

THE VALYERMO
Chronicle

S T . A N D R E W ' S A B B E Y



Nº 240 ✨ WINTER 2013



EAR FRIENDS,

FROM THE ABBOT
November, 2013

TWO YEARS AGO, MY MOTHER WAS hospitalized after having suffered a stroke. Thankfully it was not a long hospitalization; she is home and is doing remarkably well. During the first few days after the stroke however when she was in ICU, it was touch and go. She slept most of the time while her body did what it needed to do to heal and God did what He wanted to do. During those days, I sat next to her bed and prayed and prayed, my rosary beads slowly and deliberately passing through my fingers. I talked to her, though she was unresponsive. I kept a very close eye on the numbers on the monitor, hoping for signs of improvement, an answer to prayer. After several days in ICU and the caring hands of the medical staff, we began to see signs of improvement.

It's hard to look back on that experience of my mother in the hospital and not think of Advent, the season of waiting, watching and hoping. It forces me to ask a few questions of myself, especially now that the Advent season is upon us: How watchful am I of the Lord's return? Do I hope for the Lord's return, with

as much vigilance as when I sat next to my mother's bed every day, keeping an eye on her and the numbers on the monitor? Do I wait for the Lord with as much hope and prayer as when I prayed and hope for any kind of improvement with my mother's condition? How attentive am I to the varied ways the Lord visits me each day?

As Christians we believe the Lord will return again, and so we wait eagerly and hopefully. Or do we? Do we *truly* hope that the Lord will return soon? Do we *really* wait eagerly for His return? Do we actually pay attention to the signs of the times? A few years ago around this time of year, I asked several Christians—who were practicing their faith and who were actively involved in some kind of parish work—whether they wanted the Lord to come back anytime soon. Believe it or not, the overwhelming response was a variation of, “No, not yet because there are some things I still want to do.”

It seems we are just too busy with “stuff,” too goal-minded with life to be bothered by the Second Coming, and are therefore more attached to this passing world than we think. And when that happens, it is highly unlikely that we will notice those moments when Jesus *does* come to us in the ordinariness of our day.

If we think of Advent as only preparation for Christmas, then that's all it will be for us: a four-week season of the year. Likewise the birth of Christ will always and only be one single day of the year. The idea however is to get to the point in our lives where we live a life of daily waiting and watching for the Lord because He *does* come to us every day. Then the beautiful seasons of Advent and Christmas will happen more than just once a year.

Abbot Damien ✧

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

The cover photo on this issue of *The Chronicle* reflects a darkening, introspective time of year: a time that mirrors rest and sleep, old age and reflection, the passing into a new life. The contents of this issue, in their own individual way, reflect this same introspective feeling and this same reflective time.

So we enter into winter, into Advent, a time of hidden growth, and above all, of watching and waiting. To borrow a sentence from John Henry Newman: “we are not simply to believe, but to watch; not simply to love, but to watch; not simply to obey, but to watch.” This notion of waiting and watching is more than a simple action; it is a state of mind and soul. For a monk, for a Christian in the very fact of his or her faith, watching and waiting ought to be a way of living, a particular way of hoping. It implies a *personal* involvement. For example, we normally wait for the mail to arrive, but when we are expecting an important letter, we watch for the post’s arrival. We wait for a doctor’s door to open, but if we are worried about the result of a medical test, we nervously watch for the door to open. We wait for a person; yet if that person is especially and deeply loved, or feared, we watch for his or her arrival. And it is a sense of watching that characterizes Advent, not simply waiting for December 25th to arrive, gifts opened, and parties begun.

This is a time of opening our hearts to the Lord who enters our lives: whether it be sacramentally through the renewal of reconciliation, or prayer through a deepening practice of monastic *lectio divina* or perhaps pondering the mystery of the winter sky and universe. An unusual focus on this time of watching and waiting is the photo and word meditation on Our Lady in old age. She is exemplar of one who watches, waits, and ponders the Word.

May this Advent and winter season be a time of such reflection for all of us.

—*The Editor*

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Every Flat Surface an Altar

A Reflection on Benedictine Spirituality

PAUL F. FORD, OBL. OSB



WHEN I WAS A MONK IN THE EARLY 1970s, all the monks spent a lot of time in the kitchen (they still do). From making coffee before dawn to putting out the lights before compline, every monk cycled through all the kitchen chores. Prior Raphael, Prior Philippe, Father Thaddeus, Father Gaetan, Father Vincent — *all* the monks cooked and cleaned and set tables. Father Werner, a cellarer for decades, took care of washing the tables into his nineties. He told me that this chore was made lighter by the fact that the tables were so beautiful; in my time we had folding tables with Formica tops and metal folding chairs.

When our novice masters (we had three—we were tough cases) taught us the Rule, we learned the chapters on the cellarer and on kitchen service better by the good example of the monks. So I was somehow attracted to the simple domesticity, the home-liness, of caring for the kitchen and dining room and all of their fixtures.

As an oblate since 1978, I think I have made

strides in my understanding and, I hope, my practice of treating all utensils as vessels of the altar. More importantly I have come by stages to see and to teach others that every flat surface in life is an altar.

- ⇒ your desk is your altar
- ⇒ your counter tops are your altar
- ⇒ your work bench is your altar
- ⇒ your chair/sofa is your altar
- ⇒ your bed is an altar
- ⇒ the shower floor/tub bottom is an altar
- ⇒ your garden/the playing field
- ⇒ your dashboard
- ⇒ your skate/surfboard, your bike seat
- ⇒ your computer keyboard
- ⇒ your cell phone pad

I came into this insight by stages, some imperceptible and others unmistakable.

Over the decades of teaching spirituality, I recognized one particular text, Romans 12:1–2, as the epicenter of New Testament spirituality.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and

“Let [the cellarer] regard all the utensils of the monastery and its whole property as if they were the sacred vessels of the altar.”—*Chapter 31: What Kind of Man the Cellarer of the Monastery Should Be*, Saint Benedict’s Rule for Monasteries, translated from the Latin by Leonard J. Doyle, Obl. OSB, of Saint John’s Abbey, (Copyright 1948, 2001, the Order of Saint Benedict, Collegeville, MN 56321).

“Let the brethren serve one another, and let no one be excused from the kitchen service except by reason of sickness or occupation in some important work. For this service brings increase of reward and of charity. But let helpers be provided for the weak ones, that they may not be distressed by this work; and indeed let everyone have help, as required by the size of the community or the circumstances of the locality. . . . Let the rest serve one another in charity.”

...

“Immediately after the Morning Office on Sunday, the incoming and outgoing servers shall prostrate themselves before all the brethren in the oratory and ask their prayers. Let the server who is ending his week say this verse: “Blessed are You, O Lord God, who have helped me and consoled me.” When this has been said three times and the outgoing server has received his blessing, then let the incoming server follow and say, “Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord, make haste to help me.” Let this also be repeated three times by all, and having received his blessing let him enter his service.”—*Ibid.*, Chapter 35: *On the Weekly Servers in the Kitchen*

acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect. (NRSV)

The basic utensils of life are our bodies and minds, (a) totally offered up in prayer to please God and (b) transformed by God to resonate in perfect harmony with God’s pleasure in

discerning and then doing God’s will (implied in this verse but spelled out in Romans 12:3–15:7). The place for the offering of our bodies as living sacrifices are the various altars of our lives.

