



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

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

An Interview with the Abbot Primate

At the international gathering of the Congress of Abbots in Rome last September, Abbot Gregory Polan, OSB, was chosen to be abbot primate. Abbot Gregory, a monk of Conception Abbey in Conception, Mo., had been abbot of his community since 1996. He replaced Abbot Primate Notker Wolf, who had held the primate position since 2000. The editor of this newsletter invited Abbot Primate Gregory to answer a few questions for his North American brothers and sisters.

Can you tell us a little about what an abbot primate is and does?

The abbot primate is supposed to be a sign of unity within the Benedictine Confederation and the CIB (the organization for nuns and sisters), keeping a pulse on what is happening in the Benedictine world. He is also our representative here in Rome to many different groups within the Vatican, ecumenical organizations, the other religious orders and congregations headquartered here in Rome, and the embassies related to where our order has monasteries. Also, he works as the chancellor of our university and oversees the development of various programs here at Sant' Anselmo.

What was your reaction to being elected to this position?

The initial reactions to being elected were humble recognition before so huge a task and a sense of wonder at what awaits me and the order. Though I knew I was a candidate, it was my prayer that someone else would receive the call, but that was not to be the way things unfolded. It is extremely humbling to know your brother abbots call you in the name of Christ to a task that is beyond your capabilities. I found myself moving from one expectation to the next, and being prompted to what I needed to do next. It was almost like 20 years ago when I was elected abbot of Conception Abbey, but now considerably more demanding. Those were the initial reactions.

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President's Message

Dear Friends,

As I am writing this, tonight at the Art Institute in Chicago hundreds of people will be gathering for the 20th annual "Artist in All" exhibit presented by the artists in residence at Misericordia Village on Chicago's north side. Sister Susan Quaintance, OSB, wrote about Misericordia in one of her ABA president's letters last year.

In an era when people with developmental disabilities were warehoused and given only custodial care, Misericordia has sought to develop the whole person with love, dignity and a sense of purpose. They are truly artisans of their "monastery" as can be seen in this video (<http://youtu.be/K6Xg7SYQsoM>).

Christine Valters Paintner's book *The Artist's Soul: Nurturing Your Creative Soul with Monastic Wisdom* has become my "sacra speco" as Macrina Wiederkehr suggested in the book's foreword. I have also used some of the exercises with my students in the past few years as they begin to discover the artist within themselves as well. They have more inhibitions to

overcome than the residents of Misericordia Village, but eventually they come to see that giving birth to their images is liberating and fulfilling.

Like many of you, in the coming weeks I will be preparing a new course for the fall semester. This year I have been asked to teach an honors section of "Religion and the Fine Arts," a course I taught only once before when the usual professor was on sabbatical, but that was 30 years ago. How the world of higher education has change in those decades!

Although I no longer remember the details of how I approached the course back in 1987, I know it will bear no resemblance to how we engage in the experience this time. It will be an adventure and I expect to learn a lot from the students as we explore the world of religion and the fine arts in our magnificent laboratory, New York City.

May your own artistic adventures in the coming months prepare you to focus on "Artisans of the Monastery" at our convention next summer. We have confirmed three speakers: Kathleen Norris, Martin Erspamer, OSB, and David Paul Lange, OSB. We'll have artistic adventures at both St. Benedict Monastery and St. John's Abbey and several surprises as well. More details will be in the next issue. We hope to see you there.



The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Submit any announcements or articles to:

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P.O. Box 577

Nashville, Ind. 47448

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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

Julia Upton, RSM
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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

The Top of the Mountain The Foot of the Mountain

No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to protect his or her own privacy (canon 220).

Religious are ... to approach the sacrament of penance frequently (canon 664).

Observing the common life ... (canon 665)

And may God bring us all together to eternal life (RB 72).

