How many, O Lord my God, are the wonders and designs that you have worked for us!

Psalm 40:6
This Issue

Listening and Respect

Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B.

We live in a challenging time! A time of exacerbated sensibility. A time of incredible, senseless loss, and destruction. A time when the rules for normal human behavior seem to be suspended.

Currently there are sixty-five million refugees on our fragile planet. That is more refugees then at any time in recent history. There have always been refugees: those who were forced to leave their homes or countries because of conflict, horrifying violence, or environmental catastrophe. But now the crisis is not merely local; it is a global phenomenon, stretching from Honduras to Nigeria to Myanmar, Somalia, Libya, Syria, and the list goes on.

During the past summer we witnessed an eruption of violent killings: the Istanbul Ataturk Airport suicide bombing that claimed 42 lives and injured hundreds more; the truck run in Nice, France, on Bastille Day that claimed 84 victims; the shooting in Orlando, Florida, that left 49 dead and another 53 wounded; the 3 dead police officers and 9 others wounded in Dallas; and the 3 dead and 3 wounded police officers in Baton Rouge. Any one of these incidents should give us pause. This listing taxes even those who routinely encounter violence.

What should we do? The first way to reduce the potential for violence is through careful listening that leads to understanding. Violence is often, though not always, an act of desperation. As individuals and communities, we need to understand the complexities in our own local communities, and the grinding struggle to make a living that so many people experience every day. Black people in this country, for example, lost one-half of their wealth in the 2007–2009 financial crisis, and it has not been replaced.

Many communities have significant populations of immigrants. How do we respond to this situation? Consistent with the gospel directive to love one another, Saint Benedict insists that we respect all people (Rule 72).

When we encounter people of non-majority cultures at the bank, in the grocery store, or at the dentist’s office, greeting them and acknowledging them will help to lower their level of stress and anxiety. As a monastic community, we need to do more, to work with the local diocese to reduce misconceptions about the Islamic faith, especially in our strongly Catholic environment in central Minnesota. A commitment to respect takes us beyond stereotyping: it honors the individuality of human beings, each made in the image and likeness of God.

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B.

Let them practice their craft with all humility . . . . “that in all things God may be glorified [1 Peter 4:11].” Rule of Benedict 17.1, 9

This issue of Abbey Banner highlights two of the crafts practiced at Saint John’s since its founding. Saint Benedict expected his monks to attend to the needs of the monastery through the labor of their hands, and to exercise their crafts humbly, for the honor and glory of God. The pioneer monks of Saint John’s harvested rocks from the local area to create the firm foundation on which our earliest buildings were constructed. Brother Aaron Raverty outlines the history of rock building in Collegeville. The oak and pine forest that surrounds Saint John’s has also been a significant factor in our community’s craft and building. We learn about the most recent addition to the landscape: a wooden bridge on the Stella Maris Chapal Trail.

The feast of Saint Benedict, 11 July, is the traditional date on which monks profess or renew their vows as Benedictines and give thanks to God for the blessings and grace showered on this community. This year’s showers were actually a pouring rain but did not dampen the spirit of that festive day. We meet our newly professed Brother Cassian Hunter and jubilarians celebrating twenty-five, fifty, sixty, and even seventy years of monastic life and ministry. We also hear Brother Efraín Rosado reflect on his service as a deacon.

Our community’s ministry and service would not be possible without the generosity of our friends and benefactors. Father Geoffrey Ficht leads our community in offering thanks for the support of so many donors and volunteers. Mr. Francesc Gomis Dominech, a Benedictine Volunteer from Catalonia, outlines his service in Collegeville and his impressions of monastic life and ministry.

Since settling in central Minnesota one hundred sixty years ago, the monks of Saint John’s Abbey have attempted to be good stewards of the land and lakes. In 1997 this commitment to stewardship led the community to designate the abbey lands a natural arboretum. The prairie, woods, and wetlands of the Saint John’s Abbey Arboretum are home to a great diversity of wildlife, including songbirds, water and shore birds, and birds of prey. Dr. Philip Chu introduces us to two of the smallest summer residents: Cerulean and Blue-winged warblers.

