

Abbey Letter
no. 295
Fall 2023





NOTES

Prior Aelred attended the annual CAROA meeting (Conference of Anglican Religious Orders in the Americas) April 24th - 29th at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York.

Abbot Andrew and Fr. William attended a presentation on humility by James Alison at the "Contemplative Awareness in Love and Life" event at the Fetzer Institute in Kalamazoo, Michigan May 9th. Abbot Andrew was asked to add a brief reflection on the subject, and Michael Casey OCSO of Tarrawarra Abbey in Australia presented a response to the presentation via teleconference.

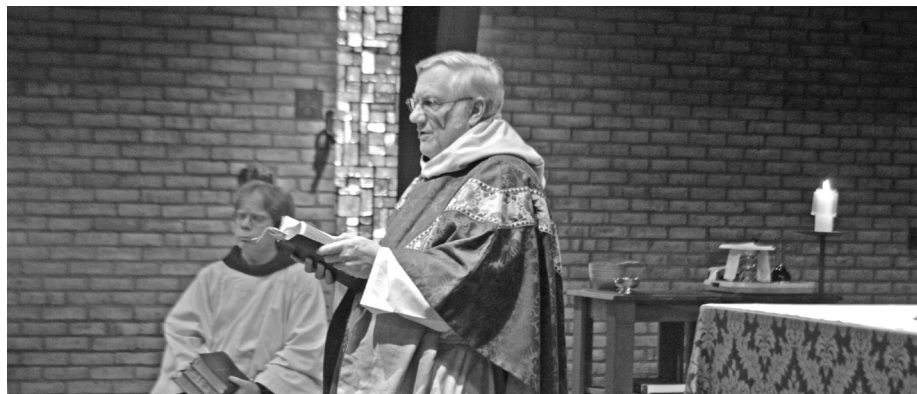
Br. Jimmy of the Community of Francis and Clare was with us June 15th - 20th.

After 18 years, Fr. William has concluded his ministry to the Formation Group of the Diocese of Northern Indiana. This group of people preparing locally for ordination met every few months for mutual exchange, discussion, and presentations concerning practical issues pertaining to ordained ministry. Fr. William was in charge of the spiritual life part of the program. The diocese has changed its curriculum so that Fr. William is no longer needed for the program.

Representatives from various retreat and prayer centers in our neighborhood continue to meet regularly for discussion about how we can be of mutual support for each other. Participants in the discussions usually include representatives from: St. Gregory's Abbey, GilChrist, The Hermitage, Apple Farm, and Culture Is Not Optional.

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.)





The monks and I extend our deepest gratitude to all of you who have contributed to St. Gregory's this past year as well as all the previous years. Your support really is necessary for our continued existence as a community dedicated to prayer and sharing our prayer life with all of you. The drive for raising money to pay for new mattresses and pillows for the guesthouses was highly successful and we received more than enough to go ahead with these purchases. Those of you who visit us will be more comfortable and all other guests will be grateful. As was stated when we made the plea for new pillows and mattresses, the excess money would go into our general operating fund. Now two additional expenses have come up: the air conditioner in the Abbey Church must be replaced, and we need to upgrade our aging telephone system. The combined cost of these two projects is estimated to be \$38,000.00. We are applying the excess funds to these needs. Any new gifts earmarked for these intentions will be gratefully accepted. Again, if there is a surplus, it will go into the general fund. These particular expenses that I have just mentioned should make it understandable that for all of the care that we take with our finances and maintaining a modest lifestyle for the community, we tend to end up with a budget deficit most years except when extra earnings through property sales such as we have made this year, or a significant bequest should supplement our normal income. This means that the gifts you send us, large or small, really make a difference to the community. The importance of bequests might prompt you to consider including the abbey in your estate planning if that is possible. That way, you can continue to support us into the future and help give the abbey a future. May your generosity and support enrich your lives in Christ.

- Abbot Andrew

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LITURGICAL CHANGES

One of the suggestions in our recent Visitation was the revision of the Office, but then it proceeded to talk about the Eucharistic Liturgy. Several bishops ago I discussed revising our Eucharistic Booklets to incorporate elements from the Supplemental Liturgical Materials and received enthusiastic support from the diocesan bishop. Shortly thereafter I was made monastery cook, which takes up most of my time and nothing further happened. As to revising the Office, we had several community meetings to discuss possibilities and I wrote a couple of Abbey Letter articles about the topic but again things shuddered to a halt when my time was taken up in the kitchen.

Liturgical Revision has been ongoing at St. Gregory's since 1967. Before Vatican II the entire Benedictine Office was in Latin: the *Antiphonale Monasticum* and *Missale Monasticum* and the *Breviarium Monasticum*. When you needed more books, you simply sent off the Solesme Abbey in France and got what you needed. With the adoption of the vernacular each monastery was on its own, relying on the *Thesaurus Liturgiae Horarum Monasticae* issued by the office of the Abbot Primate in 1977.

