



# The AMERICAN MONASTIC NEWSLETTER

Published under the auspices of the American Benedictine Academy

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

Volume 51, Number 2

June 2020

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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.*

## *ABA Hosts First Virtual Convention*

### **2020 Vison: Seeing the World in a Single Ray of Light July 17-18, 2020**

Due to the pandemic affecting our ability to travel and gather, the venue of our summer gathering is changed. What we had planned to happen on the beautiful campus of Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan., will now take place virtually. After a poll of members, the board decided we had enough support to make this our first virtual conference. The speakers are all on board with the plan and promise to include some pictures in their presentations to help engage us as we listen. We plan to include a way for speakers to interact with listeners, and for participants to interact with each other through a facilitated discussion.

Participants in the special interest section groups will also be able to interact with each other. The business meeting will go forward with reports and any necessary discussion. The schedule will include: a celebration of the lives of recently departed members, a visual display of art, the presentation of the Egregia and Monastic Essay awards, the installation of officers and board, and an address by the new president, and, of course, we will have brief periods of prayer. **All events will take place on Central Daylight-Saving Time.**

With this newsletter you will find a copy of the revised registration form that gives us the information we need in order to send you the links needed for participation. If you are able to project your reception onto a larger screen, three or more viewers can share the one link. The fee we ask will pay stipends of our presenters. A revised schedule is also included with this newsletter. All events will take place on Friday and Saturday, July 17 and 18. You can also access the revised registration form and schedule at <[www.americanbenedictine.org](http://www.americanbenedictine.org)> and on the Facebook page.

Lastly, the other piece of exciting news about this conference is that because it is a virtual gathering, monastics and oblates who might not

*(continued on page 3)*

## *President's Message*

Dear ABA Members and Friends,

Life has certainly taken on an unexpected twist in the form of a pandemic that is affecting people around the globe. Some of you may have contracted the disease and recovered, while others have known the death of loved ones due to the corona virus. All of us have been affected in one way or another: shutting down a ministry; working from home; spending time in isolation; restricting visitors; changing how we greet and support; practicing physical distancing; reaching out to others in need; covering someone else's chores; refraining from our usual social interaction and recreation; letting go of planned events that had to be cancelled; and discovering ways to adapt in order to stay connected. What would Benedict say to us now if he were here?

While the Rule is full of wisdom that could apply, what comes to mind immediately is chapter 7 as we stand humbly before our God knowing that we are not in control. Another chapter that comes to mind is, "The Tools for Good Works" as it lays out the practices that we are to be about every day as Christians and as monastics. Verse 41, "Place your

hope in God alone" seems especially appropriate at this time. Of course, the practice of good zeal is also something we are called to every day. As we spend more time together because other activities are limited, it might be especially important to "support with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior, and earnestly compete in obedience to one another." Suddenly, everyone's idiosyncrasies as well as my own seem to loom larger than normal. The practice of fervent love is tested as we work to prefer nothing whatever to Christ. And, of course, there is the need to respond every day to the voice of God who calls us "to share in the sufferings of Christ that we may deserve also to share in his kingdom." We cannot hear that voice unless we attend with the ear of our heart as we gather in common prayer and take time for personal prayer and lectio.

The pandemic has necessitated changes in our own lives and in the lives of our sisters and brothers around the world. We are one in this experience even while there are many differences due to the availability of, or lack of, resources and other conditions. We all know the resulting suffering directly or indirectly, some to a greater degree than others. The scriptures at this time of year keep reminding us that Jesus calls us to be one as he is one with his father. Perhaps it is a sad commentary that it takes a pandemic for us to realize just how connected we really are with each other. The lesson seems to be to recognize that while suffering can unite us, joy unites us even more. It takes faith and hope to believe that we are not alone, because God is with us, the source of our joy and consolation. We are one in the Spirit as we continue to live what we profess day in and day out, pandemic or not.