Abbot John Klassen opens this issue suggesting that listening and respect are critical elements of our personal and corporate response to the horrible violence and instability of our changing world. Father Timothy Backous closes with a reflection on the power of love, in sickness and in health. We also learn about the autumn Triduum, about the life of a Benedictine pope and saint, about a life-changing event at a cookie jar, and more.

The editorial staff of Abbey Banner joins Abbot John and the monks of Saint John’s Abbey in extending prayerful best wishes to our readers and gratitude for your support.

Brother Robin Pierzina, O.S.B.
D uring the Eucharist on 11 July, the feast of Saint Benedict, Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B., and the monks of Saint John’s Abbey rejoiced as Novice Cassian Will Hunter professed simple (temporary) vows as a Benedictine monk. Brother Cassian, 29, brings a flavoring of the South to Collegeville. Born in Indianapolis, he grew up just outside of Atlanta and was educated in Nashville, first at Belmont University, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in religion and the arts, and then at Vanderbilt Divinity School, where he completed a master of theological studies degree. He learned of Saint John’s Abbey while serving as a live-in volunteer at Loaves and Fishes Catholic Worker in Duluth, Minnesota.

“I got the idea that I wanted to be a monk after a visit to the Trappist Abbey of Gethsemani in Kentucky,” Brother Cassian explains. “I had heard that monks were to ‘receive all guests as Christ,’ but I could not have guessed the impact such reception would have on me. A Trappist monk’s simple, authentic happiness and heartfelt reception, anything but contrived, cut deeply within me and exposed the seed of my monastic vocation.” Beginning in July 2015, that seed was nurtured in the novitiate of Saint John’s Abbey, where Cassian discerned his call to Benedictine monasticism. “To me,” observes Cassian, “Benedictine life is about quieting oneself down in order to listen for God’s Word and find Christ in all things: in guests, in the community gathered at the liturgy, in our daily work, in study, and in the natural world. I came to Saint John’s in particular because I found the intellectual life of the community to be a good fit for me.”

Following profession, Brother Cassian is working in the Saint John’s University Campus Ministry office.

Ordination

In the presence of family, friends, and confreres, Brother Efraín Rosado, O.S.B., was ordained to the transitional diaconate by Saint Cloud Bishop Donald Kettler on 9 July 2016. As a deacon Brother Efraín assists with the administration of the sacraments of marriage and baptism for the faith community at the Church of Saint Boniface in Cold Spring, Minnesota. He continues to teach Christian formation classes and Bible study lessons at Saint Boniface and organizes the liturgy for the Spanish Sunday Mass. During the academic year, he also assists with the monthly Spanish Mass at the College of Saint Benedict.

Following his ordination, Brother Efraín reflected: “For me, to be an ordained minister is a heavenly blessing and a great responsibility. A blessing because it is a vocation that comes from Jesus the Lord; and a great responsibility because it requires me to become a messenger of the Gospel of peace, mercy, and redemption for all those I serve. I also realize that ordination to the diaconate and priesthood enriches and ratifies my monastic vows, vows that call me to embrace unreservedly a life of faithfulness to Christ and of diligent service to my brothers and sisters.”

D uring a festive Eucharist on a soggy feast of Saint Benedict, Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B., and the monks of Saint John’s Abbey honored seven of their jubilarians on the occasion of milestone anniversaries of monastic profession. “Benedict believes in the human capacity to live into grace, especially in the give-and-take of community living,” said Abbot John. “Today we celebrate the grace that has been present to us in our jubilarians. Twenty-five, fifty, sixty, and seventy years ago, our jubilarians made profession in the presence of the Saint John’s community.”