See Matthew 17:1-15, Mark 9: 2-8, 17-18, and Luke 9: 28-39

In the above texts, I have been led to reflect on the journey I have been blessed with as a monastic and as a canon and civil lawyer. In my reflections, what is both beautiful and painful is that monastic life is not merely a life on the mountain witnessing the Transfiguration, but also a life at the foot of the mountain. As Jesus and the three disciples left the mountain of Transfiguration, they immediately encountered a father asking for healing for his epileptic child who was suffering greatly.

One of the gifts given to me over these years has been to be invited by so many monastics and other persons into the privacy of their lives, a privacy that often revealed the pain and anguish. I remember as a new canonist encountering this when listening to the life journey of priest-monks who wished to be dispensed. The pain and the anguish were shared with such honesty.

But pain and anguish shared was not always in such life changing situations. Other times, it was a monastic sharing how ill-treated she/he felt by the prioress or abbot or by another member of the community. At other times, it was the journey of one who had transgressed some aspect of *conversatio morum*, and now was feeling naked because his reputation and privacy were ruined. What could this monastic do? Often, the monastic would approach with the hope that there was a canonical solution to ease the pain or anguish. Is there some procedure that requires dialogue leading to understanding and, perhaps, forgiveness with monastic leadership, with

other members of the community or with persons outside the community?

Listening to others' journeys has been a gift for me. But more than that it has been humbling to be invited into someone's life and be trusted. I am sure that many of you have experienced this in your monastic journey.

The French Cistercian abbot, Andre Louf, once wrote something like this: "We all come to the monastery broken, and the monastic community exists to help us heal." Yet, I wonder if we are conscious of our need to be a community of healing?

A sort of "canonical norm" of our ancient forebears of the desert was compassion, that is "to suffer with." How a monastic grew in compassion was a mark of growth in the monastic life. These teachers "spoke in direct and realistic language about the need to 'be with' others in their sufferings, or even to 'carry' part of their burden," says Douglas Burton-Christie in *The Word in the Desert*. Is this not teaching us that together we live also at the foot of the mountain?

As Benedictines, we pride ourselves on good liturgies. But when I think of most monastic liturgies, I reflect that for the most part they are for times when we are on the top of the mountain. Where are the liturgies, and perhaps other communal events, that heal the time at the foot of the mountain? At times, we encourage the sacrament of penance (canon 664) and some communities have communal penance services as preparation for individual confession, but ultimately these are individual moments of healing rather than communal healing.

I wonder if what is meant by "observing the common life" so that "God may bring *us all together* to eternal life" is that the community together is the sacrament of living with one another in suffering and offering one another healing and reconciliation. As a sacramental community of compassion, healing and reconciliation would we not need to share in liturgy our mutual suffering and then our mutual compassion, healing and reconciliation: the community confesses and the community forgives?

As community, at times we live *together* on top of the mountain. But at other times, we live at the foot of the mountain with the gospel father in anguish and his suffering child. We live in this these latter

(continued on page 4)

times sometimes as suffering child together, but also sometimes with some of our sisters and brothers as the suffering child.

This may not sound like a canonical article. But canon law is not only prescriptive rules and procedures. Much of canon law is exhortative, calling us to be who we desire and hope to be. So, I wonder if canon law, the Rule, our desert forebears and our own experiences of life are not calling us in in some visible, expressed way to share together at the foot of the mountain as we journey together to everlasting life.

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

Daniel J Ward, OSB
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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

What do you most look forward to doing?

I look forward to getting to know the worldwide Benedictine order, understand better its challenges, encourage others in living the Benedictine charism, and meeting more of the many wonderful people I have already met in the last five months. As I come to know the needs, I hope to be able to address them in a spiritual and practical way for the assistance of the monks, nuns, and sisters in the order.

What parts do you think will be most difficult?

