

Abbey Letter no. 280

Christmas
2019



November 2007

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14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5





Abbot Andrew



Prior Aelred



Fr. William



Br. Martin

*The monks of St. Gregory's Abbey wish
you a Merry Christmas and a Happy
New Year, and thank you for your
prayers and gifts.*



Br. Abraham



Br. Armand

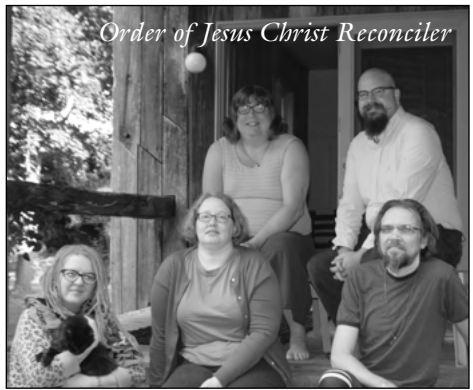
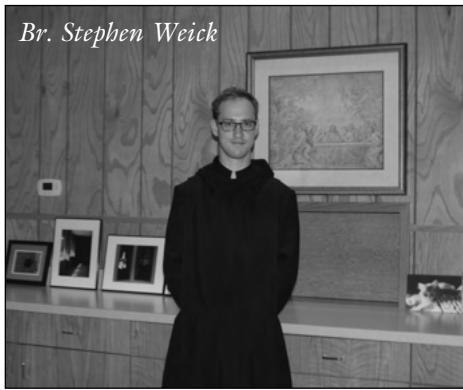
NOTES

Br. Stephen Weick from St. Augustine's House in Oxford, Michigan was with us July 13th - 29th, participating in the July Vocation Program. St. Augustine's House is a monastery in the Lutheran tradition where Br. Stephen is a novice.

The monks of St. Gregory's Abbey have elected the Rt. Rev. Douglas Sparks, Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Indiana, to be our new episcopal visitor. His duties include performing an official visitation of the monastery at least every five years, which

consists of confidential interviews with all the members of the community, observation of their life and prayer, and inspections of financial records. The episcopal visitor also oversees abbatial elections and performs other pastoral functions. The monks would like to thank our outgoing episcopal visitor, the Rt. Rev. Arthur Williams, retired suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Ohio, for his twenty years of service to us.

Members of the Order of Jesus Christ Reconciler in Detroit and Chicago were with us August 30th - September 2nd.



Please send me ___ copy or copies of the
2020 Calendar

Enclosed is \$10.00 for each calendar

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Any payment in excess of the calendar price will be gratefully accepted as a gift to the abbey.
St. Gregory's Abbey, 56500 Abbey Road, Three Rivers, MI 49093-9595
thirteen months, 15 photos, with the Abbey's liturgical calendar

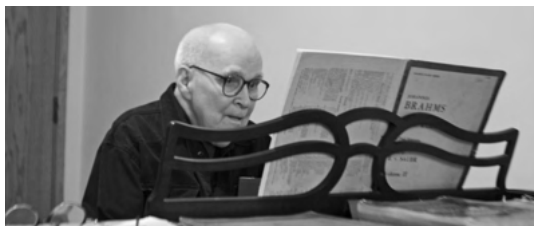
Allow 8 weeks for delivery.

Or download a PDF of the calendar from our website - \$2.00 per download!

saintgregorysthreerivers.org

Fr. Jude Bell

June 20, 1928 – July 11, 2019
ordained deacon December 22, 1956
ordained priest June 29, 1957
solemn profession March 21, 1977



Although Fr. Jude was close to twenty years older than I, he was a contemporary of mine in the monastic life. He joined the community only a year before I did, after having served many years as a parish priest in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. I found his conversation lively and engaging, sparkling with a cultured wit. I was impressed with his aesthetic interests that included reading the complete novels of Anthony Trollope and Jane Austen and playing Franz Schubert and Scott Joplin on the piano. At the same time, I was impressed with his competence at practical work that ranged from handling guests, cooking, buffing floors, typing letters for the abbot and prior, and any number of other things. His preaching ministry was seasoned by his years in parish ministry. Rather than being told what to think or believe, I felt he was sharing his own struggles with the biblical texts as he probed their possible meanings and sought ways to take them to heart and live by them.

Just two or three years after joining the abbey, he was given charge of the business office that made him responsible for maintaining the mailing list and all aspects of publishing the *Abbey Letter*. This is a job he did faithfully and generously for roughly four decades until the weaknesses of old age finally caught up with him. This is a job that gave scope for Fr. Jude's aesthetic and practical skills. He re-designed the *Abbey Letter* in the form we have it today and he did the layout when that job was longer and more complicated than it is now. He edited the articles and did the photography, producing many photos of beauty and sensitivity. His photography carried over to the Abbey calendar that he produced over the same number of years. One thing that was lost about this time was his love for playing the piano as he ceased having time for that hobby. He retained his devotion to the Metropolitan Opera and on Saturday afternoons the office rang with the sound of operatic voices.