Setting up house with Janice was another unmistakable stage in my growing appreciation of the home-iness of life. Our first purchase was a used table and six simple armchairs — as good Benedictines we knew we were going to open our home to others. From the summer of 1985 to this very day we host people of all ages, but principally our students.

In the process of writing for my dissertation, I got to read the fiction of George MacDonald, C. S. Lewis’s “spiritual father.” One particular novel, *Thomas Wingfold, Curate* (London: Hurst & Blacket, 1876), detailed the restoration of the faith and vocation of a depressed priest by some of the humblest people in his parish. The novel taught me the lesson I am trying to teach you.

In the extracts that begin on the following page, the priest, Thomas Wingfold, is in conversation with Mr. Drew, a man who sold cloth, and Mr. Polwarth, two of the agents of his restoration.

No great novel this; but these passages hit me between the eyes. I only hope these considerations help you along your way.



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Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California (1987). His doctoral dissertation was “C. S. Lewis: Ecumenical Spiritual Director: A Study of His Experience and Theology of Prayer and Discernment in the Process of Becoming a Self.” He is married to Janice Daurio, Ph.D., an oblate since 1972.

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CHAPTER XLII: THE COMMONPLACE

It was evening, and the air was still warm. Pine Street was almost empty, save of the red sun, which blinded him so that wherever he looked he could only see great sun-blots. All but a few of the shops were closed, but amongst the few he was surprised to find that of his friend the linen-draper, who had always been a strong advocate of early closing. The shutters were up, however, though the door stood wide open. He peeped in. To his sun-blinded eyes the shop looked very dark, but he thought he saw Mr. Drew talking to some one, and entered. He was right; it was the draper himself, and a poor woman with a child on one arm, and a print dress she had just bought on the other. The curate leaned against the counter, and waited until business should be over to address his friend.

...

“You see,” the draper went on, “there IS something solemn in the quiet after business is over. Sometimes it’s more so, sometimes less; but this night it came upon me that the shop felt like a chapel—had the very air of one somehow, and so I fell a thinking, and forgot to shut the door. How it began I don’t know, but my past life came up to me, . . .

All this long story is but to let you understand how I was feeling when that woman came into the shop. I told you how, in the dusk and the silence, it was as if I were in the chapel. I found myself half-listening for the organ. Then the verse of a hymn came into my mind—I can’t tell where or when I had met with it, but it had stuck to me:

‘Let me stand ever at the door,
And keep it from the entering sin,
That so thy temple, walls and floor,
Be pure for thee to enter in.’

“Now that, you see, is said of the temple of the heart; but somehow things went rather cross-cut that evening—they got muddled in my head. It seemed as if I was the doorkeeper of my shop, and at the same time as if my shop, spreading out and dimly vanishing in the sacred gloom, was the temple of the Holy Ghost, out of which I had to keep the sin. And with the thought, a great awe

fell upon me: could it be—might it not be that God was actually in the place?—that in the silence he was thinking—in the gloom he was knowing? I laid myself over the counter, with my face in my hands, and went on half thinking, half praying. All at once the desire arose burning in my heart: Would to God my house were in truth a holy place, haunted by his presence!

...

I heard a step in the shop, and lifting my head, saw a poor woman with a child in her arms. Annoyed at being found in that posture, like one drunk or in despair; annoyed also with myself for not having shut the door, with my usual first tendency to injustice a harsh word was trembling on my very lips, when suddenly something made me look round in a kind of maze on the dusky back shop. A moment more and I understood: God was waiting to see what truth was in my words. That is just how I felt it, and I hope I am not irreverent in saying so. Then I saw that the poor woman looked frightened—I suppose at my looks and gestures—perhaps she thought me out of my mind. I made haste and received her, and listened to her errand as if she had been a duchess—say rather an angel of God, for such I felt her in my heart to be. She wanted a bit of dark print with a particular kind of spot in it, which she had seen in the shop some months before, but had not been able to buy. I turned over everything we had, and was nearly in despair. At last, however, I found the very piece which had ever since haunted her fancy—just enough of it left for a dress! But all the time I sought it, I felt as if I were doing God service—or at least doing something he wanted me to do. It sounds almost ludicrous now, but—

“God forbid!” said Wingfold.

“I’m glad you don’t think so, sir. I was afraid you would.”

“Had the thing been a trifle, I should still have said the same,” returned the curate. “But who with any heart would call it—a trifle to please the fancy of a poor woman, one who is probably far oftener vexed than pleased? She had been brooding over this dress—you took trouble to content

her with her desire. Who knows what it may do for the growth of the woman? I know what you've done for me by the story of it."

"She did walk out pleased—like," said the draper, "and left me more pleased than she—and so grateful to her for coming, you can't think!"

"I begin to suspect," said the curate, after a pause, "that the common transactions of life are the most sacred channels for the spread of the heavenly leaven. There was ten times more of the divine in selling her that gown as you did, in the name of God, than in taking her into your pew and singing out of the same hymn-book with her."

CHAPTER LX: DIVINE SERVICE

[Mister Drew is speaking to Mister Wingfold] "I assert that true and genuine service may be rendered to the living God; and, for the development of the divine nature in man, it is necessary that he should do something for God. Nor is it hard to discover how; for God is in every creature that he has made, and in their needs he is needy, and in all their afflictions he is afflicted. Therefore Jesus says that whatever is done to one of his little ones is done to him. And if the soul of a man be the temple of the Spirit, then is the place of that man's labour, his shop, his counting-house, his laboratory, the temple of Jesus Christ, where the spirit of the man is incarnate in work.—Mr. Drew!"—Here [Polwarth] stood up, and held out both his hands, palms upward, towards the draper on the other side of the table.—"Mr. Drew! your shop is the temple of your service where the Lord Christ, the only image of the Father is, or ought to be throned; your counter is, or ought to be his altar; and everything thereon laid, with intent of doing as well as you can for your neighbour, in the name of *the* man Christ Jesus, is a true sacrifice offered to Him, a service done to the eternal creating Love of the universe." ❄

EXCERPTED FROM GEORGE MACDONALD, *THOMAS WINGFOLD*, CURATE (LONDON: HURST & BLACKET, 1876)

A Product of Time & Heart

BY JANICE DAURIO, OBL. OSB

IF YOU ARE OF A CATHOLIC of a certain age, you might remember the sacrament of confession as being quite different from what it is now: the experience of that once a month, in a very small room shared by one other unseen person, a time when you spoke words into darkness.

Now you still go into a very small room with one other person, perhaps visible. But you probably don't avail yourself of this experience once a month, or anything like that. The practice of confession (more accurately today the sacrament of reconciliation) has fallen off precipitously ... the practice of frequent confession becoming so unusual that when a friend told me recently that she went to confession once a week, I instinctively began to wonder about her mental stability. What has happened?

I ask myself now: When did I last avail myself of the opportunity, and when will I go again? I make a quick (very, very quick) internal inventory of my actions and find, to my delight and relief, that I am a surprisingly good person. No need to act. And there, perhaps, is the answer to the question of why going to confession frequently has all but disappeared.