One of my early special jobs here was making new Matins books. Fr. Anthony typed the pages (he was a very skilled Latinist) and the office staff used the new photocopier to make the pages and the comb binding system to assemble comb bound books. Fr. William drilled holes in the combs for ribbons. I dyed the ribbons (only white ribbons were available at the time). It was a team effort.

We were using the Collegeville Diurnal for the rest of the office, except the Grail translation of the psalms. We had a copy of the psalter that had been pointed for plainchant by Fr. Chrysogonus Waddell of Gethsemani Abbey. The Collegeville Diurnal was out of print so could not be replaced, so the next task was doing books for the Day Hours. There had been some issues with the Matins book, so this time a committee was formed to revise the Office in accordance with the Thesaurus. There were many community meetings debating various points, but eventually new books were produced, again involving quite a bit of work for a lot of people (although this time we were able to get colored ribbons).

Later we did a replacement saints book for Matins (to clear up the ambiguities in the original Matins book) and a Matins book for summer and fall that included the saints as a convenience for the participants in our Summer Vocation Program (but the rest of us also found it helpful.)

After another community Visitation, the decision was made to adopt a more inclusive translation of the psalms, which meant purchasing new psalters, making new books for the psalms for the offices that we sing (pointed for plainchant), and correcting by hand parts of the office books that were based on the psalms.

One of the unintended consequences of the Saints book was that all of the commemorations were listed. Prior to that time it was the custom to add the patron saints of new novices when they took a new name. Because the commemorations were listed, we stopped doing that. The rationale of having the complete office in the books was that monks who were traveling could take the books with them to pray the office. It did not take long to realize that the comb bound books were too fragile.

It probably is time to begin working on replacing the books, but it will be a daunting project for a small community to manage, but we are looking at it.

Even before the suggestion from the Visitation, we had practically completed a revision of the monastery calendar. There were only three deletions: St. Hippolytus, St. Fabian (both early Roman martyrs) and Precious Blood (never part of the Anglican tradition and deleted by the Roman Catholic Church at Vatican II since it was argued that the devotion was covered by the Feast of Corpus Christi). In fact, Fr. Anthony had wanted to drop the observance when we redid the Office books long ago, but some argued for retaining it and so it was. Now it is difficult to come up with good materials for the feast and we decided to omit it.

The purpose of the discussion of the calendar was not to omit days or to add others as such, but to revisit the entire question of what we wanted to have in our calendar. There were more additions than deletions.

In January we added Richard Meux Benson (founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist) and St. Armand (patron saint of Br Armand). In April we added Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

In May we added the Martyrs of the Reformation Era and the Tibhirine Monks (the Martyrs of Atlas.) In June we added St. Romuald (founder of the Camaldolese now part of the Benedictine Confederation) and St. Cyril of Alexandria (the leading figure at the Council of Ephesus). In July we added St. Moses the Black (one of the great Desert Fathers) and St. Henry the Emperor (patron of Benedictine oblates). In August we added St. Aidan (who was in our calendar when Br Aidan was a member of the community before the Saints book was done). In September we added the Memphis Martyrs (Constance, Thecla, Ruth, Frances, Charles Parsons, and Louis Schuyler who died ministering the the people of Memphis during the yellow fever epidemic of 1878). In October we added St. Bruno (founder of the Carthusians) and Abraham the Patriarch (patron of our Br Abraham). In November we added St. Hugh of Lincoln and James Otis Sargent Huntington (founder of the Order of the Holy Cross).

Beginning with the 2024 Abbey Calendar, these changes will be made. As to the revision of the office books, time will tell, but actually we have been in the process since 1967.

- Prior Aelred



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



The July program is highly recommended, but if you have a serious interest in monastic vocation and can not come in July, let us know and we can set up an individual vocational visit at another time.

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| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 2024 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT St. Andrew the Apostle | St. Martin of Tours | St. Thomas the Apostle | St. Matthew the Apostle | St. Mark the Evangelist | St. Luke the Evangelist | St. John the Evangelist |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT St. John the Baptist | St. Elizabeth | St. Joseph | St. Michael the Archangel | St. Gabriel the Archangel | St. Raphael the Archangel | St. Uriel the Archangel |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT St. John the Evangelist | St. Thomas the Apostle | St. Matthew the Apostle | St. Mark the Evangelist | St. Luke the Evangelist | St. John the Evangelist | St. John the Evangelist |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT St. John the Evangelist | St. Thomas the Apostle | St. Matthew the Apostle | St. Mark the Evangelist | St. Luke the Evangelist | St. John the Evangelist | St. John the Evangelist |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

January



Please send me ____ copy or copies of the

2024 Calendar

Enclosed is \$10.00 for each calendar.

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