number, e-mail address

Religious or academic affiliation (if any)

A brief description of the proposed project

The goal(s) of the proposed project

An itemized budget which includes:

total cost of project

sources of funding other than the ABA

sum requested from the ABA

Send completed grant applications to:

Greg Peters

THI, Biola University

13800 Biola Avenue

La Mirada, CA 90639

or submitted by email as a Word document to
greg.peters@biola.edu



NEWS

Transitions

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk, Neb., have elected Sister Rosann Ocken, OSB, as their prioress.

Sister Felícita Rentería was named superior of Monasterio Paz de la Cruz, in Morropón, Peru. The monastery was founded by Monastery Immaculate Conception (Ferdinand, Ind.) in 1969 and became a dependent monastery in 1983.

St. Benedict's Monastery in Canyon, Texas, which was originally a foundation of St. Scholastica Monastery (Fort Smith, Ark.) but had in recent years been non-canonical, has been closed.

The monks of New Camaldoli Hermitage (Big Sur, Cal.) have re-confirmed Father Cyprian Consiglio, OSB Cam., as their prior for another six year term.

* * * * *

The monks of St. Gregory's Abbey (Shawnee, Okla.) have expressed regrets at the closing of St. Gregory's University at the end of the fall semester. According to the board of directors, rejection of a major loan application forced the closing as the school would no longer be financially sustainable.

* * * * *

Oblate directors and oblate representatives met at St. Scholastica Monastery in Duluth, Minn., in July for the biennial convention of the North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors. Attendees heard from speakers Sisters Theresa Schumacher, OSB and Mary Reuter, OSB (St. Benedict's - Saint Joseph, Minn.) and Father Rene McGraw, OSB (Saint John's - Collegeville, Minn.) on the theme of "Benedictine Values and Practices." The newly elected NAABOD administrative team consists of president Sister Priscilla Cohen (Sacred Heart - Cullman, Ala.) vice-president Sister Celine Schock (Immaculata - Norfolk, Neb.) and secretary Sister Linda Larkman (St. Benedict's - Bakersville, Penn.).

* * * * *

On May 1, 2018, the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia will celebrate 150 years since their community, whose monastery is now in Bristow, was

founded in Richmond, Virginia. To commemorate their coming sesquicentennial, the sisters have begun "Countdown 150," a daily email campaign in the 150 days leading up to their anniversary. A prayer and an interesting piece of community history are delivered to subscribers' email each day. All 150 of the mailings are also being archived. More information, sign-up and archive are at the sisters' website <www.osbva.org>.

* * * * *

The Alliance for International Monasticism has begun its Lenten appeal with this year's funds being designated for the following needs of monasteries around the world:

Brazil - formation studies for Camaldolese men and women

Peru - studies in theology for a brother

Congo - theology classes for monks and nuns

Ivory Coast - theology study for three brothers

Uganda - formation course for two sisters

India - theology study for six monks

Philippines - formation and retreat program for three communities of nuns

Monastic Interreligious Dialogue (DIM-MID) - opportunity for ecumenical program

India - purchase of prayer materials for sisters and their retreat house

Mexico - repair to sisters' monastery after earthquake

Burkina Faso - construction of wall around sisters' monastery for safety

Donations may be sent to AIM, 345 E. Ninth St., Erie, PA 16503, or made digitally on the website <aim-usa.org>. Prayer cards and envelopes for groups are also available.

* * * * *

Deaths of note: Archbishop Emeritus Daniel Buechlein OSB, monk of St. Meinrad Archabbey, (Saint Meinrad, Ind.), archbishop of Indianapolis from 1992 to 2011; Most Rev. Dom Herbert Hermes OSB, monk of St. Benedict's Abey (Atchison, Kan.), bishop emeritus of the Prelacy of Cristalândia, Brazil; Sister Johnette Putnam OSB, of Mount St. Scholastica (Atchison, Kan.), monastic scholar and former president of the Federation of St. Scholastica.

* * * * *

Saint Joseph Abbey in Covington, La., was the gathering place for 35 participants in the 2018 North American Abbots' Workshop, February 2-6. In addition to the superiors in attendance, Abbot

Primate Gregory Polan and Priore Mauritius Wilde of Sant'Anselmo in Rome also met with the group.

Br. John Mark Falkenhain, a Benedictine monk of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, who is well known for his work in the area of human development and formation for celibacy, was the workshop presenter. The program included lectures as well as discussion among participants.

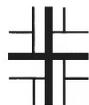
One of the highlights of the workshop was the Sunday night supper with the monks of Saint Joseph's, featuring world-renowned New Orleans cuisine. The abbots dined in the monks' refectory, which was dramatically painted by Dom Gregory de Wit, a monk of Mont Cesar in Belgium, in the 1950s.