We live at a time of unceasing self-promotion. All children are special. You are unique. Love yourself. You have to love yourself before you can love others. Educators have to help students increase self-esteem. Humility, far from being a virtue, is a vice.

How to square this with chapter 7 of the Rule of St. Benedict, that by self-exaltation we descend Jacob's ladder and lose heaven? And what of all those later chapters on all those actions that count as faults? Here, as in the bible, when confronted with challenges to self-esteem, one is tempted to retreat to

“interpretation,” and “a product of the times.” Once trapped by self-congratulation on one’s own goodness, it’s hard to escape.

The loss of the practice of frequent reception of the sacrament of confession — or, more properly, the sacrament of reconciliation—is tied to the loss of the practice of frequent, ideally daily, chapter of, or reflection upon, faults: the inexorable search for my own sinfulness and immorality. But it’s hard to do: it’s not only the current state of American twenty-first society that encourages the preservation of self-esteem, it’s a psychological tendency, too. How to overcome it?

Perhaps the literary techniques used in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* offers a hint of a clue. In a very long book (265,000 words!) Joyce mercilessly records every thought of three ordinary persons in the course of an ordinary waking day. In a real way this kind of work as an examination of consciousness requires getting in touch with that endlessly droning inner voice, of which we are almost always unaware. Leading to that examen of conscience at the center of reconciliation. It reveals who we are. And it is not always quite as we might like to think.

At Mass I look around to criticize (inwardly, of course! all the time in an attitude of prayer) that woman for dressing too expensively, and that young man for dressing too sloppily. That woman is not praying sincerely: I can tell. I am pious; you are pietistic. I am peeved (and rate her low by comparison to myself) that I remembered her birthday but she forgot mine. I am caring; you are careless. Kevin spends too much time with his children; Brendan doesn’t spend enough time with his children. My car is clean, your car is dirty: cleanliness is next to godliness! I take a walk around the block; by the time I’ve gotten back home, I have criticized every family’s yard or their home’s paint job. I murmur words of sympathy to someone who is ill or disabled or has lost a job, but the little inward voice is saying that it is their own fault, and such things don’t happen to me.

Once in touch with that little voice (it takes

lots of practice), it reveals more and more. St. Paul writes (1 Timothy) that he is the greatest of sinners; how could he do that? He is a saint. But now I realize that each person who gets in vital and aware touch with that constant inner voice will feel that she or he if not the greatest sinner, might certainly be a contender. The condemnation spewed out on others is in the service of self-esteem.

By calling the sacrament confession, the emphasis is on the faults. But the real or ultimate point of getting in touch with one’s little inner voice is not to realize the faults, nor is it to assess how virtuous I really am. The sacrament of reconciliation says it: it is to repair a damaged relationship, the relationship with God and the community. The reward for going through the agony of a thorough examination of conscience is union with that unseen other, that third person in the confessional room: Jesus Christ. And not just Jesus Christ, but all those saintly, forgiven sinners, alive now and from ages past, who make up the Body of Christ.

“...You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel” (Heb. 12:22–24). The Rule of Benedict is built upon this interior consciousness that leads to a real sense of conscience. ✧



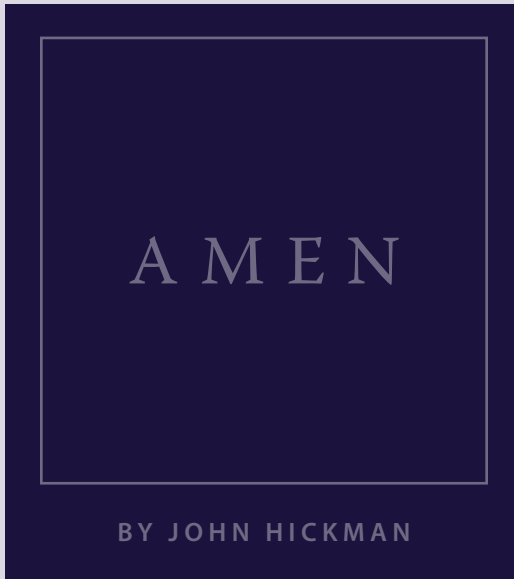
Janice Daurio, Obl. O.S.B., has been a Benedictine oblate since 1978. She has been teaching philosophy at Moorpark College for almost twenty years. She is a lifelong Catholic from Brooklyn, N.Y.

DEAR FRIENDS,
God waits for us in the quiet. He speaks to us in the silence.

On a Fall morning, a modern pilgrim prepared for a day-long retreat in silence and solitude by loading his day pack with an MP3 player with almost 12,000 songs, his Bible, a prayer book, a book on the contemplative lifestyle of a monk, a journal note pad, a mechanical pencil, a blue ink pen and a highlighter. Into the side pockets of his day pack, the pilgrim put a chilled bottle of water and the elements for the Eucharist. You can make fun of all the things the pilgrim had to take for his spiritual retreat, but if day packs had been invented 2000 years ago, I'm sure Jesus would have taken the same things in the desert.

It was a warm day, but there always seems to be a cool breeze around the lake at Saint Andrew's Abbey in

Valyermo. I pull up two chairs. One for me and one for my day pack. No one else is here. I selfishly thank God that no others are on retreat at the monastery. I need the solitude and silence. Deep breaths of desert air scented with sage. I recall scripture from 1 Samuel and say: "Speak Lord, for Your servant is listening." I hear the small, still voice of God say to me: "Come into my presence." I'm spiritually dry. I need to hear the voice of God speak to me today. I sit and wait for divine revelation. I sit and wait for a prophetic word from God. I sit and wait for clear direction. I sit. I wait. Nothing. God is silent for right now, but that's okay. I'm planning to be there for awhile so God doesn't need to be in a rush to tell me what I need to hear.



The chaotic thoughts in my head have faded away. In fact, I'm feeling a peace that's so deep, it's almost trance-like. I don't want to move.

I sit. But I'm soon restless. I certainly didn't drive all this way just to sit! I get out the book on the contemplative prayer life of a monk, but I can't seem to contemplate on anything right now. I'm unable to focus and I keep reading the same sentence over and over. I put the book away. I wonder if my inability to read means that I need to write. I take out my notepad. I pray that the Holy Spirit would give me the

thoughts to write down. My mind is a blank. I wait for the Holy Spirit to show me what to write. Nothing. God is silent. Journaling is supposed to be a good thing to do on a retreat. Nothing is coming to mind. Nada.

I put my notepad away and wonder if I should read my Bible. Yes! That's it! God wants to speak to me through His

Word! I don't have the energy to take out my Bible. So I sit some more while I figure out what I'm supposed to do on my spiritual retreat. The chapel bell sounds. It's a large heavy brass bell and has a deep, resonant tone. It echos off the hills as it calls the monks to noon Mass. I wonder if maybe that's what God wants me to do. Should I go to the service? I decide to just sit for awhile. I relax, but after a few minutes, I again feel anxious about my inactivity.

The plan for my spiritual retreat so far isn't working. I can't seem to read and I can't write. I need to hear from God and He is silent. I so desperately need Him to be with me right now. All He told me was "Come into My presence"

Please turn to page 20.



