

Abbey Letter no. 293

Easter 2023



# Want a life instead of just a job? Find out what it's like to be a Benedictine monk.

**Worship & Pray    Work & Learn**  
**with the monks at St. Gregory's Abbey - a monastery**  
**within the Episcopal Church at Three Rivers, Michigan**

...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](mailto:novicemaster@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

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

**[saintgregorysthreerivers.org](http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org)**



## NOTES

Matthew Gunter, bishop of the Diocese of Fond du Lac, was with us September 28th - 30th.

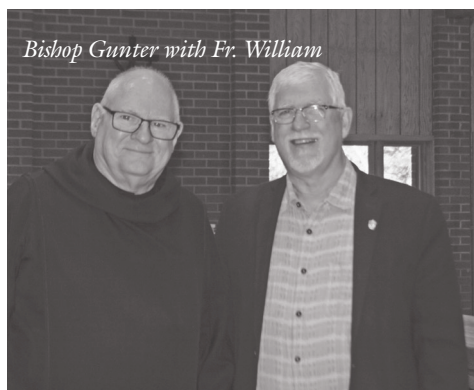
Br. Armand attended the joint convention of the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan October 28th - 29th in Lansing.

Some members of the Order of Lutheran Franciscans were with us November 3rd - 5th.

Br. Abraham preached and led an adult education class at St. Luke's Church in Kalamazoo January 22nd as part of the Episcopal Church's "Religious Life Sunday" observance.

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](mailto: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](mailto: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.)



*Bishop Gunter with Fr. William*



*friars from the Order of Lutheran Franciscans*

**Use the internet wisely -  
here are some things we offer:**

website (information)-----[saintgregorysthreerivers.org](http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

You Tube channel (videos)--[StGregorysAbbey](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCStGregorysAbbey) (no spaces)

SoundCloud channel (music)-----[Br. Abraham Newsom](https://www.soundcloud.com/Br-Abraham-Newsom)

*When searching for us on the internet, make sure you look for the St. Gregory's Abbey in Michigan. There are two other Benedictine monasteries in the United States also named for Gregory the Great.*

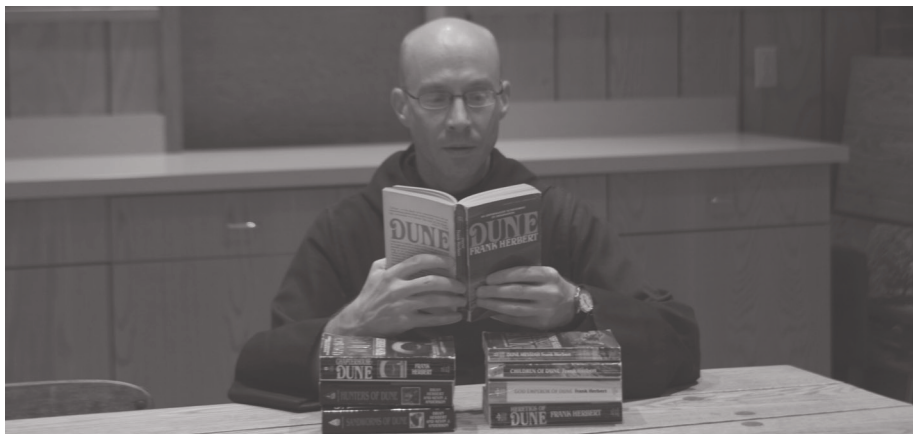
## MY FAVORITE THINGS

Life in a monastery is designed to give the monks and guests constant reminders of the centrality of God. Many of the reminders happen in the Abbey Church, where we gather seven times a day for corporate prayer. The time that is my favorite is matins (4:00am), when we sit in the dark church listening to scripture interspersed with silence, preparing us for the coming day. From my choir stall, I have a good view of the ever-changing flower arrangements in front of the lectern. The arrangement itself (especially if it is *ikebana* with subject and object) often looks to me like a representation of God holding us, gazing upon us in deep love.

Sometimes, before or after matins, I go outside to look at the stars. Depending on the season, I know which part of our front yard to stand in to get a glimpse of my favorites: Arcturus, Antares, Aldebaran, and the summer triangle of Deneb, Vega, and Altair. During the daytime, I venture farther into our woods to visit our cemetery or lake, but I especially like to visit a small glen just to the west of the cemetery where there is a bench and an Asian pagoda. It is nice to be there after lunch, quietly thanking God for all God's gifts (including the just finished lunch and the upcoming nap.)