* * * * *

The Conference of American Benedictine Prioresses (CBP) annual meeting was held at Sacred Heart Monastery in Cullman, Ala., from February 1 to 7, 2018. There were 45 members in attendance. The theme for the gathering was "Fully Human; Fully Alive."

The CBP members spent the first two days of the meeting doing the business of the CBP. On Sunday, February 4, they joined the Sacred Heart Benedictine community for Mass and then enjoyed some time for rest and relaxation. Many of the prioresses chose to go to visit Colony, Ala., Cullman County's only African-American community that in its early days was considered a safe haven for African-Americans in the Deep South. The community of Colony offered a presentation on their history and spirituals.

John Picciano, LCSW, MSW, was the speaker for the last two days of the CBP gathering. His focus was on how to deal with people struggling with addictions. The gathering ended with a southern style banquet and Mardi Gras celebration.



HAPPENINGS

If you would enjoy exploring in a beautiful setting the "ecology" of the interaction of Christian faith and spirituality with environmental consciousness, consider participating in The University of the South's Center for Religion and Environment's one-year non-credit certificate program, "Contemplation and

Care for Creation." This highly unusual program, which begins in scenic Sewanee, Tenn. with a retreat September 12-16, 2018, offers participants an exposure to the theology and the spirituality of creation care as well as its social implications. If you are interested in creation care, contemplation of nature, environmental activism, or Christian education and formation with an environmental focus, this program should be of interest to you. For more information visit <www.sewanee.edu/resources/cre/what-we-do>, or contact Center Director Robin Gottfried at 598-1243 or at rgottfri@sewanee.edu.

* * * * *

CALL FOR PAPERS: The Eleventh Triennial Conference on the History of Women Religious will be at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind., June 23-26, 2019. The program committee invites proposals for papers and panels that address the theme "Commemoration, Preservation, Celebration," from academics and independent scholars in the fields of history, sociology, literature, anthropology, theology, gender studies, visual/creative arts, material culture, religious studies, and communications.

The conference will explore how the history of women religious has been commemorated, preserved, and celebrated. Proposals are also being sought for "1,000 Words in a Picture." These short papers (up to 1,000 words) analyze a single image (a picture, artifact, or document) for a plenary session in which authors will present the image in 10 minutes, with a five minute question period.

Proposals for individual presentations or multiple-paper panels should include a one page abstract (title and 250 words) and one page curriculum vita for each author. Submit by June 1, 2018, by emailing PDFs of proposals/CVs to cushwa@nd.edu.

* * * * *

The American Benedictine Academy session at the Medieval Studies Congress in Kalamazoo, Mich., May 10-13 is on "Benedictine Exegesis of the Bible in the Middle Ages." During the congress, several sessions are offered through the Center for Cistercian and Monastic Studies. This year's program will include several speakers on manuscript transmission of St. Gertrude's *Herald of God's Loving-Kindness*, including questions raised by a recently discovered version. More information on the Congress is at their website: <<https://wmich.edu/medievalcongress>>.

Monastic Essay Contest

The Essay

The word “essay” is derived from the French verb *essayer*, meaning to try, probe, test. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, essays give a sense of probing and concrete evidence of the thinking that has gone into a piece of writing. Essays are a genre that attracts and delights as well as informs; they maintain a balance between the objective and the subjective, certainty and ambiguity; they provide coherent and illustrative content leading to something that is worth thinking about.

On the basis of this definition, we encourage new monastics and new oblates to submit essays of 3,000-3,200 words dealing with a Benedictine topic (see below) on an abstract level, i.e. using some published sources, and a concrete level showing the writer’s personal engagement. An essay is not a research paper, but rather a more personal statement about some aspect of the RB/Benedictine life showing the writer’s personal process of thinking and feeling that led to his/her conclusion.

We suggest that you choose a topic along these lines:

- ◆ How have you used RB in a concrete way in your daily life?
- ◆ How is RB 7 relevant in issues today?
- ◆ Is contemplation possible in the age of Snapchat, Twitter, etc.?

Requirements for Participation

Be a new monastic/oblate up to ten years after first profession or oblation

Submit an essay of 3,000 - 3,200 words as a double-spaced and computer-generated Word document

Deadline: March 31, 2018, i.e. the year of next ABA convention

Send to: Sister Marianne Burkhard OSB at srmarianne@cdop.org

Winners will be notified by May 10, 2018

Prizes

Winner will receive a 2-year membership in ABA with waiver of registration and housing fees for the 2018 convention and a book of interest to monastics/oblates

Second place essay will receive a book

The winner will receive help in publishing the best essay, and all entrants will have the possibility of mentoring by ABA members to help them further develop their thoughts/writing.