Holy Mary's Later Years

SUZANNE FARLEY, OBL. OSB

I HAVE NOTICED THAT THE WRITINGS and artworks featuring Holy Mary tend to focus on her life before Pentecost. There is scant material relating to her later years. That does not mean they do not exist. It means I have never seen a painting or illustration of a gray haired Mary. For example, *The Assumption* by Titian (1508–1510) is representative of artwork where Mary is gorgeous, vigorous, with non-gray hair. Michelangelo's famous *Pietà* depicts a youthful Mary holding

her dead son in her arms. She looks younger than Jesus and she was around 50! I cannot relate to these images today. I yearn for new artworks. The same is true for books. I hunger for fresh insights. Tradition tells us that Mary lived to be an old woman! Written and art narratives, have nudged forward only a little during the 20th and 21st Centuries. Still, a question emerges for me, "What inspiration can be gleaned from Holy Mary's life during her post-Pentecost period?" I read she spent her later years in Ephesus, a city located in western Turkey on the Mediterranean Sea. I have meditated on this period of her life to see what might bubble up. At this time, what bubbles up are more questions, not answers.

As the world pushes deeper into the 21st century, the number of people of advanced age is growing to unprecedented numbers, particularly in the developed countries. I can count myself among this segment of the population as I push deeper into my 70s! I do not believe Mary should stop being a role model for me.



Suzanne Farley's photographs have been published in various forms by St. Andrew's Abbey since 1994, the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Catholic Directory, the *Tidings* newspaper, and the

Chaska Herald newspaper in Chaska, Minnesota, where the author is also a guest columnist. She lives in Santa Monica, California.

CONCERNING THESE IMAGES, SUZANNE WRITES:

“This was my first time as a producer of a photo shoot. The images represent Mary at Ephesus. She is conversing with guests, listening to visitors, answering her door, and reaching out to greet or bless another. Look at the gray hair! Does that blue shawl look familiar? I have worn it at the Abbey many times. The photos are a 21st Century version of a biblical theme. I hope you can learn to appreciate the beauty of these photographs. Reportedly Mary lived in a stone house, I settled for granite. The backdrop is St. Monica Church in Santa Monica; Nancy Dewey is our Holy Mary. She is a prayerful, humble, kind, comfortable in her body, wonderful human being. Nancy loved being a part of this project.”

The photo of Suzanne Farley and the images of Holy Mary are by Rev. David Guffey CSC, Director of TV and Film, at Family Theater Productions, Hollywood, California.

I believe I should look at her with fresh eyes and a fresh perspective. I am not sure of the way to do this; I am sure I will benefit from this journey. Pondering is good for the soul!

In 1987 M. Basil Pennington O.C.S.O. wrote a book entitled, *Mary Today*. I wonder if Father Basil, after writing a 144-page book on Holy Mary, had an epiphany moment and realized there was more to be said, and he did not know how to be the messenger. For he added an epilogue to the book and in the very last paragraph, asks in effect, “Who is



Mary?” He did not have an answer. What an act of humility on his part to say so. I wanted to ask him, after 26 years if he did find an answer. Sadly, I will never have the opportunity. I discovered he died from injuries sustained in a car accident. I am however, left with the impressive last paragraph of his epilogue.

In the last paragraph he writes, “Who is Mary? At the risk of it sounding like a cliché or a cop-out, I would say the best answer to that question is silence.... If any one of us would enter into the silence of Mary’s presence we would find healing in our woundedness, solace in our loneliness, our emptiness would be filled up and our lives would magnify the Lord. At the beginning of this writing I wanted to sing of a maiden, now I would enter into the silence of a Woman who ponders all things in her heart.”

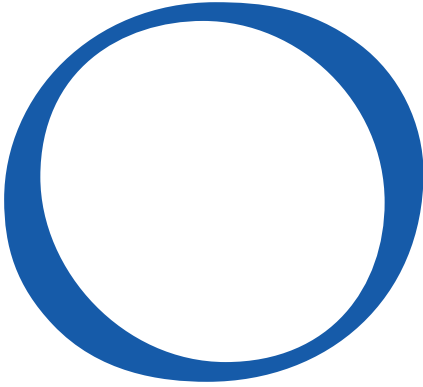
Basil chose to spell woman with a capital “W” in his epilogue. Holy Mary, the Woman, has much more to offer in the 21st Century, than in previous centuries. The Church, as far as I know, has not addressed energetically the issue of her post-Pentecost life. So I am left to ponder on my own. Entering into the silence of Mary’s presence cannot do any harm, and may in fact, do me some good!

In the months ahead I plan to further research art and literature relating to Mary in her post-Pentecost period. And I invite you to do the same. Holy Mary has given comfort, courage, and inspiration to so many for a very long time. I am confident, Mary as an old Woman, can continue to enrich lives in the 21st Century. The theme of Holy Mary at Ephesus is food for new artworks as demonstrated in the photograph(s) accompanying this article. Perhaps they can be the beginning of a time of reflection for you. ❄



LECTIO DIVINA

LUKE DYSINGER, OSB



ONE OF THE MOST ANCIENT AND TRADITIONAL approaches to Christian contemplation is the practice of *lectio divina*, the art of inwardly repeating and praying a biblical text in such a way that the Word of God gently over time becomes an experience of union with God. This practice is especially prized by Benedictine monks, nuns, and oblates, who accord it a privileged place in their daily rhythm of prayer and work. And, though practiced in many ways, it was in the early Christian monastic tradition that the practice of *lectio divina* reached its full flower. Faithful to the traditions of St. Basil and the Egyptian monastics of the desert, St. Benedict encouraged his monks to reserve the best hours of each day for *lectio divina*, a form of prayer that he regarded as a contemplative joy rather than an ascetical burden.

Lectio divina is much more than a method of meditating on the Bible: it is a means of beholding the whole created order charged with

An expanded version of this article is available in The Oblate Life, (Collegetville, 2008, pp. 107–118), available at the Abbey bookstore.



God's meaning and purpose. For the monastic or oblate who practices it daily, *lectio divina* becomes a spiritual laboratory in which God is contemplated: first, in the scriptures; then, in the mysterious movements of the human heart; and, finally refracted in the glory of a world beyond the self. Having discovered God present within and beneath the "letter" of the scriptures, the practitioner of *lectio divina* gradually learns to look up from the sacred text into the relationships and events of daily life, and to incorporate them into a rhythm of reflection, prayer, and contemplation that reveals these, too, as "salvation history". With the aid of *lectio divina* it becomes possible to behold God present in interpersonal relationships, daily tasks, and world events, and to consecrate these experiences to God in prayer, along with the inner world of one's temptations, fears, and hopes.

