







Prior Aelred



Fr. William

The monks of St. Gregory's Abbey wish you a Merry Christmas and a joyful 2023.

Br. Martin





Br. Armand



Lawrence

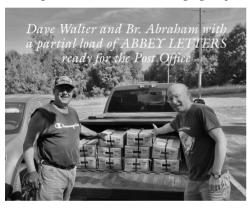
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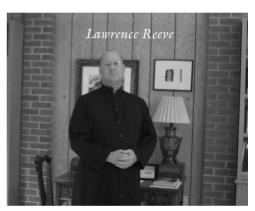
Lawrence Reeve has arrived to test his vocation at St. Gregory's Abbey. A native of Indianapolis, Lawrence comes to us from Phoenix.

Our groundskeeper and maintenance man, David Walter, has retired after many years of service to the monastery. The community is grateful for all his work. Mike Waterman has been hired as Dave's replacement. Before coming to us, Mike owned a construction company.

Br. Abraham met with the Dallas Benedictine Community via teleconference October 17th. The community meets at the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas regularly for prayer and study of monastic topics. Many people also join the meetings online, which include singing vespers and compline.

St. Gregory's Abbey 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 list. If you do want to stop receiving the hard copy once you are on the e-mail list, send an e-mail to office@saintgregorysthreerivers.org telling us you are 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.)





Please send me ____ copy or copies of the

2023 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

FOLLOWING OUR LADY'S LEAD

At the end of Luke's Christmas gospel, we read that "Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart." (Luke 2:19) The words referred to are the shepherds' account of the angels' message that brought them to the manger where baby Jesus lay. Mary learned about that part of the story from the shepherds. We learn what we know about the birth of Christ from the Bible. Like Mary, we should treasure all these words and ponder them in our hearts.

There are various ways and aims of pondering the Nativity story in our hearts. We can do it for scholarly aims; to prepare some creative work: a song, a play, a poem or picture; or we can do it as a form of prayer. When we do our pondering as a way of prayer, that's called meditation. There are lots of different ways of going about meditation.

One classic way of Christian meditation is to form a picture of some sacred scene, and then enter into it. The Christmas story is good for this because so many of us already have so many pictures in our minds of the manger, the shepherds, the magi, the angels, even the animals. Here's a pretty easy way to draw on that treasury of images for our Christmas meditations. First, settle down and focus your mind. Recall that you are in the presence of God. Let go of other thoughts and considerations for now. Next, let that Christmas scene occupy your mind. If there is a Bible at hand, read the Nativity passage. If you want angels and shepherds, you'll find them in the second chapter of Luke. The star and the Wise Men are in the first chapter of Matthew. (There's another way to go, but we'll look at that later.) If you don't have a Bible right there and then, that's OK. This is where that personal treasury of Christmas imagery can do its job. Of course, at this time of year, there are lots of visual aids too: nativity scenes or Christmas card pictures can serve as reinforcements for your thoughts.

As you picture that meeting of the Holy Family with those who have sought out our newborn Savior, imagine the setting, and the people involved. As you think about what the shepherds or the Wise Men saw and thought, bring your own knowledge and understanding to your considerations. You know the man this baby will grow up to be. You know the world today, especially your part of it. And you know yourself: what gifts you have brought to baby Jesus, what gifts you should have brought, but failed to, for one reason or another. Since you know the world around you, wonder at God being born as a part of that complex, power-driven world. As you ponder these things pray, with petition, intercession and especially thanksgiving and praise. Pray for the world's babies and new parents, for the spiritual seekers. Bring your prayers and praises to the manger, knowing that that manger is the earthly throne of the Eternal Word.

The great mystery of that union of heaven and earth, of mortality and eternity can also be a most fruitful focus of our Christmastide meditations. The Lectionary gives us proper lessons for three different Masses on Christmas Day. For two of those, the gospel is from Luke, but for the third, we read John 1:1-14, which is often referred to as the Prologue to John's gospel. We can use that passage, or parts of it, as the body of our considerations. We can combine those deeply theological words with the mental picture of the Nativity scene. That can reinforce our understanding of the great wonder of what God has done here, and it can move our hearts to deeper devotion.

Our considerations may also move us to action. They may well incline us to change our lives in some ways, to do more of what is good, to let go of some of what isn't so

good. These sorts of resolutions are a traditional part of meditation in the Western Christian tradition, and help keep our prayer in touch with our lives. We start to wind up our meditation by asking for God's help in keeping our good resolutions, and giving thanks to God for the quiet time we have been able to spend with our eternal Beloved. Another usual element at the end of a meditation is to recall any particular points or thoughts that occurred to you during your meditation time, to recall later. The traditional name for this set of saved thoughts is "spiritual nosegay." You are very welcome to smile or roll your eyes at this name. But the practice is a good one, and a good habit to form. Works for sermons, too.

If we find ourselves with a quiet time during this Christmastide, spending it in meditation on the great things God has done for us in becoming one of us would be an excellent use of our time. *Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria:* May the Virgin Mary bless us with her holy child!

- Fr. William



DAILY SCHEDULE AT ST. GREGORY'S ABBEY

Weekdays

4:00 a.m. MATINS 6:00 a.m. LAUDS

O.15 EED OF O. FI

8:15 a.m. TERCE & EUCHARIST

11:30 a.m SEXT

2:00 p.m. NONE

5:00 p.m. VESPERS

followed by meditation

7:45 p.m. COMPLINE

(on Tuesdays and Thursdays, COMPLINE

is prayed privately)

Sundays and Major Holidays

5:30 a.m. MATINS & LAUDS

8:30 a.m. TERCE & EUCHARIST

noon SEXT & NONE

5:00 p.m. VESPERS followed by meditation

7:45 p.m COMPLINE

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...if you are male, age 18 to 50, have a serious interest in monastic vocation, and can spend at least two weeks at the abbey. The only cost is \$25 for registration. For more information and an application form, write:

Vocation Program Director St. Gregory's Abbey 56500 Abbey Road Three Rivers, Michigan 49093-9595 novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

All applicants must be fully vaccinated according to current CDC guidelines.

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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 Vocation Program –

novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org

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

www.saintgregorysthreerivers.org



BOOKS FROM ST. GREGORY'S ABBEY

Singing God's Praises (1998)		
history of the community, select Abbey L	etter articles, photographs	
\$20.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
Come Let Us Adore (2011)		
select Abbey Letter Articles from 1999 to	o 2011 (companion book to Singing God's Pra	ises)
\$12.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
Tools For Peace (2007)		
Abbot Andrew's reflections on St. Bened	ict and René Girard	
\$24.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
Born in the Darkest Time of Yes	ar (2004)	
15 Christmas stories by Abbot Andrew		
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Creatures We Dream of Knowin	ng (2011)	
fantasy stories by Abbot Andrew		
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more stories by Abbot Andrew		
\$15.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
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fantasy novel by Abbot Andrew	,	
\$10.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
Moving and Resting in God's D	Desire: A Spirituality of Peace (2016)	
	g peace using Christian practices and the ideas	of René Girard
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Seven Times A Day I Praise You	1	
Br. Martin's review of personal daily pr	ayer books	
\$3.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
St. Gregory's Abbey and Bened	ictine Monasticism	
A survey of Benedictine monasticism an		
\$3.00 Please sendcopies.		\$
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Enclosed is \$ in full 1	payment. Please allow 4 – 6 weeks for d	elivery.
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Any payment in excess of the book price will be gratefully accepted as a gift to the abbey. St. Gregory's Abbey, 56500 Abbey Road, Three Rivers, MI 49093-9595