### ***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:  
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***

Antoinette Purcell, OSB  
ABA president  
Our Lady of Grace - Beech Grove, Ind.  
antoinettep1964@gmail.com

*(Convention - continued from page 1)*

have been able to travel or who live outside of North America are able to participate. Information is being sent to Benedictine monasteries around the world. We expect that the theme, “2020 Vision: Seeing the World in a Single Ray of Light” will take on new significance as we connect with Benedictines who live on other continents. We hope you are able to join us for this experience. We ask your prayers that the Holy Spirit and the patron saint of technology will guide this conference to a smooth completion so that in all things God may be glorified.

Antoinette Purcell, OSB  
ABA president

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## Schedule for Virtual ABA Conference July 17 and 18, 2020

All times are CENTRAL DAYLIGHT TIME

### *Friday July 17*

9:30 a.m. Welcome and Opening Prayer  
10:00 “Stability and Evangelization” - Sr. Pia Portmann, OSB  
11:00 Break  
11:15 Archivists and Librarians Sections meet  
12:15 p.m. Break  
1:30 “The Monastic World in the Bright Light of Equatorial Africa and the Subcontinent” -  
Fr. Joel Macul, OSB  
2:30 Break  
2:45 “Viewing the World of Latin American Monastics” - Sr. Ann Hoffman, OSB  
3:45 Break  
4:00 Researchers and Visual Arts Sections meet  
5:00 Break until Saturday morning

### *Saturday July 18*

9:30 a.m. Welcome and Prayer  
9:45 “Benedictine Time Travel: Going Back to Envisage Possible Futures” -  
Fr. Hugh Feiss, OSB  
10:45 Break  
11:00 Discussion Facilitated by Sr. Susan Quaintance, OSB  
12:00 p.m. Break  
1:00 Celebration of Life and Remembrance of Recently Departed ABA Members  
1:30 ABA Business Meeting (will take a break as necessary)

- Reports
- Results of Election for Vice President and Board
- Presentation of Awards—Egregia and Monastic Essay
- Installation of officers and board
- Address by new president Rev. Greg Peters
- Closing Prayer

## CANON LAW COLUMN

### *Pandemic Related Postponement of Elections: Canonical Implications*

The coronavirus pandemic brought on some unexpected canonical issues in our monasteries. I had never thought of the possible need to postpone an election of a monastic superior beyond the time of the current monastic leader's term. But that is exactly what has happened in a number of monasteries and other religious communities around the world.

When we realized that it was likely that it would not be possible for federation/congregation presidents and election discernment facilitators to travel to monasteries in our federations/congregations, it was clear that something creative would be required. The presidents of the women's federations in our country put our heads together through emails and Zoom calls and consultation with our brother Benedictine canonist extraordinaire, Dan Ward, to craft a solution to this conundrum. This was prior to any guidance being issued from the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life.

It was not so much the postponement decision that was the problem. Rather, the issue was this: if we postpone the election and a new election is not able to be held before the expiration of the term of the office of the current monastic leader (prioress in our federations' cases), what is there in the law to fill the gap of having no elected leader? Among our women's federations, there was no provision in our constitutions to address this. What to do?

What our three federation constitutions have in common is a wise provision to address, in a general way, situations that were not anticipated when the constitutions were written. We call such a situation a "lacuna" or an unfilled gap in the law. *Call to Life*, the constitution of my own Federation of St. Scholastica, states the following norm: "The federation president, with the consenting vote of the federation council, may provide a temporary solution for lacunae in the norms of Call to Life. She shall report her action to the next federation pre-chapter or chapter. Recommendations for new norms to cover such situations are to be considered at the next federation chapter" (Specific Norm 68). The Federation of St. Benedict and the Federation of St. Gertrude, as well as the two men's American monastic congregations, have similar norms.