There are several challenges ahead. 1) On a personal note, there will be the adaptation to Italian culture, which is quite different from what we are used to in the United States. 2) Our university needs to continue working on and implementing its strategic plan. 3) Trying to meet the many requests that come my way, and making the decisions about what are the most pressing needs. That means deciding among many good projects and plans, but what are most pressing at the moment.

What are your hopes and vision about monastic life? What would you like to see happen in your term of office and going into our future?

At this point, I am still learning many things about Sant Anselmo, the order throughout the world, and how I relate to the various people and publics that are part of our life in Rome. My hope would be to see monastic life grow and flourish, and to be a witness to the power of prayer, the beauty of community life, and the joy of living the paschal mystery faithfully. Those hopeful wishes need a practical application, and that will be the work ahead. Stay tuned for more on the development of those values.

Anything else you would like to say to your North American brothers and sisters and the many oblates and others who read AMN?

North America holds a beautiful and powerful spirit of faithful prayer, gracious hospitality, and joy in the common life. Keep that alive because it will invite many others to want to share in your life. The simple acts of love, kindness, understanding, compassion, forgiveness, and welcome are true invitations to our rich Benedictine life and heritage.

COMING EVENTS

National Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors Convention

*St. Scholastica Monastery - Duluth, Minn.
July 14-19*

Oblate directors and assistant/associate directors of oblates are encouraged to attend along with two oblates from each monastery. If a director is unable to attend, one or two designated oblates may still attend as representatives. This year's theme is "Benedictine Values & Practices: Tools for Living, Tools for Life." Speakers will be Sisters Theresa Schumacher, OSB and Mary Reuter, OSB (St. Benedict's – Saint Joseph, Minn.) and Father Rene McGraw, OSB (Saint John's – Collegetown, Minn.)

www.naabod.org

Monastic Oblate Institute *Sophia Center - Atchison, Ks. July 20-23*

The speaker for this year's institute will be Father Meinrad Miller, OSB (St. Benedict's Abbey - Atchison, Ks.). Oblate director and spiritual resource person for St. Teresa of Calcutta's Missionaries of Charity, he will speak on "Steps to Good Living." Registration has been sent to all oblate directors, and is limited to the first 50 oblates.

Sophia Center, 751 So. 8th St., Atchison, KS 66002, maryliz@mountosb.org

www.sophiaspiritualitycenter.org

Fourth International Oblate Congress *Il Salesianum - Rome, Italy November 4-10*

Benedictine oblates from all over the world, whose participation is endorsed by their director, will gather to discuss, share, celebrate, pray and work together, exploring the theme "A Way Forward - The Benedictine Community in Movement." The keynote speaker will be Sister Joan Chittister, OSB (Mount St. Benedict - Erie, Pa.). A special workshop for

accompanying oblate directors will be arranged. The official congress language is English, with plenum lectures translated into several other languages. Each country or region has been assigned its own quota of voting delegates. Once this quota has been filled, additional participants are welcome as non-voting representatives.

http://www.anselmianum.com/programmi/2017/congressus_oblati/english/welcome.php

New Degree Program at Sant'Anselmo

In response to an increasing need for spiritual research and monastic wisdom in the modern world, Sant'Anselmo University in Rome will offer a new English-speaking program, "Spirituality and Culture" beginning in the fall semester. Subtitled "Challenges of Modern Culture to Spiritual Theology," the program presents the Benedictine spiritual tradition read in the context of modern culture.

This program of the Faculty of Theology will be fully accredited November 2017 and run through May 2019. Successful participants will receive a "License," a European "master's degree," in spiritual theology.

The program is oriented to Benedictines, members of other religious orders, priests and lay people who are interested in deepening their spirituality, enlarging their knowledge of modern cultural challenges and acquiring skills for formation work. Scholarships are available. Monks are welcome to live at Sant'Anselmo during and between the modules, nuns in neighboring monastic facilities.

For more information, please visit the Spirituality and Culture web site (http://www.anselmianum.com/ateneo/teologia/_istituto_monastico/spirituality_culture/index.php) or contact me directly at the address below.