1 THE THEORY OF *LECTIO DIVINA*

Underlying the art of *lectio divina* is the presumption that all human experience entails an alternating rhythm, a life-giving, energizing movement back and forth between the poles of spiritual “activity” and “receptivity”. The active pole includes speaking, searching, and working; while receptivity entails listening, perceiving, and quietly being. Well-balanced spiritual practice always consists in a gentle oscillation between these two. The importance of this rhythm is obvious even in activities modern culture considers “secular”. For example, wholesome conversation requires both listening and speaking, with appropriate intervals given over to reflecting, commenting, pondering, and asking for information. Similarly, efforts in the workplace are often most productive when they are regularly punctuated by intervals of relaxation and movement, during which the solution to complex problems sometimes emerges unexpectedly. If this balanced rhythm is characteristic of all healthy human endeavor, it follows that our experience of God (who, after all, placed this rhythm within the human heart!) should also include and even celebrate this gentle oscillation. And it is precisely this that the practice of *lectio divina* seeks to do.

2 THE PRACTICE OF *LECTIO DIVINA*

The goal of *lectio divina* is, quite simply, prayer. *Lectio divina* is not Bible study in the usual sense of the term, and should not be confused with it. The biblical text that is pondered in *lectio divina* is entirely secondary and instrumental: it is a means rather than an end. The primary purpose of the biblical text is to become transparent, to give way to the loving embrace of the God who originally inspired and who is present, waiting, within the text. Although it is not an exegetical method in the modern sense, *lectio divina* must always proceed from a profound respect for the literal, historical meaning of the text, and should therefore be grounded in

the best possible modern exegesis. A trusted modern commentary is often the best place to begin the practice of *lectio divina*.

Since the twelfth century introductions to *lectio divina* customarily describe four (sometimes five) rungs or steps in a spiritual “ladder”. While this model may be helpful for beginners, it can give modern readers the false impression of a fixed technique that necessarily proceeds in a stepwise progression. In practice, the order of movement between “rungs” is constantly changing, more like a dance or a musical fugue than linear ascent. Rather than steps or rungs, the following four subjects could perhaps be more profitably conceived as recurring “notes” in a changing musical phrase, or as interweaving “colors” in a complex tapestry.

***Lectio*: reading/listening.** The art of *lectio divina* requires the cultivation of inner quiet. Beginning with few minutes of silence or monologistic prayer can help prepare for a method of reading that is radically different from what is taught in modern schools. In antiquity reading, even in private, was generally done aloud. Thus the text was seen, heard, felt as vibration, and even in a sense “tasted” as words were formed on the tongue and lips. While this may no longer be appropriate or possible, it is a reminder that in the ages when *lectio divina* flourished, reading, *lectio*, meant taking a text in, allowing it to literally become part of the self. In *lectio divina* the goal is not to master a text, to mine it for information, but rather to be touched, to be formed by it. Interior quiet facilitates an ability to read gently and attentively, inwardly listening “with the ear of the heart.” Like Elijah, who had to ignore wind, fire, and earthquake in order to hear the still, small voice of God (I Kings 19:11-12); the practitioner of *lectio divina* learns to read the biblical text slowly, expectantly, listening for the “faint murmuring sound” that represents God’s invitation to take in a verse or two, then to memorize and repeat the text inwardly.

***Meditatio*: meditation.** The inward gentle repetition of a text that allows it to slowly

touch the heart is called *meditatio*; in Hebrew, *hagah*, in Greek, *meletē*. In Christian antiquity the word *ruminatio* was often used as its equivalent: the image of a ruminant animal quietly chewing its cud became a symbol of the Christian pondering the Word of God and savoring its sweetness. But a much more popular and vivid invitation to *lectio divina* was found in the example of the Virgin Mary who “pondered in her heart” what she saw and heard of Christ (Luke 2:19). This inward pondering, *ruminatio*, on sacred text allows the Word to interact with thoughts, hopes, memories, and desires. As this interaction proceeds, additional words, images, and insights often arise. In many schools of meditation these emerging thoughts and memories are condemned as “distractions” and rejected; but in *lectio divina* the response should be very different. What arises within the heart during *meditatio* is not something alien, intruding from without: these memories and insights are part of the self and are proper matter for that act of consecration that ancient Christian writers called *oratio* - prayer.

Oratio: prayer. “Prayer” is often conceived primarily as dialogue with God: indeed, “conversation with God” (*homilia pros theon*) is an ancient and traditional Christian definition of prayer. In *lectio divina* this dialogue should be characterized by *parrhesia*, a biblical concept that includes frankness and honesty in speech. Through an upwelling of thoughts and images the practice of *meditatio* provides a (not always welcome) glimpse of the self: this in turn should stimulate dialogue with God that is utterly frank and candid. Having seen both what is good and what needs to be changed within the self, one can engage in honest “conversation with God” and offer straightforward petition and intercession for the self and for others.

While the practice of scriptural *meditatio* naturally leads into dialogue with God, it can also encourage another, deeper kind of prayer. Early Christians noted the close connection between the Greek word for prayer, *proseuchē*,

and the word for vow, *euchē*. Prayer can be a kind of vow, an act of self-offering in which the self and all of one’s relationships, hopes, and concerns are consecrated, presented to God in an act of blessing that transforms and fills what is offered with new meaning. The word of consecration or blessing that effects this offering can be the same phrase that is pondered in *meditatio*. Just as the elements of bread and wine are consecrated at the Eucharist, God invites those who practice *lectio divina* to exercise their Royal Priesthood by consecrating everything that arises during *meditatio*, whether seemingly trivial “distractions”, valuable insights, or difficult and pain-filled memories. Over all of these should be gently recited the healing word or phrase God has given in *lectio*. In this *oratio*, this consecration-prayer, the innermost self together with all of one’s relationships are touched and changed by the word of God.

Contemplatio: contemplation. *Contemplatio* has traditionally been understood as an act of “gazing” that entails participation in and communion with the object of contemplation. In the context of *lectio divina* this refers to receptive, wordless prayer; silent gazing and rest in the embrace of the God who has offered his word through *lectio* and *meditatio*. In contemplation the practitioner of *lectio divina* ceases from interior spiritual *doing* and learns simply *to be*, to rest in the presence of a loving Father. Although deeply enjoyable and a source of spiritual refreshment, *contemplatio* should not be regarded as the principal goal or purpose of *lectio divina*. The quality or efficacy of *lectio divina* should not be judged by the amount of time spent in any of its phases. No spiritual technique can guarantee or even prolong true contemplative prayer, which is always a pure grace and often an unexpected gift. Instead, the awareness that this gift is sometimes offered can prepare the practitioner of *lectio divina* to cease using words when words are unnecessary, and then return joyfully to the sacred text or to *ruminatio* when the (often brief!) moment of silent *contemplatio* has passed.