The next step was to call together the federation council to decide how to fill the gap in the law that was discovered with the pandemic-related travel restrictions. Of course, that council gathering had to be conducted virtually, which we did via a video call using the Zoom platform. Fortunately, in my own federation, we have been using this video conference call option for several years, so it was not something we had to learn at the time of the pandemic. After careful consideration and discussion of this situation, each of the federation councils wrote an interim norm. My own federation council unanimously approved the following norm to fill this lacuna, which took effect immediately and will remain in effect until the next federation chapter is held in 2022: "For a grave reason, the president, with the consent of her council and after consulting with the monastery, may postpone the election of a prioress and extend her term but not for more than one year."

This norm has been invoked in four monasteries of my federation and I am aware that other women's federations and men's congregations have also had to postpone elections during this pandemic time. This means that our monastic leaders in whose monasteries elections were scheduled will likely serve longer than they had expected, but the term of office in the Federation of St. Scholastica cannot be extended for longer than a year.

Within a short time after we made the decision that a new norm had to be written to provide for this unexpected situation of travel restrictions, the Vatican Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life published its own guidance to all religious institutes in the world facing such a situation. Fortunately, what we had decided was totally consistent with the Vatican's guidance.

I think this shows us that canon law (which includes not only the canons in the Code of Canon Law but also our own proper law found in our constitutions) can be adapted to the needs of the time. Canon law is to be interpreted always with the "salvation of souls" (see canon 1752, the last canon in the Code) as the backdrop. So we look at the situation facing us, we look at the law as it is written, and we apply that law with as much wisdom and compassion as we can muster.

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



**ABA 1st Biennial Virtual Convention**  
**“2020 Vision:**  
**Seeing the World in A Single Ray of Light”**  
**July 17-18, 2020**

**Registration Form**

*(Please Print!)*

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Member    Non-Member\_\_\_\_                       OSB             Oblate             Other

Abbey/Monastery Affiliated With and City: \_\_\_\_\_

Street/PO Box Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee:**            *mark your choice*  
   **Before July 1, 2020**

**\*Please Note:** We can only provide one link per couple or community. It is assumed that all participants in these groups will be watching together.

- Individual – \$50.00
- Couple – \$75.00
- Community of up to 6 Viewers – \$100
- Community greater than 6 Viewers – \$150

There will be section meetings held with two sections scheduled at the same time: Monastic Research and Visual Arts section will be meeting at the same time and will have each separate links; the Archives and Library sections will have another link.

*Please indicate which section meeting you would like to participate in:*

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

**Please send Registration to:**  
American Benedictine Academy  
c/o Sr. Robin Lynn Evans, OSB  
802 E 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Ferdinand, IN 47532

**ABA Use Only**

Date Received	Amount	Check #/Cash	Year Term



## NEWS

### ***PANDEMIC CHANGES OF PLANS:***

\*\* “Being Benedictine in the 21st Century: Spiritual Seekers in Conversation,” formerly scheduled for June 26-28, 2020, at the Sophia Center of Mount St. Scholastica in Atchison, Kan., had nearly reached its capacity of 200 participants before the pandemic forced a postponement. It has been tentatively scheduled for some time at the end of May, 2021.

In the meantime, those who had registered and other interested persons will have the opportunity for ongoing resources through a series of virtual conversations. Judith Valente gave a short reflection on silence in April, which was viewed by 70 persons who were able to engage in conversation with the speaker and each other. At the end of June, at which time the conference was originally scheduled, Sister Linda Romey will give a brief thought-starter on the subject of community. Similar online events with Sister Judith Sutura, Kathleen Norris and other as yet unnamed speakers are tentatively scheduled for later in the interim period before the conference. Updates, Information and registration are at the conference website <[www.beingbenedictine.org](http://www.beingbenedictine.org)>.

\*\* The Mount Tabor Centre of the Community of Jesus had been planning a European trip, “Sacred Sites: the Holy Land in the Heart of Italy,” for June 20-29, 2020. They are now hoping to have the tour and study event in the fall of this year or spring of 2021. More information is at <<https://mounttabor.it/events/sacred-sites-the-holy-land-in-the-heart-of-italy/>>.