Fr. Bernard Sawicki, OSB
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NEWS

Recent monastic elections include:

Prioress Maribeth Wentzlaff, OSB - Sacred Heart Monastery (Yankton, S.D.)

Prioress Cathering Godfrey, OSB - St. Gertrude's Monastery (Ridgely, Md.)

Mother Kathy Ullrich, OCSO - Our Lady of the Angels Monastery (Crozet, Va.)

Prioress Theresa Hoffman, OSB - Mother of God Monastery (Watertown, S.D.)

Prioress Esther Fangman, OSB - Mount St. Scholastica (Atchison, Kan.)

Re-elected to continue their leadership were:

Prioress Maria deAngeli, OSB - St. Scholastica Monastery (Fort Smith, Ark.)

Prioress Babara Rinehart, OSB - House of Bread Monastery (Nanaimo, B.C., Canada)

Prioress Clare Carr, OSB - Benet Hill Monastery (Colorado Springs, Colo.)

A symposium on religious brothers in the Church was held on March 25 at Notre Dame. Over 225 individuals attended the event, representing more than 15 different communities/institutes. Brother John Mark Falkenhain, OSB, of St. Meinrad's Archabbey (St. Meinrad, Ind.) delivered the keynote address, which was published in the April 13 issue of *Origins*. All of the videotaped sessions of the symposium are available at <http://www.yearforconsecratedlife.com/brothers-symposium.html>.

Abbot General D. Diego M. Rosa, OSB Oliv., has announced that the Olivetan Congregation has decided to close Holy Trinity Monastery in St. David, Arizona. The congregation is working with the resident oblates and lay associates seeking a way to enable them to continue to live on the site. Holy Trinity was founded from Our Lady of Guadalupe Abbey in Pecos, New Mexico, in 1974.

The most recent issue of the Monastic Worship Forum's newsletter notes the passing into eternal life

of two gifted Benedictines who made significant contributions to monastic culture in their lifetimes. Father Henry Bryan Hays, OSB, monk of Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., was a noted monastic composer who possessed world-class credentials in the musical world. Sister Miriam Schmitt, OSB, of Annunciation Monastery in Bismarck, N.D., was a scholar and teacher of monastic history and liturgy, and an active member of the ABA. The Forum's newsletter, containing extended obituaries as well as some selections from the reflections of the late Fr. Kevin Seasoltz, along with past issues and more resources, may be found at their website, www.monasticworshipforum.org.

Abbot Brian Wangler, OSB, abbot of Assumption Abbey in Richardton, N.D. died on May 25. Abbot of his community since 2004, he was a longtime supporter of the ABA.

Abbots and conventual priors from North American Benedictine monasteries met at Prince of Peace Abbey, Oceanside, Cal., for their annual assembly in February. The keynote speakers were Abbot President Elias Lorenzo, O.S.B, abbot president of the American-Cassinese Congregation and Father Daniel Ward, OSB of Saint John's Abbey (Collegeville, Minn.) presenting "Case Studies in Monastic Life: Responding to the Bruised Reed." Father Thomas Gaunt, S.J. from C.A.R.A., Georgetown University, spoke on trends in vocation discernment.

Archabbot Kurt Stasiak, OSB, has announced that St. Meinrad's Archabbey has made the decision to suspend the operation of their Abbey Press. Abbey Press Trade Marketing has been purchased by CA Gift (formerly Cathedral Art), a wholesale gift manufacturer in Rhode Island. The company will continue to produce a wide range of best-selling Abbey Press products under the name "Abbey Gift." Abbey Press Publications is currently considering options for the future publication and production of the popular *CareNotes* line, books and *Deacon Digest* magazine, which includes exploring the sale of the business.

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.

FEATURE REVIEW

The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation by Rod Dreher. 2017, Sentinel Press, an imprint of Penguin Random House, New York, 262 pp., \$25, ISBN 978-0-7352-1329-6.