Platinum (70) Jubilarian

For seventy years Father Kilian McDonnell, O.S.B., of Great Falls, Montana, has thrived in the monastic manner of life. A noted scholar, author, and teacher, he is the founder of the Collegerville Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research. His life reflects an expansive approach to the Benedictine vow of stability: traveling widely, but never leaving this planet, on behalf of Church dialogue commissions. From 1972 until 1992 Father Kilian served as the Catholic co-chair of the international dialogue between Classical Pentecostals and Roman Catholics. For fifteen years he served as consultant to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the Vatican ecumenical office. He was also a member of the international dialogues with Disciples of Christ, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, and the national dialogues with Lutherans and Presbyterians. When he did land in Collegeville, Father Kilian served on the faculty of Saint John’s University School of Theology. In 1983 he received the Papal Award for Ecumenism, Pro Pontifice et Ecclesia. “For distinguished contributions to theology and the Church,” the Catholic Theological Society of America awarded him the John Courtney Murray Award in 1995. At age 75, Kilian embarked on a new career: publishing poetry. Six books of verse later, he continues his literary excursions.

Diamond (60) Jubilarians

Three members of the monastic class of 1956, Fathers Rene McGraw, O.S.B., and Simeon Thole, O.S.B., and Brother Otto Thole, O.S.B., were present for the celebration of their sixtieth anniversary of monastic profession. Generations of college students of Father Rene McGraw have benefited from his rigorous and insightful teaching of philosophy, learning how to read a difficult text closely. Equally blessed are thousands of students, including the current president of Saint John’s University, Toleby, who as freshmen were nurtured and mentored by this longtime university faculty resident. Born in Litchfield and raised in Little Falls, Minnesota, Rene began a lifetime of learning at Saint John’s in our prep school. He served the monastic community as formation director for six challenging years. His prodding and personal commitment to nonviolence and Benedictine Pax helped guide university faculty and administrators to introduce a peace studies major. Toleby and Dostoyevsky are regularly quoted in his homilies, and despite an occasional foreshadowing cloud over his prophetic comments, he has the faith and confidence of Julian of Norwich: “All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.” Alas, that faith and confidence are being sorely tested: Rene is also an avid Minnesota Twins fan.

The community is constant in opening itself to the mystery of God’s love. None of us knows what will be asked of us. We do know that Christ will always be with us. Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B.
Father Simeon Thole, inferred Abbot John, “graded enough papers to reduce any time in purgatory” during his ten years of teaching English at Saint John’s Preparatory School, in addition to service as a dorm prefect. Years of careful reading of theology and monastic topics in general, and Scripture in particular, have produced thoughtful and well-crafted homilies, assisting him to be an effective pastor for several local parishes and beloved chaplain for the sisters at Mount Saint Benedict Monastery, Crookston, Minnesota. All his pastoral and educational training was tested by his appointment as and educational training was tested by his appointment as Brother Walter Kieffer as refectorian for the community’s monastery, repairing, cleaning, or replacing as needed. As refectorian for the community’s special meals (feast days, major events), Neal brings to the table lovely flavors, aroma, and presentation that are not typical of rural Minnesota. Caribbean-spiced fare is a specialty. Nor does he underestimate the quantity of food needed. The monastic community can safely predict what the noon meal on Monday and Tuesday will include, following Sunday’s special celebration. From mufflers to mangos, from pinto beans to mangoes, from pinto beans to mangoes, from poncho to papaya, Brother Neal serves and services the community with zeal and zest.