\*\* There will be no Monastic Institute at Saint John’s in Colegeville, Minn. this year, which had been scheduled for June 29 to July 3. The institute will return next year with the same speakers and theme of “Humility: Paradoxical Pathway to Union with God,” from Monday, June 28 to Friday, July 2, 2021. Information is at <<https://www.csbsju.edu/sot/lifelong-learning/monastic>>.

\*\* The “Monasticism, Education and Formation Symposium” that was to be held at Sant’Anselmo in Rome has been re-scheduled for June 8-11 in 2021. The organizers of the symposium are happy to report that the response to the call for papers was very strong and they have collected 43 abstracts from 15 countries and four continents.

“The response to the call for papers offers a vast and original panorama of the topic, ranging from the most ancient sources of monasticism through the Rule of Saint Benedict, liturgy and prayer, art and culture to modern social challenges. Many themes are transversal and dialogical,” reports Bernard Sawicki, organizer. Details are at <<https://www.anselmianum.com/facolta-di-teologia/istituto-monastico/monastic-ed-2020-welcome/>>.

Other programs at Sant’Anselmo’s, including “Leadership and the Rule of Saint Benedict,” a joint educational project of the universities of St. Gallen in Switzerland and Sant’Anselmo in Rome to assist in the training of monastic leaders in their management skills, have also been postponed until 2021.

\*\* Abbot Primate Gregory Polan made the following announcement regarding previously scheduled events: “Because of this pandemic, and because of the challenges of international travel for the coming months, we have decided to postpone the Congress of Abbots in September 2020. Because of this, it seems wise, after consultation with Father Benoit and the Core Team for the next International Oblate Congress, to postpone that important event until November 2022. There are so many things that are uncertain in our lives at this moment with this attack of the coronavirus, so it is important that we look to the future with hope and with safety for everyone involved.” The Abbots Congress is now re-scheduled for September 5-15, 2021.

In connection to this comes the following update from Sister Lynn McKenzie, OSB, moderator of the women’s organization CIB: “Due to the threat of the coronavirus, the CIB decided to postpone its annual Conference of Delegates meeting from September 2020 in Assisi to September 2021. Next year’s Conference meeting will also be held in Assisi. The dates are 4-8 Sept 2021. The CIB Council will meet

before the Conference meeting. After the Conference meeting in Assisi, on 8 September we will travel to Rome to join the abbots for the Congress of Abbots at Sant'Anselmo from Sept 8-14. The CIB Council has been staying in touch with the CIB Delegates and Substitutes during this time of pandemic. We remain in communion for the safety and healing of all impacted by the virus.”

\*\* The general chapter of the Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance (OCSO), which also was to have been held this September, has likewise been postponed until September of 2021. It will be held at Domus Pacis in Assisi from Sept. 2 to 23. The Abbot General and his council, and all other superiors will remain in office until that time.

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### ***OTHER NEWS***

At the death of Sister Shawn Carruth, prioress of Mount St. Benedict (Crookston, Minn.), Sister Jane Becker, OSB, of Monastery Immaculate Conception (Ferdinand, Ind.) was named administrator for the community.

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Saint Meinrad School of Theology offers a chant institute designed for directors of parish liturgical music and singers in parish liturgies. Come spend a week at the incomparable atmosphere of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, and prepare to be immersed in the beauty of liturgical chant.

Learn and experience how chant is “sung speech,” and prepare to incorporate English and Latin chant into your parish liturgies. Through the week, attendees will have the opportunity to participate in the liturgies of Saint Meinrad’s Benedictine monastic community, as well as to form and sing in a chant schola.

Some topics are  
What is Chant and Why Sing It Today?  
Historical Development of Chant  
Types of Chant and How They are Used  
Modality and Modes

Psalms, Psalm Tones, and Their Use in Liturgy  
Genres and Sources of Chant  
Teaching and Directing Chant  
Spiritual Preparation with the Sacred Word:  
Lectio Divina

Composing a Chant Antiphon  
Singing in a Chant Schola

Upcoming workshops scheduled are Winter Chant Workshop - Jan. 25-29, 2021; Summer Chant Workshop: July 26-30, 2021

Information is at <<https://www.saintmeinrad.edu/continuing-formation/chant-institute/>>.

