

Abbey Letter

no. 258

Summer

2014



# Come & See

Find out what it's like to be  
a Benedictine monk.

**Worship & Pray      Work & Learn**

with the monks at St. Gregory's Abbey —  
a monastery within the Episcopal Church  
at Three Rivers, Michigan

if you are male, 18 to 50, and can stay for at least two weeks  
in July. The only charge is \$25 for registration.



*For more information and an application form, write:*

July Program Director  
St. Gregory's Abbey  
56500 Abbey Road

Three Rivers, Michigan 49093-9595  
novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org



## NOTES

The Rt. Rev. James Magness, Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries, was with us February 24th – 28th.

The Rt. Rev. Catherine Waynick, Bishop of the Diocese of Indianapolis, was with us March 16th – 19th.

Fr. William preached at the ordination to the diaconate of Clayton Berkley at St. David's Church in Elkhart, Indiana, on April 4th.

Abbot Andrew attended the leadership meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) May 5th – 10th at the Sisterhood of Saint John the Divine in Toronto, Ontario.

Br. Abraham is scheduled to be a speaker at the Lion and Lamb Festival August 8th - 10th. The outdoor festival in Fort Wayne, Indiana will feature speakers and artists from several denominations focusing on the topics of peace and justice, and is sponsored by the Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church.

Br. Abraham's new Symphony in g minor has been published and is available at [webbermusic.com](http://webbermusic.com) by searching for Newsom, A in the composer's search box. The score can be seen on the "Look" tab. Synthesized performances of individual movements can be heard on the "Listen" tab via links to YouTube (when the video loads, click either "Play All" or choose a movement by clicking "Playlist" in the upper right corner of the video). Donations of \$1.00 per look and listen are requested and can be made at the website or sent to St. Gregory's Abbey designated "music compositions".



*Bishop Waynick*

## ...The Vast Expanse Of Interstellar Space...

As I get older, I find myself becoming ever more fascinated by the universe, and the various theories of how it came to be, and how it works, and all that. My interest intrigues me, for I am what may best be described as scientifically challenged. It is difficult for my mind to process scientific or technological information, for whatever reason.

Be that as it may, I find myself dazzled by the beauty of the universe, as well as awed by the size of it all. It is this latter point that I find most interesting, and most affective of how I understand our place in the created order.

In his delightful book *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, Bill Bryson gives us a good way to comprehend how huge our own little solar system is. He writes that if we imagine the Earth as being the size of a pea, then Jupiter would be over 1,000 feet away. On this scale, Pluto would be a mile and a half away, and would be the size of a bacterium. Now consider that Pluto is not the edge of our solar system. Indeed, Pluto is only one-fifty-thousandth of the way to the Oort Cloud, which is usually thought of as the edge of our solar system. The Oort Cloud — “a vast celestial realm of drifting comets,” according to Bryson — is so far from us that there is no chance of us ever being able to reach it with a manned mission.

That’s just our solar system. Consider that our solar system is a very small part of the Milky Way galaxy. To put that in perspective, once again imagine the Earth is the size of a pea. The closest star to our solar system would then be ten thousand miles from our pea-sized Earth. This star (Proxima Centauri) is part of our galaxy. Which gives one a better idea of the size of our galaxy. And our galaxy is not even the biggest galaxy we know of. There are at least billions of galaxies out there. This begins to give us an idea of the size of our universe. Compared to our solar system, compared to our galaxy, compared to our universe, we are virtually nothing.

There are a couple of ways to look at this, to interpret it, to deal with this fact of our smallness. One is to say that nothing matters, that we are so tiny as to be of no consequence, even if there is a God. For me, having a sense of our smallness is humbling, and in that humbling knowledge I find a sense of joy and wonder. We believe God loves us, and is actively interested in our well-being, actively involved in our lives. This sense of our smallness, what I would call our virtual nothingness (when compared to the universe at large), shows that God loves us even more than we can ever begin to imagine.

For at God’s “command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home...And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman...to open for us the way of freedom and peace. By his blood he reconciled us. By his

wounds we are healed.” (Eucharistic Prayer C, *Book of Common Prayer*)

How amazing, how astonishing, how virtually incomprehensible is God’s love for us.

I love you more than tongue can tell. You are the light of my life, my sun, moon, and stars. You are my everything. Without you I have no reason for being...How much do I love you? Count the stars in the sky. Measure the waters of the ocean with a teaspoon. Number the grains of sand on the seashore. Impossible, you say. Yes and it is just as impossible for me to say how much I love you. My love for you is higher than the heavens, deeper than Hades, and broader than the earth. It has no limits, no bounds. Everything must have an ending except my love for you...