Golden (50) Jubilarians
Fifty years ago, Brother Walter Kieffer, O.S.B., and Father Cyprian Weaver, O.S.B., made their first profession of vows as Benedictines. Introduced to Saint John’s through our preparatory school, Brother Walter Kieffer was a youngster of twenty when he began his monastic life. For a quarter-century, with his mentors Brothers Eddie Zwak and Victor McMahon, Walter learned what keeps Saint John’s running through its plumbing infrastructure. He unstuck a lot of stuff. For decades he also worked in the wastewater treatment plant, assisting in the separation of the storm and sanitary sewer systems, and in the introduction of an ozone treatment system. For thirty-five years Walter served on the fire department, thirty years as chief. During his tenure, there were no major fires at Saint John’s, “because,” he explains with Lake Wobegon logic, “we put them out when they were still small.” Throughout his monastic life he has been acquainted with the sweet side of Saint John’s: as coordinator, tree tapper, and cooker in the maple syrup operation. In his golden years Brother Walter ministers as an ordained deacon and a faculty resident for college freshmen. From plumbing to waste-water management to the woods, he knows a lot of stuff. After beginning monastic life at Saint Gregory’s Abbey in Oklahoma, Father Cyprian Weaver now calls Collegeville his home, though stability of place has evaded him. With a remarkably inquisitive and creative mind, a host of master’s degrees, and doctoral degrees in human biology and neuroendocrinology, pancreatic pathology, Cyprian is a brilliant educator. He has taught our prep school and college students, and graduate students around the globe. While the director of our university research laboratory, he designed a state-of-the-art lab and conducted diabetes research while mentoring numerous undergraduate “lab rats.” His love of learning led him to master the Chinese language while a visiting professor at several universities in the People’s Republic of China. For eleven years he was a faculty member or director of the Medical College, Fu Jen University, Republic of China. More recently Cyprian has served as associate professor of medicine and principal investigator in the University of Minnesota’s department of medicine, along with numerous other multimodal positions. A survivor of a 7.6 earthquake in Taiwan (1999) and of gastric cancer (2005), Father Cyprian continues his quest to serve God and humankind through medical science with a monastic heart.

Silver (25) Jubilarian
A native of Trinidad who first became acquainted with monastic life through our former priory, Saint Augustine’s Monastery in The Bahamas, Brother Neal Laloo, O.S.B., celebrated twenty-five years of monastic commitment in Collegeville. Neal’s primary talents and interests include an unlikely pairing of mechanical abilities and culinary skills. As coordinator for the maintenance of abbey cars, he is well acquainted with the theoretical—what might go wrong with an automobile; and with reality—what will go wrong, depending on the driving skills of the particular monk. He also attends to the upkeep of two cabins that belong to the Abbey Montreal, repairing, cleaning, or replacing as needed. As refectorian for the community’s special meals (feast days, major events), Neal brings to the table lovely flavors and presentations that are not typical of rural Minnesota. Caribbean-spiced fare is a specialty. Nor does he underestimate the quantity of food needed. The monastic community can safely predict what the noon meal on Monday and Tuesday will include, following Sunday’s special celebration. From mufflers to mangos, from pinto beans to mangoes, from pinto beans to mangoes, from poncho to papaya, Brother Neal serves and services the community with zeal and zest.

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Abbey Banner Fall 2016

Francesc Gomis Domènech

Ever since I completed my university studies in Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain), the idea of serving abroad as a volunteer has been in my thoughts. I longed for new experiences, far away from my country, and learning about another culture. However, I started a job in a maritime company in Barcelona. After six months, when my employment contract ended, I saw clearly it was time to start my volunteer adventure. At that moment, I didn’t know where or when, but my intention was clear. I even turned down some job offers in Barcelona.

Because I was acquainted with the monks of Santa Maria de Montserrat Abbey in Catalonia, I spoke about my volunteer hopes with Father Sergi d’Assís Gelpí, the coordinator of the Benedictine Volunteers serving at Montserrat. Father Sergi is the headmaster of the Escolania de Montserrat—one of the oldest and most famous European boys’ choir, in which I sang for four years. My goal was to volunteer in a country where English is the main language, because I wanted to improve my English skills. The option of volunteering at Saint John’s Abbey came up early in our conversation. Saint John’s in central Minnesota is a big, rural abbey, like Montserrat, with extra rooms, food, and a lot of work to do. Father Sergi contacted Brother Paul Richards, the director of the Benedictine Volunteer Corps (BVC), and explained my situation and my intentions. All this happened during the last days of January 2016. One month later I landed at the Minneapolis-Saint Paul airport to start my service.