\*\*\*\*\*

Pope Francis has appointed Abbot Elias Lorenzo, OSB, of the American-Cassinese Congregation, to be auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Newark, in the state of New Jersey. Bishop Elias was prior of Sant’ Anselmo for five years before being elected Abbot President of his congregation.

\*\*\*\*\*

Calling Benedictine oblates! You are invited to the Monastery of St. Gertrude in Cottonwood, Idaho, Sept. 29 – October 3, 2020 to engage in the 3rd Annual Oblates for the Future Symposium. For the third year in a row we are stretching boundaries, challenging assumptions and delving deeply into what it means to be an oblate in the rapidly changing landscape of Benedictine life.

This year we will be focusing on Benedictine formation for oblates. How do oblates engage in the transformative call of living according to the Rule of Benedict? Are you ready and willing to actively engage with others in these crucial conversations? Join us! Please note that space is limited and fills up early. The symposium is open to Benedictine oblates and professed Benedictines who work with oblates.

(This event is tentatively to be held as scheduled unless there is some change in the government’s covid19 directives. Information on the meeting is at <<https://www.stgertrudes.org/oblates-for-the-future/>>



## *IN MEMORIAM*

Sister Shawn Carruth, OSB

Sister Shawn Carruth, OSB, died unexpectedly on March 26, 2020. She was a pillar of the American Benedictine Academy, having been a member for decades, as well as a past board member and past president. She was the recipient of the 2012 Egregia Award for her dedication to monastic scholarship and embodiment of Benedictine culture. At the time of her death, she had been serving since 2016 as prioress of the sisters of her community, Mount St. Benedict Monastery in Crookston, Minn.

Sister Shawn earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and secondary education from Saint Catherine University in Saint Paul, Minn., a Master of Arts degree in theology from the School of Theology, Saint John's University, Collegeville, Minn., and a Ph.D. in religion with a concentration in New Testament from the Claremont Graduate School in Claremont, Cal.

She was professor emerita of Concordia College, Moorhead, Minn., where she had taught in the religion department from 1989 until her retirement in 2013. She also spent 10 summers working with the summer renewal program in Rome for English-speaking Benedictine women.

Sister Shawn was an accomplished scholar of the New Testament and retreat director. Her devotion to the "love of learning and desire for God" is captured in the following excerpts from her obituary on the website of her community:

Sister Shawn's love of learning and language began at an early age when she taught herself Latin while she was still in junior high school! She was able to do this because the Mass was said in Latin, and the prayer books had Latin and the English translation. She learned vocabulary, conjugation of verbs, and uses of other parts of speech.

Sister Shawn worked as an active member of the Q Project, a reconstruction of a common written source used by the writers of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. She served as the managing editor of several volumes that resulted from the study. Sister Shawn wrote not only on topics related to the New Testament but also on many related to monasticism. Sister Shawn said that she felt most like herself when she was studying for hours on end. Her scholarly articles can be found not only in volumes published in the United States but also in Australia. Sister Shawn satisfied her love of language by learning French, Spanish, German, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Coptic.

Sister Shawn loved to teach. In her early years as a Benedictine sister, she taught in elementary schools in Bemidji, Red Lake Falls, and Mahtomedi. From 1972 to 1980, she taught French and religion at Mount Saint Benedict High School and also served as the director of ongoing formation for the monastic community. Before she even finished her dissertation, she accepted a teaching position at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN.

Sister Shawn also spent ten summers working with a summer renewal program in Rome for English-speaking Benedictine women. Sister Shawn also was involved with many Benedictine communities of men and women in the United States and even as far away as Australia! She was regarded highly by Benedictine and Scripture scholars in Europe, Australia, and the United States.

Sister Shawn was asked the question, "What has brought you fulfillment in monastic life?"