From the opera *Einstein on the Beach*  
by Philip Glass and Robert Wilson  
text by Mr. Samuel M. Johnson

— Br. Martin



*teatime before vespers brings monastery guests together: a visiting friar from the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory, students from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, and members of Culture Is Not Optional (a Christian community in Three Rivers that promotes involvement in local arts, peace, and justice)*

## CONTACTING THE ABBEY

### **Mailing address —**

St. Gregory's Abbey  
56500 Abbey Road  
Three Rivers, MI 49093

### **Telephone —**

269-244-5893

9:30am - 11:15am or 2:30pm - 4:15pm Eastern Time Monday through Saturday  
(please do not telephone at other times or on Sundays or holidays)

### **E-mail —**

### **Guest reservations and information —**

[guestmaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:guestmaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

### **Mailing list —**

[office@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:office@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

### **Abbot Andrew —**

[abbot@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:abbot@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

### **Information about becoming a monk or participating in the July Program —**

[novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

**Books and calendars may be ordered, prayers requested, and donations made at our website —**

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



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### **See the slide shows at our website**

[saintgregorysthreerivers.org](http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org)  
choose the “information” tab

### **Read the sermons and articles at our website**

[saintgregorysthreerivers.org](http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org)  
choose the “articles” tab

### **Read the abbot's blog**

[andrewmarrosb.wordpress.com](http://andrewmarrosb.wordpress.com)

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choose the Publications tab, click on "order publications (print)" and look for "pamphlets"

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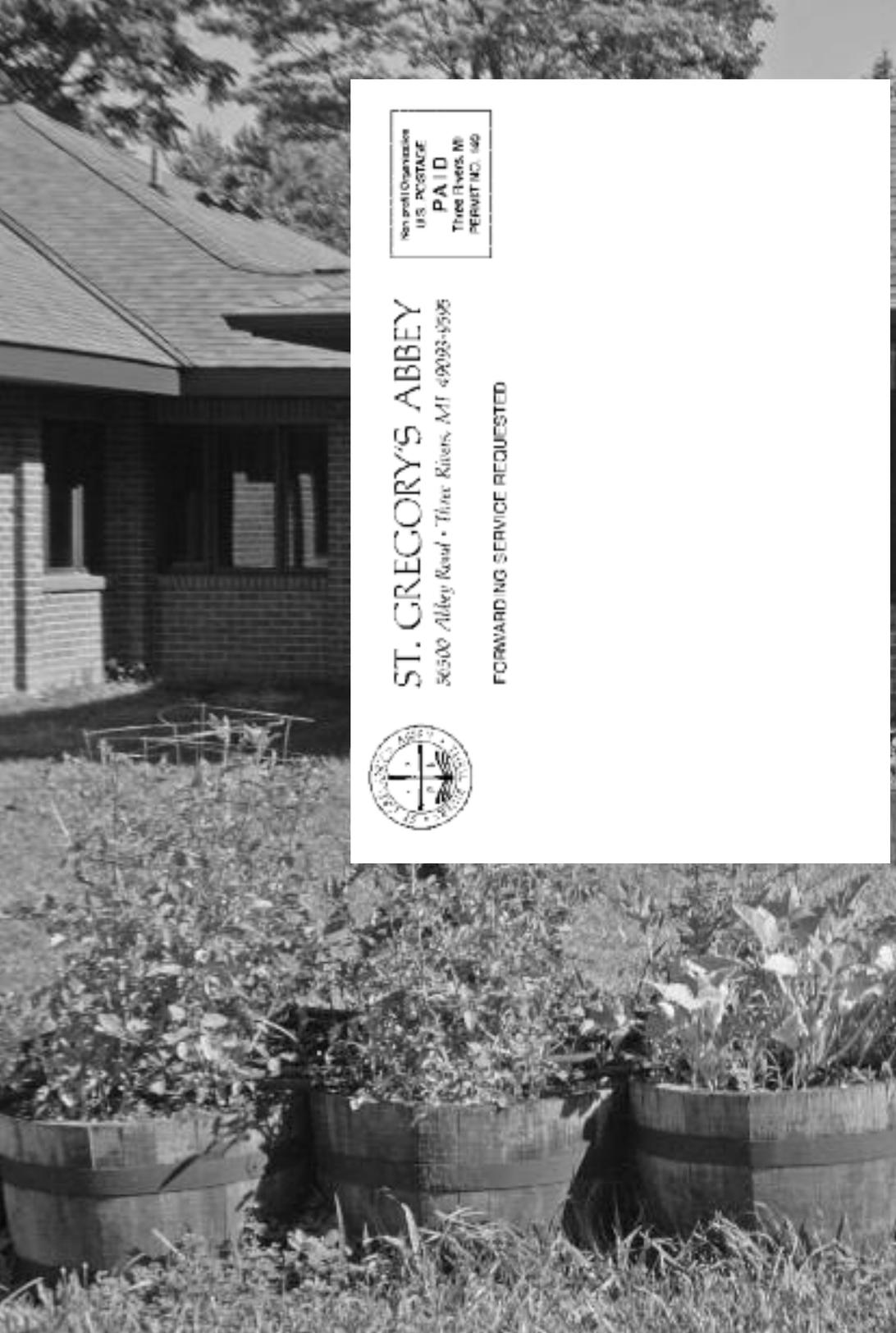


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FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED



Saint Gregory's Abbey is the home of a community of men living under the Rule of Saint Benedict within the Episcopal Church. The center of the monastery's life is the Abbey Church, where God is worshiped in the daily round of Eucharist, Divine Office, and private prayer. Also offered to God are the monks' daily manual work, study and correspondence, ministry to guests, and occasional outside engagements.

The continuing existence of Saint Gregory's is made possible by the support of those who believe that the contemplative vocation within the Church finds valid expression there.

The monks ask your prayers and will be grateful for your offerings.

<http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org/donate.html> to donate online

Donations may be mailed to:  
Saint Gregory's Abbey  
56500 Abbey Road  
Three Rivers, MI 49093-9595