3 LECTIO DIVINA AS A LABORATORY OF CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATION

The regular practice of *lectio divina* can help liberate the practitioner from a narrow modern definition of contemplation. In early Christianity the natural oscillation, described above, between “active” and “receptive” modes of spiritual experience slowly came to be associated with Platonic and Aristotelian notions of the active life (*bios praktikos*) and contemplative life (*bios theoretikos*). It was not a question of choosing or specializing in one or the other: these “lives” were presumed to interact in every person in a mutually reinforcing rhythm. The “active life” consists chiefly of the moral work of rooting out vices and practicing virtue. Contemplation entails a second balanced movement between two mutually-enhancing poles: *theoria physikē*, kataphatic, image- and word-filled contemplation of God in creation; and *theologia*, apophatic, wordless apprehension of God beyond all concepts and images. Both modes of contemplation were considered necessary for a well-balanced spirituality. *Lectio divina* teaches the practitioner to delight in moving back and forth between active and receptive experiences of God. In *lectio* the grandeur and complexity of biblical salvation history slowly focuses down on a single biblical phrase; the ruminated phrase then evokes complex personal responses. These responses, in turn, invite prayer, sometimes in words, sometimes in a simple act of consecration. At intervals one senses an opportunity to simply rest in the presence of God; then the invitation arises to return to the sacred text. As this rhythm of *lectio divina* become natural and familiar, one’s understanding of “contemplation” expands. One discovers that the same rhythm of listening and praying that reveals God in the scriptures can also be applied to that portion of salvation history that is one’s own journey of faith: the glory of God becomes perceptible in both the macrocosm of the universe and in the microcosm of one’s own heart.

4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS ON MATTER, TIME, AND SPACE

The question is often asked whether sacred scripture is the only proper matter for *lectio divina*. Throughout the history of Christian monasticism the Bible has always retained “pride of place” during the time set aside for *lectio divina*. But it is also true that certain other texts can be read in the same spirit, and will enhance one’s practice of biblical *lectio*. Benedict particularly commended to his monks the *Institutes and Conferences* of John Cassian, the *Rule of Basil*, and the *Lives and Sayings* of the desert fathers and mothers. All these have in common that they can in some sense be regarded as the fruit of other Christians’ *lectio divina*. They reflect the wisdom and experience of monks and nuns whose spiritual lives were formed and shaped by the regular praying of scripture, and they frequently cite the Bible or (in the case of the desert texts) regularly allude to biblical models and images. It could be said that they “whet the appetite” for biblical *lectio*, they encourage the reader to frequently turn back to the biblical text. The same can be said of the biblical commentaries of Origen, John Chrysostom, Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bede: these were often read together with (but never replaced!) the Bible in monastic *lectio divina*. There are modern authors whose works can similarly enhance the oblates’ or monastics’ experience of *lectio*: perhaps a simple rule of thumb is the question, “does this encourage me to return to the Bible?” If the answer is “yes,” then the text is fit matter for *lectio divina*.

It needs to be frankly admitted that oblates who are able to set aside daily time for *lectio divina* have attained a much higher level of ascetical virtue than their monastic sisters and brothers. Those who are privileged to live within monasteries experience an environment where *lectio divina* is encouraged and protected: their oblate sisters and brothers enjoy no such luxury. Life “in the world” and

Please turn to page 18.

QUARTERLY BOOK REVIEW

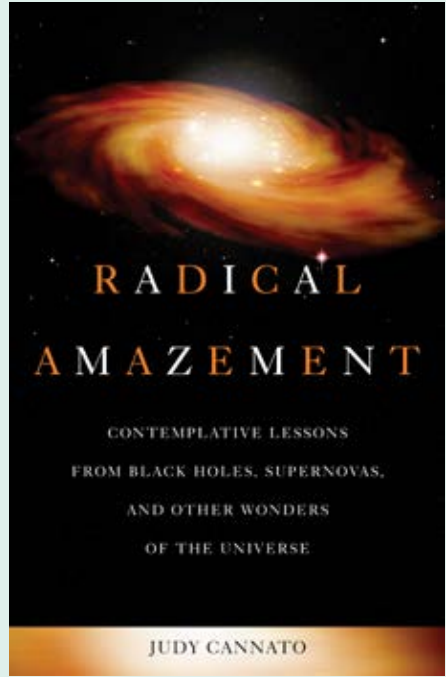
by fr. philip edwards, osb

SUNDAY AT VALYERMO — in our present practice, the havdahlic laying to rest of the Sabbath Day with Compline gives way to the expectant vigil watch for the “Eighth”, Messianic, Day of the Resurrection and “early in the morning of the first day” as the day breaks into light, Morning Praise exults: “This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad [in it].”

The consoling gardener, the bread-breaking pilgrim of the Emmaus way, the dazzling fish-eater and opener of the Scriptures of the Upper Room, renews the ancient Good News from the first days of creation and covenant: “Fear not, for I am with you,” “I have called you by name, you are mine,” “Fear not nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses!” (Isa 41:10, 43:1, 44:8) “...to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem” (Lk 24:47) “make disciples of all ... and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age”, (Mt 28:20) “but of that day and hour no one knows...” “Watch therefore” (Mt 24:36, 25:13).

For the Christian, this moment, which we call the Paschal Mystery, is the root (*radix*) of amazement, the Word Become Flesh, God With Us, suffers, truly dies and enters into the realm of the dead from which he rises to return to the right hand of the Father on the Heavenly Throne to intercede and to send the wonder-working and truth-speaking Spirit to console and to empower even greater works until that unknown hour when the Son shall return in glory to judge the living and the dead and the world by fire!

Really!?! How do I/you/we/they/anyone know all this? In the midst of what may seem the bombast of mythical mumbo-jumbo, priestcraftily logomachy, sentimental pious self-projection and wish fulfillment is a kernel of human experience witnessed and shared by a growing group of believers who remember



RADICAL AMAZEMENT
 Contemplative Lessons from the
 Black Hole, Supernovas, and other
 Wonders of the Universe

Judy Cannato, 2006 Sorin Books, Notre Dame, Indiana

and commit to written words the good news they wish to hand down. They are not virgin soil for this kernel to take root for they are, each one to varying degrees, already cultivated and enriched by being members of an ancient family of faith with its Sacred Scriptures and traditions to shape and inform them; indeed, they come to believe ever more strongly that their charismatic leader is the fulfillment of the messianic promises in those scriptures as he brings them to the Holy City for the High Holy Feast of Passover and are dismayed and dumfounded by the rejection and condemnation to death he receives from the religious and civil authorities. “Proof” for the kernel of the Resurrection itself for the modern skeptic is not directly possible, but belief in it is at the core of the Apostolic Preaching as presented

in the Book of Acts. St. Paul, a johnny-come-lately as an apostolic witness before the written remembrances that are now known as “Gospels” are published is already presenting as the received core of the Good News “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas ... last of all ... to me” (I Cor 15:3–8). Cephas, the “Rock”!?!?, that blustering, cowardly blow-hard and his ragtag band of nondescript Galileans? ... exactly so, for as they experience the Pentecostal empowerment of the promised Spirit to do the works and even greater works of their crucified and risen Master, the cowardly bluster becomes a humble but fearless constancy of proclamation and expectation even to the sacrificial death which the word for witness has become (martyrdom); “the blood of witnesses is the seed of the [Assembly called out of the world and into the Body of the Anointed One] the Church (*Ecclesia*)”. “Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil 2:11). He “is coming soon ... to repay every one for what he has done ... even so, come, Lord Jesus! [*maranatha*]” (Rev 22:12, 17). This is [the Christian’s] faith, the faith of the Church, although in the ever-lengthening time (so far only two thousand years or so) of watchful remembrance, refined facets of this gem without price have come to light.