She replied, "The expectations of monastic life: prayer, quiet, service . . . All of that I respond to. And the overall presumption that we're all seeking God . . . that is what each of us is here for."



# ABA Business

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## The Terrence G. Kardong MONASTIC STUDIES GRANT

ABA members are invited to apply for Monastic Studies Grants 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:

Name, address, phone number, e-mail

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 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

Although this year’s convention will not have a physical venue for the display of art, the Visual Arts Section of the ABA invites Benedictine artists to submit digital images of their artwork for the Virtual ABA Convention: 2020 VISION: SEEING THE WORLD IN A SINGLE RAY OF LIGHT. Artists may submit one to four digital images to be displayed in a digital gallery on Facebook. The digital gallery will also be streaming during breaks at the Virtual Convention.

Criteria for submission:

- Digital images in JPEG format of artwork in any medium (fiber, ceramic, woodworking, stain glass, photography, etc.). Each submission must be clearly labeled with:

- artist’s name,
- title of work (optional)
- medium
- name of artist’s community and its location

Submissions for the digital gallery need to be in JPEG format.

Please email files to <greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com> **by June 30**. You may contact Gregory Evans with any questions or concerns:

Phone (571) 225-7745

Email: <greg.evans.oblsb@icloud.com>.

## *Prayer for Deceased ABA Members*

On Saturday July 18, at 1:00 CDT, during the virtual convention, the ABA will honor all members who have died since the 2018 meeting. Please send names of deceased members to Sr. Antoinette Purcell at <antoinettep1964@gmail.com> or to her at the postal address: 1402 Southern Avenue / Beech Grove, IN 46107. If the person was a religious or oblate, include the name of their monastery and city. Deadline for receiving names is July 1, 2020, to allow time for preparation.

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**The ABA now accepts digital payment for dues, donations and convention registration on its website. Look for the Paypal button on the page.**

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

<https://www.facebook.com/americanbenedictineacademy>

## NOMINEES FOR ABA BOARD

An important part of the business of the ABA convention is the election of ABA members to serve on the organization's board of directors. This July, a new vice-president (who becomes president in two years) and two board members will be elected at the convention. Duties can be found in the by-laws.

From the nominations submitted in advance, one person has accepted the nomination for vice-president and three members have agreed to nomination to the board's at-large seats. Because the election will be conducted electronically, there will not be the customary opportunity for additional nominations to be made from the floor during the business meeting. Therefore, new nominations will be accepted with consent of nominee until June 30, with election beginning electronically on July 1.

Information about the candidates is provided in the June *AMN* in advance of the convention for the members' deliberation. Please take time to give this serious right of membership your attention and prayer.

### *Nominee for Vice-President*

*The vice president serves for a two year term, after which he or she succeeds to the presidency for the following two years.*



GREGORY EVANS

I have been an oblate of St. Benedict Monastery in Bristow, VA, since 2004, a member of ABA since 2009, ABA Visual Art Convenor since 2012 and currently, a board member for ABA.

I retired in 2010 from a career with the Federal Aviation Administration. At the monastery, I volunteer in many capacities, among which are: manager of the gift shop, coordinator for the annual bazaar, serving as a speaker/presenter for the Benedictine Pastoral Center, helping facilitate the "Knitting as Prayer" group, and especially in the areas of music, art, interior environment, and landscaping. Especially close to me is ministering to the elderly community members by visiting them, running errands, computer needs, and arts and crafts.

As an oblate, I see a direct correlation between my volunteer work and living the Rule of St. Benedict. I view the office of vice president/president as an opportunity to provide an example for other oblates as to how we, as lay members of our monastic communities, can and do live a monastic life and are an integral part of today's changing understanding of monasticism. I would like to offer my background and insights into Benedictine living as vice president/president of the ABA.