Before I came to Minnesota, I knew what my job as a volunteer would be: help with the Spanish lessons in Saint John’s Preparatory School and work in the abbey woodworking shop. I had no experience teaching Spanish nor working with wood, but fortunately that was not a big problem! I was also aware that I would have the opportunity to live with the monks and pray with them each day. I taught Spanish for three months, until May. Since my mother tongue is Catalan, rather than Spanish, I can say I’m bilingual! My help was welcomed by Brother Lucián López and Mr. Martina Talic, the Spanish teachers at the prep school. I think the three of us were a good team in the Spanish department. I was in charge of conversation exercises, usually with small groups of three or four, although sometimes with just one student. I was surprised by the really good Spanish skills of some students.

My other primary job as a Benedictine Volunteer is in the abbey woodworking shop. The woodworking team is nice: Mr. John Grobe, Mr. Michael Ronske, Father Lew Grobe, Mr. Rob Lillard, Mr. David Lorenz, and Mr. Will Johnson. I don’t consider myself a woodworker, but they make me feel like one of them. Usually I work with the small projects, such as crosses, stands, funerary urns, and other products.

During my time at Saint John’s I have learned how the monks live day by day: their jobs, their prayers, their feasts, etc. I knew a little about monastic life before I came to Collegeville, because I studied in the Benedictine school in Montserrat, but every abbey has its own way of living and praying. Nowadays I believe it is easy to think that a monastery is a kind of prison in our society! In Spain, for example, the majority of young people think of a monastery as a really isolated place, and they think the monks live away from reality. In contrast, at Saint John’s Abbey nothing could be further from the truth. One of the things that I really like about this monastery is that it is open. Everybody is welcome, and that is really nice. Saint John’s Abbey operates an amazing educational enterprise: Saint John’s Preparatory School, Saint John’s University, and the School of Theology. This means many monks have connections with numerous students, usually young people; and as everybody knows, youth is the driver of our society! For this reason, I think the BVC is a great opportunity not only for young men to learn about Benedictine life around the world but also for Benedictine abbey around the world to open their doors to young people.

During my six months at Saint John’s I enjoyed two of the big holidays in America: Memorial Day and Independence Day. The way the monks celebrate both was similar: cookout in the backyard; eating hot dogs, corn on the cob, hamburgers, and ice cream; drinking beer, and playing volleyball. I also had the opportunity to travel and visit some big cities in the U.S., such as Philadelphia, Miami, New York City, Chicago, Boston, and, of course, the Twin Cities. And I sampled a little bit of the American college life: I lived on campus, watched college sports and musical performances, and enjoyed parties with Johnnies and Bennies. I even witnessed the “great feast” of college graduation.

I would like to thank the monks of Saint John’s Abbey—and especially Brother Paul Richards, the BVC director, and his assistant, Mr. Nick Crowley—for giving me this opportunity. I also thank Father Sergi d’Assís Gelpí, who recommended Saint John’s as a good place to serve as a volunteer. And I thank my family and friends for supporting me in my decisions, and the new friends I met in America for allowing me to thoroughly enjoy my time as a Benedictine Volunteer in the United States of America.

Mr. Francesc Gomis Domènech received a bachelor’s degree in nautical and maritime transportation studies from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia and served as director of Collegeville Port Authority during this summer’s shipping season.
Autumn’s Sacred Triduum

Michael Kwatra, O.S.B.