This book follows the textbook pattern of the last two reviewed for this *Chronicle* — although the second of the two reviews has somehow irradiated into outer cyberspace in its trajectory toward these pages — each chapter presents a particular subject, followed by a “to do” list of practical reflection leading into (hopefully contemplative) prayer with a formulated prayer by the writer to conclude each chapter. The publisher’s note concerning the author tells us that she was an associate member of the CSJ and “an author, retreat facilitator, and spiritual director best known for her work connecting the New Cosmology with Christian spirituality

... she died after a battle with cancer on May 7, 2011, and is survived by her husband and two grown sons.’ She is, then, another variant of the CC, in this case Convinced Cosmologist (rather than Concrete Calvinist or Conquering Convert, etc.), and although the dates of copyright and death are separated by five years, one senses an impassioned *cri du coeur* of apocalyptic urgency against idle indifference of the unenlightened, rather like that voice from the stage in the last anxious century “Attention must be paid!”, but this is not the prophet of doom and destructive condemnation despite the ever accelerating suction of the Black Hole, but rather the kingdom-entering child who tugs your sleeve and says “Come! Look! And see what I see....”

Permit me this one long quotation from Chapter Nine, “Self Dissolution and Black Holes”:

It was once thought that nothing could get out of a black hole, but now, as a result of the work of Steven Hawking, we know there is at least the theoretical possibility of escape. A phenomenon called “Hawking radiation” implies that under certain conditions black holes can emit radiation. The theory says that the release of radiation comes from the creation of pairs of subatomic particles in the space adjacent to the black hole, with one particle getting pulled into the black hole while the other radiates away. This action is thought potentially to cause the eventual collapse of the black hole. Another name for radiation is light. What Hawking radiation suggests is that not even a black hole lies outside the influence of light. Even the smallest of particles can reverse a situation from which there seems to be no escape. A black hole’s darkness is not so definitive after all.... In every experience, even those in which the black hole has sucked us in and seems to have annihilated all that we have known ourselves to be, there is the possibility of Light ... the primary expression of creation. It is Love’s primary speech, the word made energy and Mystery made tangible. In our times of utter darkness, when all hope seems to have

vanished, along comes the faintest particle of light that collapses the hole and makes us whole! Just like the darkness itself, the light that becomes a saving grace is nearly undetectable.

It may be faint, but it is not feeble. It may not register on the visible spectrum, but it is nevertheless present and potent. And because it is there, dissolution will never have the final word.

What is required of us as we recognize that our efforts to transcend will always be countered with the threat of dissolution? The problem, I have suggested, is not our intention but our attention. But questions remain: What is it that will keep me attentive? How can I grow in awareness so that I may avoid unnecessary black holes and navigate the required ones with grace?

We know the answer: contemplation ... a prayer practice [that] slows us down so that we become aware that something is going on within us — something different, unusual, discomfoting. In the silence we more readily recognize our resistance and fear. As we grow in fidelity to contemplative prayer, we begin to change the way we meet the world. We are more awakened to life, less needy, more clear about who we are and what our life is about. We walk in peace even when we are uncertain, in assurance even when all is dark ... we avail ourselves to the creative power of the Light.... Powerless to change circumstances on our own, we are empowered by grace to become grounded again and allow all things to work together for good — our own and that of the radically amazing cosmos in which we live” (pp. 13–14).

For the Feast of the Apostles, we sing the witnesses of the Paschal Mystery sent forth to preach and to heal, heralds of the Bridegroom and His Feast, as one with the music of the spheres, the heavens which declare the Glory of God and whose “span extends through all the earth, their words to the utmost bounds of the cosmos”(Ps 19 [18V]). It is wonderful to have a moment of respite and rapprochement between scientists and theologians; may the

entente cordiale continue in humbly seeking and sharing light. May the Comfortable Conservative who eschews all “enthusiasm” accept the Charismatic Challenge of the tugged sleeve and follow the Child into the Kingdom. ✠



Fr. Philip was born the year this monastic community was founded in China. Newman — especially his Grammar of Assent — was important in his own intellectual formation. He made his monastic profession at Valyermo in 1962.

LECTIO DIVINA continued from page 15

the responsibilities of family guarantee that time intended for prayer and *lectio divina* will regularly have to be sacrificed. For this reason it is important for oblates to have alternative “quick and simple” approaches to *lectio divina* for those all-too-frequent days when minor emergencies arise. One simple approach is to place the text in a prominent place where it can be glanced at, if only briefly, while one dresses in the morning. Oblates whose faith communities emphasize liturgical worship often make use of the lectionary in their *lectio divina*. It is not difficult to leave a lectionary open on a desk or a shelf, and to glance at some portion of the day’s texts during such mundane preparations as brushing one’s teeth. It is surprising how little time it takes under such circumstances for a word or phrase to present itself for *meditatio*. Even when time for extended *meditatio* and prayer is not available, the word that was taken in can serve as a means of consecrating events and relationships throughout the day. And for those whose work involves the use of a computer, websites such as <http://www.universalis.com> permit the laborer to periodically glance at the day’s liturgical texts throughout the workday. ✠

AROUND & ABOUT THE MONASTERY



Father Eleutherius Winance, OSB († August 15, 2009) spent his long life of a hundred years in being a monk, in teaching and travelling for missionary work. When asked how he understood his monastic vow of stability in light of his great and many travels he would reply, with a characteristically sly smile, “I took a vow of stability, not of immobility.” The monks of Valyermo continue to follow in Fr. Eleutherius’ wake. Some of the travels engaged in recently have included invitations extended to monks to celebrate important national and spiritual occasions, as well as giving retreats or workshops.

Abbot Damien, the first Benedictine abbot of Samoan descent, was invited to attend the episcopal ordination of the second bishop of



Pago Pago, American Samoa, Peter Brown, CSsR. While he was there, he was invited to celebrate Mass in the village of Leone where his parents were born and where he himself was baptized.

In late September the monastic community was treated to a new annual event. The Carmelite Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Los Angeles, at their convent and retreat house in Alhambra, invited the community to a dinner and social evening, in honor of the long-standing association between the two communities. For the past two years the communities have gathered on a Sunday evening to pray Vespers, share a meal, and enjoy each others’ company. Original songs composed by Brother Angelus based on



MONKS' FEAST DAYS

Dec. 20 Fr. Isaac, OSB

Jan. 12 Fr. Aelred, OSB

Jan. 31 Fr. John Bosco, OSB

Mar. 19 Fr. Joseph, OSB

Mar. 21 Bro. Benedict, OSB

texts by St. Teresa of Jesus and Mother Lu-
isita, the foundress of that Carmelite com-
munity, as well as by one of the Sisters were
performed. This gathering is a sign of con-
tinual spiritual support and appreciation
between two communities who, for over a
decade, were neighbors in the desert. Next
year it is the Abbey's turn to host meal,
prayer and song.

In addition to his duties at St. John's Semi-
nary as teacher and a spiritual director, **Fr. Luke Dysinger** is giving a series of individual
talks on *Lectio Divina* to all Catholic high
school teachers in each of the five regions
of the LA Archdiocese. He is doing this se-
ries with Bishop Gordon Bennet, SJ, who
is speaking on Ignatian spirituality and
discernment.