Whatever you might think about it when you finish, every monastic community should be having some buzz about this new book that has become a *N.Y. Times* and Amazon best seller and the subject of editorials and reviews in such major publications as *The New York Times*, where David Brooks called it “the most discussed and most important religious book of the decade.”

I watched a two hour press club event on C-Span with Dreher being evaluated and grilled by some of the most well-known religion columnists in the country. I was hoping this would help me clarify my thoughts about this book and this movement but, at the end, I was still not sure about the pros and cons of this movement.

For those who have not yet grappled with the book, the title is taken from Alisdair MacIntyre’s statement in the book *After Virtue* where, comparing today to the fall of the Roman Empire, he invokes the need for a new but very different St. Benedict. Dreher’s introduction to his book is an even bleaker and more desperate depiction of our times. He traces human history as a horrible decline through progressively more immoral and godless eras, culminating with the final straw, the legalization of gay marriage. Although Dreher is senior editor of *The American Conservative*, he asserts that both left and right have lost their moral compass, citing the election of Donald Trump.

At this point, as he cried out for the few right-thinking people in the world to flee to the hills as Benedict had done, I was ready to stop reading. His interpretation of St. Benedict showed little understanding of Benedictine history as a movement into the heart of the seeker and the heart of culture. Supported by nothing that I can find in the writing of Benedict, he seems to be suggesting that the “Benedict option” occurred because the saint threw up his hands in despair and wanted nothing to do with the depraved world that would be lurking at his monastery gate and would surely kill the soul.

From this dire premise, the author dives into the elements of Benedictine spirituality and this part of the book is actually a pretty good summary for those unfamiliar. He summarizes various elements briefly and supplements them with excerpts from his experiences learning wisdom from the monks of Norcia.

Everything in the middle of the book grows from this understanding, that these values provide an option for Christians to choose to witness to the values of family and community, work and prayer, and the ability to withstand temptation to embrace the worst of contemporary culture. He does occasionally acknowledge that some people can fall off the deep end of isolationism and that it is important to accept people from “outside” when there is common ground or need for compassionate response.

At this point, as he talks about circles of people with shared values, shared worship and a shared desire to raise children in a positive educational environment, it sounds as if he is describing the good old Catholic ethnic neighborhood or the single-denomination small town.

So far, so good. In the final section, however, he returns to his original cry to circle the wagons. It is reminiscent of my childhood memories of how the Communists were going to come in and destroy every element of life as we knew it and we would have to be prepared to stand for our values and die. Perhaps his warnings are prophetic and real; I certainly hope not.

Surely anything that gets people to think more critically about what they believe and value is worthwhile. What I don’t know is whether St. Benedict would want to be the patron saint of this movement as Dreher portrays it. But at this point he is, so will there be “bounce” in regard to our monasteries? Will more people come to us seeking a life that is radically different than that of the world? Are we the ideal spiritual paragons Dreher holds up as his model? Are we the paranoid, gay averse, last bastions of civilization that he also sees as ideal? Will they be disappointed if they find that we are civically engaged with people of varying beliefs, welcoming of visitors considered “immoral,” or a little too engaged with technology?

Report on the ABA session at the 2017 International Congress of Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo, Mich.

The session sponsored by the ABA was on May 12 with the topic of sources of authority that were used as a guide in living monastic life: the Bible, the Rule, early monastic documents, the traditions of their founders, monastic reform centers, and customaries.

The first of the four papers was by Joseph Morrel, graduate student at the University of Dallas, “Monks as Champions: Sources of ‘Spiritual Warfare’ in Medieval Benedictinism.” Two principal sources of this image in the RB and elsewhere were Origen’s commentary on Leviticus, where he discussed the struggle with Pharaoh, and the accounts of Antony’s struggles with the Devil and himself through asceticism, prayer and work. St. Benedict inherited, and in Gregory’s account exemplified, the hermitage as the place where this warfare occurs. Such spiritual warfare was not limited to monks.