Many of these things are peculiar to St. Gregory's Abbey, but one does not need to live in a monastery to see one's surroundings in a prayerful, grateful manner. We live in a noisy, greedy world, but very few individuals are noisy and greedy (and those few that are especially need our love). Most people we meet every day are good and loving, and we can be good and loving back to them. We can live our lives in ways that bring peace and joy to our planet, as we accept the peace and joy brought to us by others. After all, God made the world and said it was good. In fact, it is so good, that God became a part of it and experienced all of human life in the person of Jesus. He gave and received gifts of love and peace from those around him.





One gift that I am most thankful for and that fosters my prayer is music. I delight especially in the symphonies of Anton Bruckner and Franz Schubert, the electronic works of Kraftwerk, the Brandenburg Concertos of J. S. Bach, the 80's ska revival tunes of The Beat and The Bodysnatchers, the early albums of Jefferson Starship (and its amazing violinist), and the music of Pink Floyd. Music is not the only form of art that opens my heart to God: I consider sports to be an important branch of art, as they are expressions of the very best a human mind and body can do. The Olympic Games are a special time, regardless of the specific event I am watching. The participants have committed themselves to a life of discipline that has brought them to the top of their fields, and their performances are inspiring and sublime. NFL games are also a source of awe for me: the intricate plays and teamwork coupled with the individual athletes' artistry is amazing. The sport that pulls me in most is IndyCar racing. The teamwork that makes the cars run at top speeds with a minimum of fuel usage on a variety of circuits throughout the season is amazing, as the teams work to shave off measurements of thousandths of a second while traveling well over 200 mph.

Books and other forms of literature can also be "prayer fodder" for many people. One particular book that I read and ponder often is **The Silmarillion** by J. R. R. Tolkien. To me it is a long song of thanksgiving for the gift of mortality (the immortal elves wearily grow from pity of the short life span of humans to envy of it). **The Fantastic Four** by Marvel Comics is another favorite, featuring the sweetness of the heroes' family situation as they repeatedly save the multiverse. However, books don't have to teach us anything to be edifying—they can simply be fun, like the science fiction of Becky Chambers, Dan Simmons, and Frank Herbert. Entertainment for its own sake is good, and is a wonderful gift from God. Some of my favorite sources of entertainment are podcasts, such as **Big Picture Science** (lots of facts with few laughs), **Go Fact Yourself** (fewer facts but more laughs), and **Nobody Listens to Paula Poundstone** (very few facts with a lot of laughs.)

All of these things are gifts from God, and all can foster our prayer, if we choose to let them. Your favorite things are probably different than mine, and that is good. The important thing is that we delight in the wonderful world God has made. That includes delighting in God and delighting in ourselves.

## BOOKS READ IN THE REFECTORY DURING LUNCH AND SUPPER 2022

**Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States**

*by James C. Scott*

**Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy**

*by Cathy O'Neil*

**An Introduction to the Baha'i Faith**

*by Peter Smith*

**The Book in the Renaissance**

*by Andrew Pettegree*

**The Hermits of Big Sur**

*by Paula Huston*

**Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World**

*by Anand Giridharadas*

**Mission to America: A History of St. Vincent Archabbey, The First Benedictine Monastery in the United States**

*by Jerome Oetgen*

**Her Stories: Daytime Soap Opera & US Television History**

*by Elana Levine*



**We hope** our prayers and presence are of ongoing benefit to you and to the whole world. We invite you to help us continue our ministry of prayerful presence. Your prayers for us are the most important way to help us, but we also need your financial support. You can make a donation by using either the envelope in this newsletter or by using the “donate” button on our website

[saintgregorysthreerivers.org](http://saintgregorysthreerivers.org)

To prolong your support, please consider us in your estate planning and use the name “St. Gregory’s Abbey of Three Rivers, Michigan.” Feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

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Three Rivers, MI 49093  
269-244-5893  
[abbot@saintgregorysthreerivers.org](mailto:abbot@saintgregorysthreerivers.org)



## Daily Schedule at St. Gregory’s Abbey

### Weekdays

4:00 a.m. MATINS

6:00 a.m. LAUDS

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



# ST. GREGORY'S ABBEY

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