Our yearly observance of the paschal Tridium—Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday, the heart of the liturgical year—is a celebration of the paschal mystery: God’s plan for our salvation in the dying and rising of Jesus, in which we share through baptism. But there is another sacred triduum in the Church’s year: Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls’ Day. These three days, too, form a holy time for celebrating the paschal mystery and the communion of saints that springs from it. The solemnity of All Saints is the theological heart of the Church’s autumn triduum, but its chronological beginning is the eve of all hallows, or Halloween.

Halloween shows how the Church transformed a pagan festival of death into a celebration of everlasting life in Christ, the life that flourished in all the saints. Among the ancient people of the British Isles, 31 October was the day of death, the beginning of winter. During this night, souls of the dead were thought to flee their cold forest abodes to seek shelter and food from their kinsfolk. Glowing jack-o’-lanterns, first carved out of turnips and later out of pumpkins, served to scare away any undesirable visitors from the spirit world.

The Church tried to supplant such practices with liturgical veneration of the saints, our Christian ancestors, on 1 November. Scary costumes affirm the Christian victory over evil: if children can assume the guise of monsters and ghouls, then Christ’s triumph over the powers of darkness has broken evil’s ultimate hold on human lives. Christ lives to save us from all that would do us physical or spiritual harm. Better than any jack-o’-lantern could, Christ our light puts evil to flight.

Halloween, the eve of all hallows, is a public proclamation that Jesus, the conqueror of death, hell, and the devil, has hallowed all human life. All Saints is the public celebration of those who knew, spoke, and lived this truth as Christ’s disciples. These holy days summon us to push back the power of evil in our world. The scariest thing about Halloween may not be spooky costumes or haunted houses but our failure to embrace and live the reign of God as did the saints.

All Saints

The solemnity of All Saints is the liturgy’s fullest expression of our belief in the communion of saints. While many individual saints have a feast day on the liturgical calendar, this solemnity celebrates God’s holy ones from all times and places. On All Saints we gaze through the eyes of John the Seer: “I had a vision of a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation, race, people, and tongue (Revelation 7:9). This great assembly proclaims why they are there: “Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne, and from the Lamb” (7:10). The death and resurrection of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, is the source of their salvation and ours.

The Gospel of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12), proclaimed on All Saints, shows us the way to God’s kingdom. These words of consolation show us the happiness of the saints at journey’s end, but they also challenge us to walk that difficult road. The saints are people who made the Beatitudes their trusted roadmap to the throne of God; they are people whom God made expert guides for those still on the way. Our desire to be blessed, to be saints in God’s future, should determine what we are doing in our present: living the Beatitudes and letting them shape us into God’s holy ones.

All Saints is our grateful recognition of God’s holy ones for who they were, what they did, and what they continue to do for us in the communion of saints. This day is the greatest celebration of the Christian family in its final triumph over sin and death.

All Souls

The Church celebrates All Saints at the very time the northern world’s vegetation is dying. November confronts us with death, with closing up, and sealing in. Even the trees know this. But we know that though the trees look dead, they are resting up for next year’s growing.

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed takes tangible form among our Hispanic sisters and brothers who celebrate El Dia de los Muertos, the Day of the Dead. They remember and honor their deceased loved ones by setting up decorated altars called ofrendas. The spirits are remembered with offerings of food and other things that they enjoyed in life. This is one way that Christians, in the midst of November’s dying, fling a challenge into the face of death. In this time of natural bleakness and gloom, we say to death: “You have no permanent grip on us.” Instead we celebrate all who have died. They, like the seed, rest in the earth, but they also live with God. For God’s life in all the living is stronger than death. The shared life of all the faithful in the one body of Christ is not broken by death.

To believers in Christ, death means not decay but harvest. Death is not the end; it is the fruition, the fulfillment of the seed of eternal life that became ours at baptism. Those who have died are part of the rich harvest of eternal life, the harvest that the Lord Jesus will gather into his kingdom on the last day. On All Souls’ Day we pray that the departed will rejoin to be at home with God, sharing in God’s eternal day.