### *Nominees for Board*

*Two new members will join the board for a 4 year term, replacing Sister Renee Branigan and Judith Valente. Sister Colleen Maura McGrane remains on the board until 2022. If Gregory Evans is elected vice-president, a third board member will be elected to complete his current board term.*



SISTER EDITH BOGUE

I am surprised each day to find myself a Benedictine, an unexpected vocation from an atheist upbringing. Anglican nuns in India planted seeds of faith in second grade. Those seeds ultimately brought me to St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, in 1998. Since then, I have taught at our college, served as oblate and vocation director, on the monastery and Federation councils, and as NRVC member area coordinator.

As a sociologist and social worker, I am primarily interested in the interplay of the secularizing forces in society and the factors that foster faith and spiritual growth, both in the monastery and the wider society. This work informs presentations for 55 and Under, Federation chapters, the Generative Communities Colloquium and other venues, as well as retreat and oblate conferences. I am currently a participant observer in a charismatic evangelical denomination, exploring the processes and culture which produce remarkable growth of membership, leadership, and deep Christian formation. I hold M.A. degrees and a joint doctorate in sociology and social work. With ABA, I believe that the Benedictine charism, in all its expressions, is gift to the church and the world. It would be a privilege to further that work on the ABA board.



TOM PIAZZA

It is my hope that the ABA can serve as a helpful resource for communities that are trying to adapt to difficult circumstances. In my own life I have lived through years of community growth as a member of St. Leo Abbey during the 1960's and also during years of gradual community decline as a friend and frequent visitor. In recent articles in the *American Benedictine Review*, I have documented current membership trends and made suggestions for reversing them.

My background and experience in social science academic research provide a useful perspective on the current situation, and as an ABA Board member I will try to be of further service to the Benedictine family. I have a Ph.D. in sociology from Berkeley and an S.T.L. in theology from Sant'Anselmo in Rome. Currently, I am mostly retired but still active in various research projects. I am married with a son and two granddaughters, who think I am amusing.



SISTER JEANA VISEL

A northern Illinois native, I joined the Sisters of St. Benedict at Monastery Immaculate Conception, Ferdinand, Ind., in 2003, making first profession in 2006 and perpetual profession in 2010. I hold a B.A. in religious studies from Kenyon College, an M.A. (theology) with concentration in monastic studies from St. John's School of Theology, and a D.Min. in spirituality from the Catholic University of America. I have trained in icon painting since 2008 with Hexaameron Ecclesial Arts, and I authored *Icons in the Western Church: Toward a More Sacramental Encounter*.

At Saint Meinrad Seminary and School of Theology, I am dean of School of Theology Programs, director of Graduate Theology Programs, and adjunct assistant professor of Spirituality. In recent years I have written for Liturgical Press's *Give Us This Day* and *Pray Tell*, and I serve on the editorial board of the *American Benedictine Review*. Alongside religious art, my research interests are in

monastic *ressourcement* and *aggiornamento* in the present day.

How can being faithful to the roots of our tradition help renew monasticism as we continue to help fulfill the mission of the Church in the world? The American Benedictine Academy has an important role in fostering these conversations. If asked to do so, it would be a privilege to serve in this way.

### RECORDINGS OF CONVENTION PRESENTATIONS

The ABA plans to offer recordings of each of the 2020 convention presentations at a cost of \$8 per video DVD or \$5 for audio only CD ((includes shipping), or \$2 each for digital mp4 files.

“Stability and Evangelization”  
- Sr. Pia Portmann, OSB

“The Monastic World in the Bright Light of Equatorial Africa and the Subcontinent” -  
Fr. Joel Macul, OSB

“Viewing the World of Latin American Monastics” - Sr. Ann Hoffman, OSB

“Benedictine Time Travel: Going Back to Envisage Possible Futures” -  
Fr. Hugh Feiss, OSB

Order forms will be downloadable on the website after the convention.

If you wish to pre-order, please specify format and desired talks, and contact Sister Judith at <jsutera@mountosb.org>

You will be billed after the convention when the recordings are available.

## 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)



### American Benedictine Academy Individual Membership/Renewal Form

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Do you have any areas of interest/expertise you wish to share with the Academy?

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

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