Sister Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB, a Benedictine Sister of Perpetual Adoration, who is translating Adalbert de Vogüé’s *A Critical Study of the Rule of Benedict*, spoke on “Aniane and the Authorities.” Much could be said about Benedict of Aniane’s relationship with authorities: the court, Church, liturgy, RB, monastic tradition and evolving monastic practice. She addressed the tradition transmitted through the writings of the Fathers. For his two and a half years of monastic life Aniane lived a very extreme ascetical regime, thinking that RB was written for beginners or the weak and he wanted to *ascend* to the precepts of Basil and Pachomius, which were possible only for a few. Then he became a champion of RB, his *Concordia regularum* slightly rearranging RB then giving parallel texts from other rules. Aniane’s aim was complementarity: he wanted to make space for various authorities. This trait enabled him to embrace life in the monastery and in the court, and to add his own voice to shaping the tradition he had received from the Fathers and Benedict of Nursia.

The third speaker was Jacob Rieff, visiting associate professor at Marquette University and author of the forthcoming *The Old English Rule of Saint Benedict*. His subject was “St. Aethelwold and Authority: A Rhetoric of Silence.” Aethelwold lived in the tenth century at Abingdon and then Winchester. He instituted monastic cathedrals,

translated the RB, and was the primary composer of the *Regularis concordia*. He maintains his position by means of a strategy of rhetorical absence, letting authorities speak for him. Anglo-Saxon reforms of the Church and monasticism looked to the Apostolic Church, Gregory the Great and Augustine of Canterbury, and the time of Bede. To justify his efforts to withdraw the Church from lay control Aethelwold needed royal support; to further his cause he invoked an idealized view of early monasticism. He admits that the *Regularis concordia* introduced some new things based on observances at Fleury and Ghent, but these were things that Gregory wanted Augustine to do. He cites the same authorities in the prologue to his translation of the RB: the Bible, Gregory and Augustine, King Edgar, and a certain abbot (i.e., Aethelwold himself). By so removing himself from the text, Aethelwold gives authority to his changes.

Nathan John Haydon, a graduate student from the University of Arkansas, spoke on “Instruction in Monastic Customs: Aelfric’s Letter to the Monks of Eynsham and Liturgical Authority.” Obedience is central to cenobitic monasticism. Obedience to the abbot and community is obedience to Christ. Liturgical practice is a shaping authority. Liturgical expression varied from minster to minster. Bede and Aethelwold favored uniformity in liturgy. Too much diversity limited the capacity of monasticism to give identity to the Angel-Saxon nation. Aelfric thought the RB, Cluny, Ghent, Aniane, and Aethelwold were the right guides. His letter (ca. 1005) is actually a set of *consuetudines*, designed to be an authority and based on the RB. He draws on Amalarius and makes adaptations to the situation in England, including prayers for the king at each liturgical hour.

The ABA session proposed for the 2018 Congress is “Benedictine Exegesis of the Bible in the Middle Ages.” Apart from Bede, medieval Benedictine biblical exegesis is not widely read or studied. How homogenous was Benedictine biblical interpretation? How did controversy and polemics influence it? To what extent was it derived from Augustine and other early Christian sources? What signs of originality are there? What was the intended audience? Did Benedictine exegetes favor Benedictine sources? What books of the Bible attracted Benedictine exegetes and why? Anyone interested in giving a paper should contact me.

Hugh Feiss, OSB
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DON'T FORGET THAT ALL MEMBERSHIPS PAID THROUGH 2016 WERE DUE FOR RENEWAL JAN 1.

The following are the current members of the American Benedictine Academy with dues paid through 2017.

