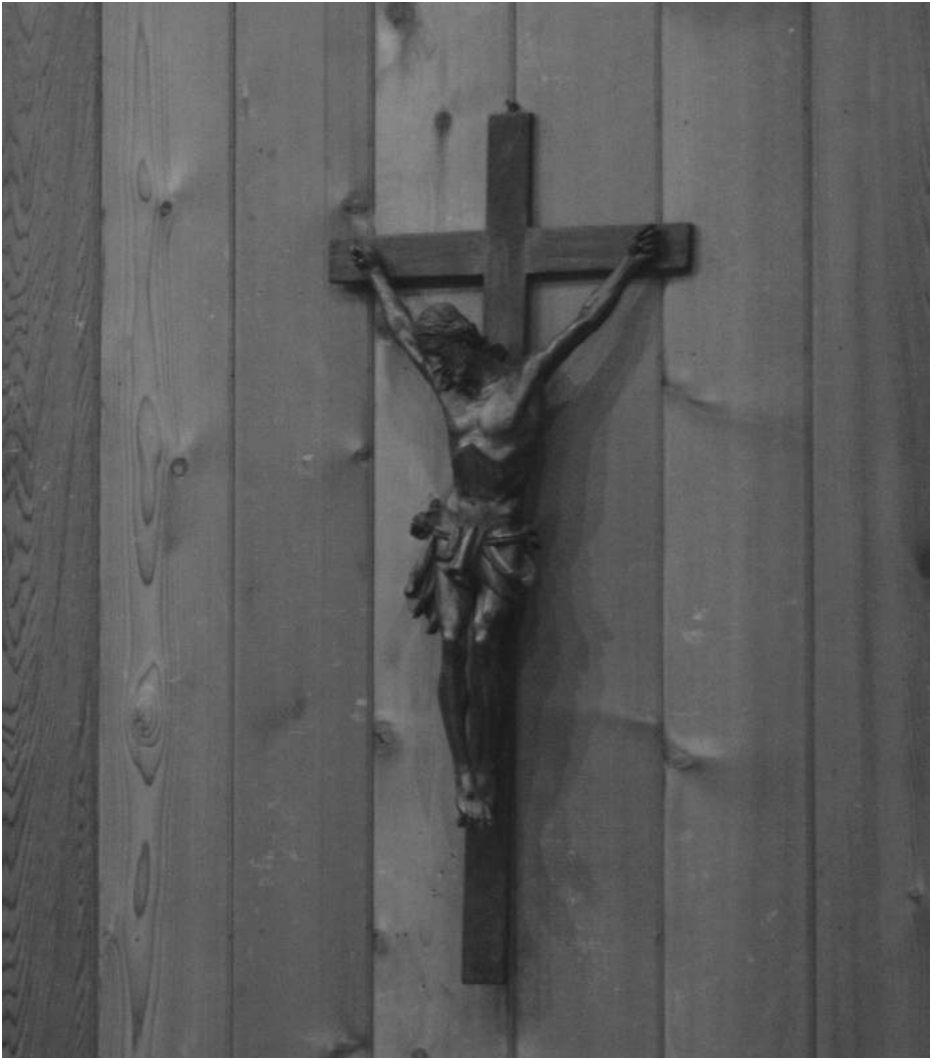


Abbey  
Letter  
no. 269

Easter  
2017



*on the cover: the altar in the Abbey Church after Good Friday Liturgy*



When Jesus was nailed to the cross, nobody who saw it, or had run away before it happened, could have even hoped that the dying man would be raised from the dead to offer all of us life beyond imagining.

—Abbot Andrew

St. Benedict says: **Listen...**  
**incline the ear of your heart**

So be a summertime monk for two weeks or more at St. Gregory's Abbey, a Benedictine monastery in the Episcopal Church at Three Rivers, Michigan.

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...if you are male, age 18 to 50, and if you can spend at least two weeks at the abbey during July. The only charge is \$25 for registration.

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St. Gregory's Abbey  
56500 Abbey Road  
Three Rivers, Michigan 49093-9595  
[novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

# NOTES

Students from the Honors College at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan were with us October 7th – 8th as part of a service-learning project. The students participated in various aspects of daily monastic life including work and prayer.

Abbot Andrew was at Prince of Peace Abbey in Oceanside, California February 17th – 21st for the Benedictine abbot's workshop, featuring speakers from the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate. He is also scheduled to attend the superiors' meeting of the Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas (CAROA) at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York May 1st – 6th.

Fr. William continues his ministry to the Formation Group of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. This group of people preparing locally for ordination meets every few months for mutual exchange, discussion, and presentations concerning practical issues pertaining to ordained ministry. Fr. William is in charge of the spiritual life part of the program.