As the liturgical year draws to a close, the celebrations of Halloween, All Saints, and All Souls return us to the paschal images of dying and rising that form the heart of Lent, the paschal Triduum, and Eastertide. The three-day harvest festival also points us forward to the final gathering of God’s holy ones at the end of time.

Father Michael Kwatra, O.S.B., liturgy director of Saint John’s Abbey, is a faculty resident at Saint John’s University.
In July, eight monks, including Abbot John Klassen, and several lay volunteers enrolled in a timber-framing class at the North House Folk School in Grand Marais, Minnesota. Their task: construct a wooden, covered footbridge for the Stella Maris Chapel Trail, to replace the deteriorating concrete-block bridge. Their medium: milled wood from the abbey arboretum—white oak, and white “heritage” pine that had been harvested after the disastrous 2011 storm. Their tools: whirring circular saws, scraping scrub planers, gouging drill bits, roaring routers, and one thundering chain mortiser. Their guides: instructors Mr. Peter Henrikson and Mr. Tom Healy, and the tradition of sustainable timber-framing at Saint John’s, dating to the 1880s. The outcome: hundreds of segments of wood were measured, cut, trimmed, and fit into place—every mortise-and-tenon joint, a work of art!—and reassembled in August on the shores of Lake Sagatagan.
Southerners in the Arboretum

Philip Chu

When one thinks of birds in the Saint John’s Abbey Arboretum, the first phrase that comes to mind is not “southern warblers,” but in fact two warblers with mainly southern distributions approach the northwest extremes of their breeding ranges here. These are the Cerulean Warbler (Setophaga cerulea) and the Blue-winged Warbler (Vermivora cyanoptera).

Cerulean Warblers

In the 1930s the Cerulean Warbler was thought to be a rare summer resident in southeastern Minnesota (Roberts 1932); however, the species is now known to be more widespread. The Minnesota Biological Survey, which began in 1987 and is ongoing, found the Cerulean in summer to be scattered throughout the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province as far northwest as Otter Tail and Becker counties.

The Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province is a belt of hardwoods that crosses the state from southeast to northwest—and, within this belt in central Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (2016) states that the Cerulean Warbler is found in “upland oak, maple, and/or basswood dominated forests, usually in tracts with numerous wooded potholes or wet meadow openings.” This is an excellent description of forested tracts in the abbey arboretum. Moreover, the Cerulean has a preference for nesting in, singing from, and feeding in white oaks (Bushue et al. 2013), and according to abbey land manager Tom Kroll, white oaks make up five to ten percent of the oaks in the arboretum woods.

Cerulean Warblers are birds of the treetops. They tend to feed in the forest canopy, with MacNeil (2010) finding average foraging heights of about fifty-five feet for females and sixty-five feet for males. The species also nests high—Rogers (2006) found mean nest height to exceed sixty feet.

Breeding Bird Survey data from the U. S. Geological Survey suggest that Cerulean Warbler populations have been declining at a rate of approximately three percent per year. This decline has been attributed to loss of mature forest, to fragmentation of the forest that remains, to loss of important tree species like white oak, and, in tracts harvested for timber, to timber rotation periods that are too short to allow for the production of mature trees (Bushue et al. 2013). Though the decline has been insufficient to prompt the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Cerulean as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, that decline, as well as further declines projected for Minnesota, did lead the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to list the warbler as a Special Concern Species in 1996.

Blue-winged Warblers

Like the Cerulean Warbler, the Blue-winged Warbler was considered to be a rare summer resident in southeastern Minnesota in the 1930s (Roberts 1932)—and, like the Cerulean, it is now known to be more widely distributed. The Minnesota Biological Survey found it in summer to be scattered throughout the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province as far northwest as Wright County, and it is now found here in Stearns County as well.

