

Abbey Letter no. 261
Easter 2015





A lot of religious posts come my way on the internet and with Holy Week and Easter, their number has only increased. I'm afraid they tend to run together and usually I am in a rush to get through them and frequently do not do them justice. So I can't recall who wrote a piece comparing N. T. Wright and Richard Hays and their different theories of what the very first Christian confession was - N. T. Wright says "Jesus is Lord" and Richard Hayes says "Christ is Risen." Whoever it was that wrote the piece says that he prefers Hays on this and I agree. Not that both of us don't agree that Jesus is Lord, but we know that Jesus is Lord because Christ is Risen. Nor are either of us suggesting that the "Jesus of history" was reinterpreted to be the "Christ of faith," as if these are two totally different things. Rather, we would say that the church was able to understand that Jesus is Lord because Christ is Risen.

But something both of us liked about N. T. Wright is that he insists that the early Church did not believe in the Resurrection because of the Empty Tomb. The great thing about N. T. Wright, unlike so many Scripture scholars, is that he can get away with saying that without

having people accuse him of not believing in the Resurrection. N. T. Wright says that the disciples believed in the Resurrection of Christ because they saw him!

After all, if it were simply a matter of the Empty Tomb, the most obvious explanation would be the one we chanted on Palm Sunday — that the disciples (or someone else) ‘stole the body.’ And we know from the power of the Risen Christ to pass through walls or appear and disappear, that the angel didn’t have to roll away the stone so Jesus could get out. The stone was rolled away so that we could see in, or in the case of the more impetuous Peter, walk in. Jesus is not in the tomb. But even then Peter doesn’t believe in the Resurrection. He doesn’t know what to think.

But the Empty Tomb doesn’t mean Jesus is alive. Meeting Jesus is how we learn that Jesus is alive. Alive in a new way. People who see him don’t recognize him at first. He is not the same, but they come to see that it is Jesus and he is alive.

You can see Jesus. He will come upon you when you don’t expect it. You will not recognize him. But later you will know that you have seen the Risen Lord. And everything will be different.

Fr. Richard Rohr says

Christ Crucified is all of the hidden, private, tragic pain of history made public and given over to God. Christ Resurrected is all of that private, ungrieved, unnoted suffering received, loved, and transformed by an All-Caring God. How else could we believe in God at all? How else could we have any kind of cosmic hope? How else would we not die of sadness for what humanity has done to itself and to one another? Jesus is the blueprint, the plan, the pattern revealed in one body and moment of history to reveal the meaning of all of history and each of our lives. The cross is the banner of what we do to one another and to God. The resurrection is the banner of what God does to us in return.

— Prior Aelred

NOTES

Bishop Martins and Fr. William

Students from the Honors College of Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan spent some time during the fall semester at St. Gregory's as part of a learning service project. The students participated in the monastic round of prayer, work, and community life as they learned about how the monastery interacts with the surrounding society and culture.

Br. Peter De Franco, a novice in the Companions of St. Luke was with us October 11th – 19th prior to his community's convocation later that month.

Members of Culture Is Not Optional, a Christian community based in Three Rivers promoting local art, agriculture, and justice, were with us November 1st – 2nd.

Members of the Order of Jesus Christ Reconciler were with us Nov 7th – 9th. The new ecumenical religious order has a house in Chicago (Community of the Holy Trinity) and is forming one in Detroit.



The Rt. Rev. Daniel Martins, bishop of the Diocese of Springfield, was with us December 8th – 11th.

Abbot Andrew led a Quiet Day at All Saints Church in Saugatuck, Michigan on February 14th. He is also scheduled to present a Benedictine Workshop at Trinity Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana March 6th – 7th.



GVSU students



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Thank you for keeping in touch with us through our ABBEY LETTER in whichever format you decide.

Books read in the refectory during lunch and supper 2014

Patrick Leigh Fermor: An Adventure

by Artemis Cooper

The Boy on the Wooden Box: How the Impossible Became Possible...on Schindler's List

by Leon Leyson with Marylin J. Harran & Elisabeth B. Leyson

One Summer: America, 1927

by Bill Bryson

Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love

by Elizabeth A. Johnson

Danubia: A Personal History Habsburg Europe

by Simon Winder

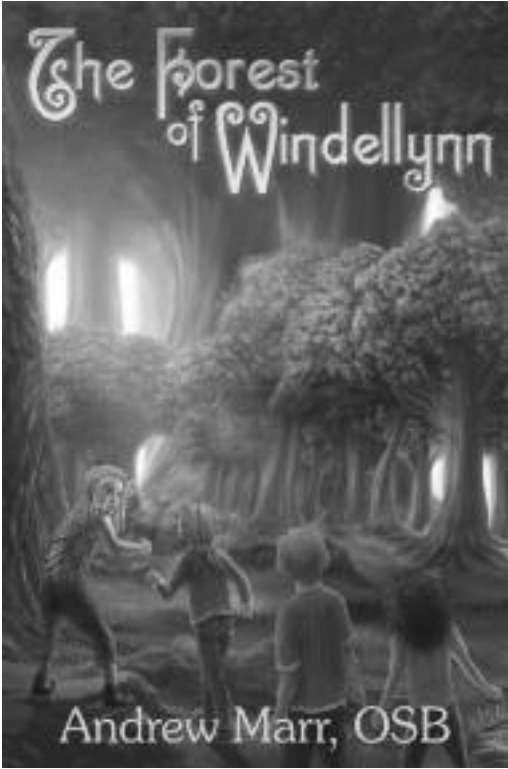
Once Upon a Country: A Palestinian Life

by Sari Nusseibeh with Anthony David

Traitor to His Class: The Privileged Life and Radical Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt

by H. W. Brands

NOW AVAILABLE



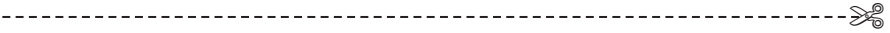
Gwion Williams is playing a scrub baseball game with his friends after school when his friend, Kerry, disappears while chasing a long fly ball. Soon after, a strange boy, strangely dressed, appears and offers to help Gwion find his missing friend. Gwion soon learns that his friend has been kidnaped by elves to steal his soul. Before long, his friend Margot and sister Gwen are also taken. To rescue them, Gwion must risk a journey into the elves' forest which they have created out of cyberspace. Along the way, Gwion finds that he has much to learn about what it means to have a soul. An exciting and thoughtful read for both young and older readers.

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of your heart

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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.

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