*GVSU Honors students*

## Books read in the refectory during lunch and supper 2016

**Hope Is the Enemy** (essay from “American Scholar” website September 7, 2015)

by Dasha Kiper

**Joan Chittister: Her Journey from Certainty to Faith**

by Tom Roberts

**Our Man In Charleston: Britain's Secret Agent in the Civil War South**

by Christopher Dickey

**The Nones Are Alright: A New Generation of Believers, Seekers, and Those in Between**

by Kaya Oakes

**Listening for Madeleine: A Portrait of Madeleine L'Engle in Many Voices**

by Leonard S. Marcus

**Amerigo: The Man Who Gave His Name to America**

by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

**A Culture of Conspiracy: Apocalyptic Visions in Contemporary America**

by Michael Barkun

**King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa**

by Adam Hochschild

**Paper: Paging Through History**

by Mark Kurlansky

**The Penny Poet of Portsmouth: A Memoir of Place, Solitude, and Friendship**

by Katherine Towler

**Eat Sleep Sit: My Year at Japan's Most Rigorous Zen Temple**

by Kaoru Nonomura

**Martyr of Loray Mill: Ella May and the 1929 Textile Workers' Strike in Gastonia, North Carolina**

by Kristina Horton

**Harmony in Faith and Music: Fr. Cassian Folsom Heads Monastery in Italy that Produces Chart-topping Music and Beer** (article from “Indiana University Alumni Magazine” Winter 2016)

by Kathleen Mills

**Bedlam's Door: True Tales Of Madness And Hope**

by Mark Rubenstein, MD

## It' All Grace

I have, for most of my life now, not believed in the “Penal Substitutionary” theory of Atonement. God did not send Jesus to punish him for our sins. God is not vindictive, nor a sadist. As Orthodox Archbishop Lazar Puhalo puts it, “A god who demands the child-sacrifice of his own son to satiate wrath? That is not Jehovah; that is Molech. God was not punishing Christ on the cross; he was IN Christ, reconciling the world to himself.” Jesus is God’s way of saying “See how much I love you?”

I have also, again for most of my life now, rejected the notion of eternal damnation. I am a staunch universalist. At this point in my life, I cannot understand how anybody can defend such a horrible idea. That is, how can anyone live with the idea that people one loves may be found wanting and sent to everlasting torment? Can one really love a god that would do such a thing?

One idea of hell is that it is not the physical torture of a lake of fire (or worse), but rather eternal separation from God. The argument goes something like this: God respects our free will, and will not force one to be in his presence if one chooses not to be. However, it seems to me that if one of God’s attributes is omnipresence, then separation from God is not possible, for there can be nowhere where God is not. God is always with us, and we with God, even though we may not always realize it. Indeed, we usually don’t.



*Br. Martin preparing correspondence to prisoners*



My own personal way of thinking about all this is to (as I said above) reject the idea of eternal damnation, and to accept instead the idea of some form of purgatory, where God continues to work on us until we're ready to love God rightly, repenting of whatever harm we may have caused. It is, as it were, where we will understand fully how much hurt we've caused to others. We will in this way learn empathy and compassion by entering into the pain and trouble of others. I imagine that part of the experience will be our genuine sorrow for our actions and our desire to make up for our failings. Perhaps a better way to put this is to say: Hell is knowing fully what we've done to others. Heaven is learning we have been forgiven by them and God. And we learn to be forgiving of others by being forgiven ourselves.

One could argue that this is cheap grace. I would point out that real grace is less than cheap, it is free. Otherwise it isn't grace. And as St. Thomas Aquinas said, "It's all grace."

— Br. Martin

## Music compositions from St. Gregory's Abbey

**Missa Brevis** *choral symphony by Br. Abraham - Latin text from the ordinary of the mass*

**Rumi** *choral symphony by Br. Abraham - English translation of the poems of Rumi*

**A Symphony of Psalms** *choral symphony by Br. Abraham - Latin text of four psalms*

**The Kiss** *baritone voice and string quartet by Br. Abraham - texts from office readings for Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary*

**Tuesday Afternoon** *chorus and wind octet by Br. Abraham - psalms from Tuesday vespers*

**Symphony in c minor** *orchestral symphony by Br. Abraham in romantic minimalist style*

**Symphony in g minor** *orchestral symphony by Br. Abraham in expansive classical style*

**Visible Dream** *piano and baritone voice by Br. Abraham - poems of Cyrus Cassells*

**Week In Review** *piano and baritone voice by Br. Abraham - poems of Robert Fruehwirth*

**The Hours** *tenor, baritone, and bass voices by Br. Abraham - texts from psalms for lauds and vespers*

**Life of Benedict** *orchestral setting of Gregory the Great's Life of Benedict by John Webber*

*scores and synthesized performances available at **webbermusic.com***

For everything but *Life of Benedict*, search for 'Newsom, A'; for *Life of Benedict*, search for 'Webber, J'. 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 for "music compositions". Hard copies of scores and orchestral parts are for sale at list price from **webbermusic.com**



**Saint Gregory's Abbey** now has an e-mail list for those wishing to receive the ABBEY LETTER electronically (PDF). To enroll in the e-mail list, send your full name and e-mail address to

**abbeyletter@saintgregorysthreerivers.org**

Enrolling in our e-mail list does not remove you from our hard copy mailing list. If you do want to stop receiving the hard copy once you are on the e-mail list, simply send an e-mail to

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