Allen, OblSB, Gerry - Bellevue, NE
Anderson, Linda - St. Paul, MN
Biermaier, OSB, S. Ann Marie - St. Joseph, MN
Branigan, OSB, S. Renée - Richardton, ND
Brennan, Donald - Manchester, NJ
Brewer, Tom - Uniontown, OH
Burkhard, OSB, S. Marianne - Peoria, IL
Carlson, Helen - Richfield, MN
Carrillo, OSB, S. Elizabeth - Atchison, KS
Carruth, OSB, S. Shawn - Crookston, MN
Cooper, OSB, Abbot Mark - Manchester, NH
Crozier Garcia, OblSB, Cheryl - Honolulu, HI
Daniels, Marilyn - Newport, VT
DeAngeli, OSB, S. Maria - Fort Smith, AR
Devine, OSB, Br. Luke - Lacey, WA
Dieker, OSB, S. Alberta - Mt. Angel, OR
Drnjevic, OSB, Br. Cyril - St. Benedict, OR
Dummer, OSB, S. Mary Lou - St. Paul, MN
Dunham, Laura - Riverside, CA
Ernster, OSB, S. Jacquelyn - Yankton, SD
Erspamer, OSB, Br. Martin - St Meinrad, IN
Evans, Gregory - Manassas, VA
Evans, OSB, S. Robin Lynn - Mount Angel, OR
Fallon, OSB, S. Ramona - Pierre, SD
Feehan, OSB, S. Mary - Elizabeth, NJ
Feiss, OSB, Fr. Hugh - Jerome, ID
Forman, OSB, S. Mary - Collegeville, MN
Fox, OSB, S. Ruth - Richardton, ND
Frigge, OSB, S. Marielle - Yankton, SD
Fritts, Jack - Lisle, IL
Gilmartin, Linda - Cloverdale, IN
Goetz, OSB, S. Janet - Erie, PA
Grabert, OSB, Fr. Colman - St. Meinrad, IN
Grimmet, Dina Strong - Greeley, CO
Gudger, OblSB, Cheryl - Port Orchard, WA
Hagen, OSB, S. Paula - St. Paul, MN
Hammack, OblSB, Robert - St. John, MO
Heath, Anne - Holland, MI
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What about the next generation? Should those of us with educational institutions be capitalizing on his call for solid, Christian classical education? Will the children whose families extol the Benedict option be any more familiar with the values and thus more attracted to a monastic vocation?

What about all the readers of this book who may be getting their first exposure to Benedictinism? Will more of them seek to read more about the way of life or be inspired to come for a visit? Will they somehow associate us with this flight from the world version of religious life that is not one that we ourselves have promoted but has been placed on us by this author's interpretation?

Only time will tell whether a book that is being read and discussed by millions, but is honestly only vaguely connected to real Benedictinism, will have any effect on monastic life. But I think we had better be aware that it's out there.

The editor

BOOK REVIEW

Benedict's Daughter: Poems by Philip C. Kolin. 2017, Resource Publications, an imprint of Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, Ore., 67 pp., \$11, ISBN 978-1-5326-1147-6.

Given a cursory look, the lives of Benedictine oblates may seem prosaic, with their daily routines of prayer and work in the midst of the mundane tasks of family life. However, upon close observation of the life of an oblate named Midge, Philip Kolin discovered the poetry to be found in courtship and marriage, the classroom and the kitchen, and coffee and conversation when they are infused with the Benedictine values of prayer, hospitality, and humility. The poems in *Benedict's Daughter* reveal how the wisdom of St. Benedict can permeate life outside the monastery and lead to an extraordinary life of insight, devotion, and service. Poems that focus on Benedictine spiritual traditions, liturgies, saints, and abbeys are included in this volume as well. The reader will want to linger with these rich, deeply felt, meditative poems.

*Jennifer Halling, Postulant
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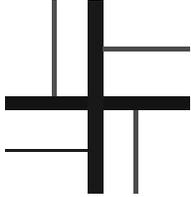
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