ABA Members as of March 1, 2018

All other memberships expired as of January 1 and will only be eligible for convention discount if renewal is received before or with conference registration. New or renewing membership application is on following page. Members may nominate board members from the list below.

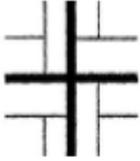
Allen OblSB, Gerry	Hayes OSB, Rt. Rev. Giles P.	Pugsley CJ, Betty
Ambre, Matthew L.	Heble OSB, Judith Ann	Purcell OSB, Antoinette *
Bethke, Janell	Hensell OSB, Eugene	Quaintance OSB, Susan
Bevens, Donna M.	Hollermann OSB, Ephrem	Rader OSB, Rosemary
Biermaier OSB, Ann Marie	Hooks OSB, Susan *	Ranek OSB, Jeanne
Bogue OSB, Edith	Hunkler OSB, Marie	Raverty OSB, Aaron
Branigan OSB, René	Johnson OblSB, Jim	Richmond, Rev. Donald P.
Bratrsovsky OSB, Mary	Joyce OSB, Timothy	Rinehart OSB, Barbara
Burkhard OSB, Marianne *	Jung OSB, Virginia	Romey OSB, Linda
Burley OSB, Joanna	Kardong OSB, Terrence	Rudolph OSB, Susan
Bush, Jacquelyn D.	Kehrwald OSB, Jennifer	Sautner OSB, Adel
Cahill, Joanne T.	Keller, Will	Schlabach, Gerald W.
Carlson, Helen	Klassen OSB, Abbot John	Schumacher OSB, Theresa
Carrillo OSB, Elizabeth	Kodell OSB, Jerome	Shannon CJ, Martin
Carruth OSB, Shawn	Kosin OSB, Christine	Siebenaller, Robert
Cerera Ph.D., Anthony	LaVorgna, Sarah	Smith OSB, Lynn
Christensen, Katherine	Lord Connolly of Sutton	Stoner OSB, Dorothy
DeAngeli OSB, Maria	Massam, Dr. Katharine	Studzinski OSB, Raymond
Dieker OSB, Alberta	McGrane OSB, Colleen M.	Sutera OSB, Judith *
Dirkes, Paul	McKenzie OSB, Lynn	Swan OSB, Laura
Dummer OSB, Mary Lou	Meyers, Steven L.	Tewes OSB, Mary
Dunham, Laura	Mika OSB, Susan	Thompson OblSB, Phyllis
Ernster OSB, Jacqueline	Moorse OSB, Dunstan	Tomaine, Rev. Dr. Jane
Evans OSB, Robin Lynn	Murphy OSB, Judith	Upton RSM, Julia *
Evans, OblSB, Gregory	Neuman OSB, Matthias	Valente OblSB, Judith
Evard OSB, Virginia	Nordstrom OblSB, Nikki	Varga OSB, Hildegard
Fallon OSB, Ramona	Norris OblSB, Kathleen	Verhalen OSB, Peter
Feehan OSB, Mary	Odermann OSB, Valerian	VonHerrmann OSB, Jeanette
Feiss OSB, Hugh	Okholm OblSB, Dennis	Wambach OSB, Ann
Forman OSB, Mary	Oliver OSB, Richard	Ward OSB, Dan
Fox OSB, Ruth	O’Ryan OSB, Mary Ann	Wenstrup OSB, Mary Catherine
Funk OSB, Meg	Osika OSB, Lynn	Wisniewski, Kristen
Grabert OSB, Colman	Panowicz OSB, Mary Kay	Witulski OSB, Pat
Guarino, Maria	Paschke OSB, Lenore	Wolff-Salin, Mary
Gudger OblSB, Cheryl	Peters OblSB, Greg	Younger OSB, Barbara
Hammett OSB, Peter	Piazza, Thomas	

* not eligible for nomination

ALL MEMBERSHIPS PAID THROUGH 2017 WERE DUE FOR RENEWAL JAN. 1

YOUR ABA MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS

The ABA website, *The American Monastic Newsletter*, awards and grants for monastic studies, and conventions (for which members receive a registration discount)



The American Benedictine Academy

<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: _____ \$35.00 for one year membership _____ \$50.00 for two years membership

PLEASE SEND TO:

**Sister Julia Upton, RSM
600 Convent Road
Syosset, NY 11791**

email: ambenacad@gmail.com