

Abbey Letter

no. 279

Fall 2019



on the cover: Independence Day fireworks

Scenes from this Year's July Vocation Program

Participants in our annual Vocation Program commit to staying at least two weeks at St. Gregory's. While here, they are given a glimpse of monastic life as they pray, work, study, and have social contact with the monks.



NOTES

Sr. Heather CSC and Sr. Marguerite CSC of the Community of the Sisters of the Church in Hamilton and Oakville, Ontario were with us April 26th – 29th and May 4th – 6th (as they traveled between Ontario and Wisconsin).

Abbot Andrew traveled to Nashville, Tennessee to attend the Theology & Peace Conference June 17th – 20th. The principal speakers were Naomi Tutu, Michael Battle, and Sandor Goodhart presenting the topic: “The Beloved Community as the Way from Scapegoating to Ubuntu”.

We recently acquired a new address printer for our bulk mailings. The old process of printing labels on a tractor feed printer was becoming difficult because of increasing scarcity of labels, ribbons, and printer parts. St. Gregory’s Abbey mails over 80,000 newsletters yearly (that figure does not include our email list or downloads from our website.) We also send out several other bulk mailings every year: Confraternity Letters, Vocation Program Posters, and

Abbey Calendars. The monastery also has a forestry program, more than making up for the amount of paper that we use.

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

office@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

telling us you are now on the e-mail list and want to be removed from the hard copy list. (If you are in the confraternity, please mention that so that we make sure you receive the confraternity letter via e-mail).

Fr. Jude died in the afternoon of July 11 (St. Benedict’s Day). More information about his life and vocation will be featured in the next Abbey Letter.



Become A Monk

see our website for details

saintgregorysthreerivers.org

under the “About” tab, click “Becoming a Monk”

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contact the vocations director

novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

Corners In Time

Monastery churches are not exactly public buildings, nor are they private buildings. They are not parish churches (usually), nor are they retreat center chapels. They are places for monastic communities to gather for corporate prayer, but they almost all have spaces for people who are not members of the monastic community to join in the prayer. Even most of the public prayer that goes on in monastery churches is not the usual style of worship that goes on in parish churches, and the furnishings are not what one finds in a normal church building. Our church has an area where guests sit, and it has a space for our celebration of the Eucharist (an altar or holy table, lectern for public scripture reading, and chairs for those presiding and assisting at the Eucharist). In between the guest area and the altar, however, is where the particularly monastic furniture resides. We monks sit in rows facing each other, perpendicular to the guest seating area. That facilitates our monastic corporate prayer of reciting psalms in antiphonal form (one side recites one verse, the other the next verse, than back to the first side for the next verse, etc.)

The monks sit in “choir stalls” (a seat with a desk for holding the psalm books). These choir stalls are very special places in the lives of nuns and monks. At many monasteries, including here at St. Gregory’s, choir stalls are “assigned seating” (as are our spots in the refectory and chapter room). We sit according to our seniority in the community, and we occupy our particular choir stall until a gap is made in the order above us (by the death or departure of someone ahead of us in seniority). That means that we might be in the same choir stall for years or decades. They become a place where prayer can be cultivated by the occupant; they are often used for private prayer as well as the daily round of corporate prayer.





As the years roll on praying for the many requests we receive, in addition to chanting the same psalms at the same time on the same day every week, we are freed from the notion that our prayer should reflect our own whims and desires, allowing us to open up to allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us. We join in the prayer of all those around the world who have prayed before us and all who will pray after we are long gone. We are held together by the Holy Spirit inside all of us and surrounding us. We learn that our prayer is not about us and does not depend on us, so we never have to worry about “getting it right”. This is all amazingly freeing. We are in a communion of saints who hold us in prayer as we hold others in prayer. We do not and cannot understand our relationship with each other in this communion, but we can live in it and depend on it. We can be at all times and all places with all these others to whom we are joined in prayer.

One does not have to be a monk to have one’s own spot to cultivate prayer. It does help to be stable in one’s prayer time and place, but the important thing is the desire to pray and the honest effort to make oneself available to the Holy Spirit. Any effort is met by grace and is initiated by grace.

— Br. Abraham



Books from St. Gregory's Abbey

Singing God's Praises (1998)

history of the community, select Abbey Letter articles, photographs

\$20.00 Please send ____ copies.

\$ _____

Come Let Us Adore (2011)

select Abbey Letter Articles from 1999 to 2011 (companion book to Singing God's Praises)

\$12.00 Please send ____ copies.

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Tools For Peace (2007)

Abbot Andrew's reflections on St. Benedict and René Girard

\$24.00 Please send ____ copies.

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Born in the Darkest Time of Year (2004)

15 Christmas stories by Abbot Andrew

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Creatures We Dream of Knowing (2011)

fantasy stories by Abbot Andrew

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From Beyond to Here (2012)

more stories by Abbot Andrew

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The Forest of Windellynn (2015)

fantasy novel by Abbot Andrew

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Moving and Resting in God's Desire: A Spirituality of Peace (2016)

Abbot Andrew's thoughts on cultivating peace using Christian practices and the ideas of René Girard

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Seven Times A Day I Praise You

Br. Martin's review of personal daily prayer books

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St. Gregory's Abbey and Benedictine Monasticism

A survey of Benedictine monasticism and how it is lived at St. Gregory's

\$3.00 Please send ____ copies.

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All of the above except for **Singing God's Praises**, **Born in the Darkest Time of Year**, **Seven Times A Day I Praise You**, and **St. Gregory's Abbey and Benedictine Monasticism** are available in ebook formats. To download, go to our website:

saintgregorysthreerivers.org and look for publications (digital).

All books may be purchased as hard copies from our website or by using this order form.

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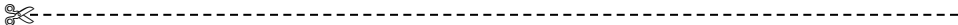
Or download a PDF of the calendar from our website — **\$2.00 per download!** On the “Publications” tab, go to “The Abbey Calendar”. Download the PDF and then click the PayPal button to make your payment.



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
			The Holy Family of Jesus	S. Gregory Ninivite		
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
The Epiphany of the Magi	The Epiphany of the Kings				S. Paul, 1st Letter	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
The Baptism of Our Lord	S. John the Baptist	St. Basil, Bishop	S. Thomas, 1st Letter		S. Andrew, 1st Letter	Conversion of St. Paul
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
The Epiphany of the Christ	S. James the Apostle	S. James the Apostle	S. Vincent		S. Thomas, 2nd Letter	Ascension of St. Peter
26	27	28	29	30	31	2020
The Epiphany of the Christ	S. John, Evangelist	S. Thomas, Apostle				



Please send me ___ copy or copies of the

2020 Calendar

Enclosed is \$10.00 for each calendar

Name _____

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Any payment in excess of the calendar price will be gratefully accepted as a gift to the abbey.
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