While I was still a novice, I wrote a long article on prayer which I shared with my novicemaster, Fr. Anthony. Fr. Anthony gave it to Fr. Jude who came to me, encouraging me by saying that he really liked it and he wanted to print it in the *Abbey Letter* as a three-part article. This was the beginning of a long relationship during which I learned how my style could be sharpened and clarified through going over the text with a fine-toothed comb.

Fr. Jude used his skills in many other important jobs for the community. This included being the master of juniors (the monks in temporary vows) for several years. Most importantly, he was deeply involved in the revision of the monastic office under the direction of Fr. Anthony. He helped edit the text and designed and printed the liturgical books that we use today.



Important as work, both manual and intellectual, is to Benedict's vision of the monastic life, the heart of the monastic life is the Divine Office when we sing praise to God. For all of his activity, Fr. Jude was very faithful to the office and among the most dependable of monks in his attendance. There is no question that his work was grounded in prayer.

When Jesus says to Martha that he is "the resurrection and the life," (John 11: 25) he is not only speaking of the hope of the Resurrection after death, which Martha had just affirmed but, as many scholars have pointed out, Jesus was proclaiming the Resurrection as a present reality. Jesus' raising of Lazarus can be seen as a sign of resurrection in the present time as well as a sign that he, and all of us, will "rise in the resurrection on the last day." (John 11: 24) That is, in Christ, we can experience a foretaste of the resurrected life here and now. The work that Fr. Jude did offered many foretastes of the Resurrection as a present reality in the form of the *Abbey Letter*, the articles he edited and those he wrote, and in the photos that show an eye for his appreciation of God's presence in the world.

Impressive as these glimpses of resurrection are, the harder task through which the resurrected light shines more subtly and deeply, is to give up the works to which one is devoted. When he was slowed down by heart bypass surgery and then a bad case of shingles, Fr. Jude had to let go of most of his work. In many cases, he took the initiative in saying that he couldn't do a job any more, as he did with preaching. When it became clear that he was no longer up to the rigors of producing the *Abbey Letter*, I dreaded having to tell him that he had to give it up. But when I told him this, he was relieved. He saw the problem for himself and he graciously handed the task on to Br. Abraham.

Fr. Jude continued to do jobs around the monastery until, one by one, each became too much for him. Then, about fifteen months ago, he fell and was taken to the ER. A CT scan was tried to look for internal bleeding. Fr. Jude was allergic to the intravenous dye that was used and he went into anaphylactic shock. He survived but was much diminished, needing professional care for getting up in the morning and getting to bed at night. St. Paul knew that the resurrected life in this world includes suffering with Christ so that "we may also be glorified with him." (Romans 8:17) Seeing Fr. Jude struggle to do the simplest tasks and suffer mental confusion at times was heart-breaking, but at the same time, through his infirmities, I sensed the light from beyond that was drawing him away from us. During this time, Fr. Jude read books on spirituality at a very slow pace and he watched news programs on his computer, keeping alive his thirst for social justice.

When he fell and fractured his hip, his body was too weak to rebound. A partial hip replacement relieved the intense pain but left him with discomfort. On the day he died, one of the nurses at the hospital told me he was lying peacefully with his hands folded. Then, while the community was celebrating St. Benedict's day, our Holy Father came for him.

— Abbot Andrew



Q: What Do You Do at the Monastery All Day?

A: look at our website to find out – you will find slideshows showing various aspects of the abbey grounds and monastic life, back issues of the *Abbey Letter*, sermons preached by the monks, information about monastic life, the Summer Vocation Program and monastic vocations, and contact links for the abbot, novice master, guest department, and publications office. Prayer requests and donations can also be made online, as well as calendar and book purchases.

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Daily Schedule at St. Gregory's Abbey

Weekdays	Sundays and Major Holidays
4:00 a.m. MATINS	5:30 a.m. MATINS & LAUDS
6:00 a.m. LAUDS	
8:15 a.m. TERCE & EUCHARIST	8:30 a.m. TERCE & EUCHARIST
11:30 a.m. SEXT	noon SEXT & NONE
2:00 p.m. NONE	
5:00 p.m. VESPERS <i>followed by meditation</i>	5:00 p.m. VESPERS <i>followed by meditation</i>
7:45 p.m. COMPLINE (on Tuesdays and Thursdays, COMPLINE is prayed privately)	7:45 p.m. COMPLINE

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

Mailing list –

office@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

Abbot Andrew –

abbot@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

Information about becoming a monk or participating in the July Program –

novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

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

www.saintgregorysthreerivers.org

Become A Monk

see our website for details

saintgregorysthreerivers.org

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

or

contact the vocations director

novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org



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).

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