Brother Angelus Echeverry, in addition to his
continuing work in musical composition, is
further honing his musical skills by taking
weekly organ lessons in Los Angeles.

Father Cassian di Rocco is back in Rome finish-
ing up his studies for a Licentiate in Sacred
Theology (STL). His academic work focusses
on Blessed John Paul II's Theology of the Body.

Father Aelred Niespolo had full hip replacement
surgery in August, and is recovering apace.
He is back as both teacher of philosophy and
Catholic Heritage, and as a spiritual director
at St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, CA. ✠

WE VALUE OUR FRIENDS AND DO NOT BUY,
RENT, SELL OR SHARE OUR MAILING LISTS

AMEN *continued from page 9*

when I first sat down and then He ended the
conversation. I'm getting nothing from God
now. All I've done so far on this retreat is to
sit. What a waste of time... I've been sitting
by the lake for well over an hour when a new
thought emerges. I slowly realize that there is
nothing more I want to do. In fact if I could
have a choice of doing anything at all right
now, there is really nothing I'd rather do than
just sit. Suddenly, something hidden has now
been revealed. I see that this was God's plan
for me all along.

God was showing me how to become silent
and just sit with Him. My idea of a spiritual
retreat was a day pack filled with "spiritual
things" to read and do. God's idea of a spiri-
tual retreat was just Him and me. God had
spoken to me. He said, "Come into My pres-
ence" and then waited silently while I busied
myself with more important things to do. God
knew what I needed and I was only going to
find it by being in His presence. I was only
going to find it in the silence and solitude. I
was only going to find it by just sitting with
Him. By the lake. At the monastery. ✠



**The Reverend John
B. Hickman** is pas-
tor of New Hope
Family Church in
Van Nuys. He en-
joys teaching this
Evangelical/Char-
ismatic church
some very "non-

Protestant" practices such as *Lectio Div-
ina*, *praying the Daily Office* and the *Prac-
tice of the Presence of God*. His first time
at St Andrew's Abby was forty-plus years
ago when, at the age of nineteen, he in-
stalled the sound system in the pasture for
the 10th Annual Fall Festival. He can be
contacted at pastorjohn@NHFC.LA



RETREAT CENTER *Calendar* 2013–2014

DECEMBER 2013

ADVENT RETREAT: *A Season of Anticipation*

Friday, November 29 – Sunday, December 1, 2013
Fr. Stephen Coffey, OSB

Stephen Coffey, OSB, a Massachusetts native, has lived monastic life in Olivetan monasteries in Pecos, New Mexico, Waialua, Hawaii, and San Luis Obispo, California. He has recently come to St. Andrew's Abbey. Father Stephen has ministered in several retreat centers and has also been involved in formation ministries. Besides serving as novice director, he has taught candidates for both priestly and diaconal formation, and for many years has been involved in the training of spiritual directors. He is a candidate for the Doctor of Ministry degree through the Washington Theological Union.

VENI, VENI, EMMANUEL: *A Silent Retreat*

Friday, December 20 – Sunday, December 22,
2013

Fr. Matthew Rios, OSB

For complete details about the 2013 retreat offerings, including descriptions and presenter information, visit our website:

SAINTANDREWSABBEY.COM

and click the Guest House link.

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CALL THE RETREAT OFFICE:

(661) 944-2178

CHRISTMAS AT VALYERMO:

Mystery of the Word made Flesh

Tuesday, Dec 24 – Thursday, Dec 26
EARLY arrivals = Monday, December 23
(additional \$50 a person)

THE NATURES ARE RENEWED

Friday, December 27 – Sunday, December 29,
2013

Fr. Maximos Davies

JESUS THE WISDOM OF GOD

"The New Year's Retreat" – (preached retreat)

Monday, December 30, 2013 – Thursday, January
2, 2014

Fr. Stephen Coffey, OSB

JANUARY 2014

DISCERNMENT IN DAILY LIFE

Friday, January 3 – Sunday, January 5, 2014
Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

THE VIRTUE OF HOSPITALITY

Monday, January 13 – Wednesday, January 15
Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

MID-WINTER DANCE WORKSHOP:

"Footsteps Before Me"

Friday, January 17 – Monday, January 20
John West, Oblate, OSB
with Fr. Philip Edwards, OSB

SPIRITUALITY AND CONTEMPORARY

CINEMA: Winter Session

Friday, January 24 – Sunday, January 26
Nikki Tucker, Oblate, OSB

PRIESTS' RETREAT: *Christ our Friend, the One who set His Face on Us*

Monday, January 27 – Friday, January 31
and

Monday, February 24 – Friday, February 28
Fr. Joseph Brennan, OSB will present the same retreat as 2013

INTER-PARISH RCIA DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Saturday ONLY, January 25
Victoria Dendinger, Oblate, OSB, PhD.
Diana Janas, Oblate, OSB

FEBRUARY 2014

MUSICA SACRA: *Sacred Music's Natural Relation to Personal and Liturgical Prayer*

Monday, February 3 – Wednesday, February 5
Br. Angelus Echeverry, OSB

THE BOOK OF JOB

Friday, February 21 – Sunday, February 23
Fr. Aelred Niespolo, OSB

BASIC KNITTING – DAY RETREAT/WORKSHOP
(limit 10 persons)

Saturday, February 22, 2014
Elizabeth Seward, Oblate, OSB

MARCH 2014

LENTEN *SILENT* RETREAT

Tuesday, March 4 – Friday, March 7
Fr. Francis Benedict, OSB

DESERT FATHERS

Friday, March 7 – Sunday, March 9
Fr. Luke Dysinger, OSB

"CUARESMA": *El tiempo litúrgico de conversión*

Sabado solamente, 29 de marzo
Carlos Obando

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PLEASE CHECK ONE DONATION BOX: One time gift only

\$1 a day (\$30 per month) \$2 a day (\$60 per month) \$3 a day (\$90 per month) Other (\$_____ per month)

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

MONTHLY CREDIT CARD PAYMENT

Charge the marked amount to my credit card each month

VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER AMERICAN EXPRESS

CARD NUMBER

EXPIRATION DATE

SIGNATURE

OR

MONTHLY CHECK TRANSACTION

ENCLOSED IS MY VOIDED CHECK. By sending this check, I authorize St. Andrew's Abbey to withdraw the marked amount from this account each month.

MONTHLY CHECK. I prefer to mail my check each month.

To change or stop your donation at any time, simply call St. Andrew's Abbey Development Office at (661) 944-8959.

DONOR INFORMATION

CHANGE OF CONTACT INFORMATION

YOUR NAME

MAILING ADDRESS

MAILING ADDRESS

PHONE NUMBER

E-MAIL ADDRESS

PRAYER REQUEST

ABBOT DAMIEN, please include the following prayer request for the monks to keep in prayer:

Your donation is tax deductible. • Thank you for helping us to preserve this house of prayer.

If you wish to remember the Abbey in your estate planning, please call (661) 944-2178.

You do not need to make any donation to ask for our prayers.

Please place this donation form in the return envelope provided.



St. Andrew's Abbey
PO Box 40
Valyermo, CA 93563-0040
RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
PAID
PERMIT NO. 1
PEARBLOSSOM, CA