Whereas the Cerulean Warbler breeds in mature forests, the Blue-winged Warbler breeds in sites with thick shrub cover and dense patches of herbaceous vegetation near the forest edge or in forest clearings (Gill et al. 2001). A relative of the Blue-winged Warbler is the Golden-winged Warbler. Studies summarized by Gill et al. (2001) indicate that, as the range of the more southerly Blue-winged expanded northward into the range of the more northerly Golden-winged, the former tended to increase while the latter tended to decrease. In any one area, the usual result has been that Blue-wingeds have been more abundant as eastern forests were cleared, and as some of the cleared areas were allowed to regrow, with the result, according to Gill et al., that Blue-wingeds have been expanding northward since at least the late 1800s.

As befits a bird favoring shrubby areas near woodland edges, the Blue-winged’s activities tend to occur at modest heights. Though the Blue-winged forages primarily in the top half of woody vegetation, that vegetation is typically less than twenty feet tall, consisting of shrubs and small trees (Ficken and Ficken 1968). Nests are located on or near the ground, among, for example, goldenrod or raspberry stems (Gill et al. 2001).

Both Cerulean and Blue-winged warblers—though predomi-
Hospitality

William Cahoy

Benedictines are well known for their hospitality: a ready welcome, hearty food and plenty of it, a listening ear, even a warm bed if needed. In a world of strangers and superficial intimacy, this hospitality is a true gift.

Benedictine hospitality—or any authentic hospitality—suggests a different way to think about the interplay of identity and openness. All too readily we assume that identity and openness to the other operate in a zero-sum relation such that the stronger our identity, the less open we will be. Conversely, the more open we are to others, the weaker our identity becomes an impetus for seeing the other as an infection or cancer to be excised in the name of ethnic, ideological, or religious purity. In such a world hospitality is a profound witness to the Gospel, to the love of God for all God’s children. Hospitality, openness, and love of the other do not weaken our identity as Christians. They are what that identity looks like.

Ultimately, this rhythm of identity and openness is rooted in nothing less than the very nature of God as Trinity. The amazing affirmation that the underlying, creative reality of the universe, God, is such that real identity—unity—is not diminished by real difference—three Persons. This eternal dance of identity and difference in love is the life of God, a life we are called to live, imitate, and make present in the world. Benedictine hospitality is a witness to this reality of God. It is a witness the world and the Church desperately need. It is about far more than simply being nice. It requires care for the well-being of others, regardless of whether they think, believe, or behave like I do. It takes practice, formation, and commitment to persist in this hospitality.

Let all guests be received like Christ.
Rule of Benedict 53.1

While Benedictines may be distinctively formed in the practice of hospitality, they teach us that welcome of the other is part of our identity as Christians. We can best show our gratitude for the hospitality we have received by making it a practice not limited to the monastery.

Dr. William Cahoy was dean of Saint John’s School of Theology and Seminary, 1999–2015.

The Prior
Eric Hollas, O.S.B.

That prior shall perform respectfully the duties enjoined on him by his abbot and do nothing against the abbot’s will or direction.
Rule of Benedict 65.16

By current standards Saint Benedict’s job description for the prior is spare. He makes clear that the work of the prior—who oversees the daily activities of the monastery and leads the community in the absence of the abbot—derives entirely from the abbot. He does the abbot’s bidding, and in practical terms he does all those things for which the abbot has neither the time nor inclination to do.

What is startling are the qualities that are absent from the list. Imagination isn’t there. Nor did Benedict suggest that the abbot find a self-starter for the job. As prized as these qualities may be today, they weren’t what Benedict had in mind when he considered the ideal prior.

What stirred Benedict’s passions about this? As is the case elsewhere in his Rule, experience was one of his teachers. There were stories about priors who set themselves up as rivals to the abbot. Some lorded it over the brothers. A few saw this as the chance to eradicate the boatload of faults that previous superiors had tolerated in the community. Still others favored friends. All this left a bad taste, and Benedict summed it up succinctly. “There are some who become inflated with the evil spirit of pride and consider themselves second abbots. By usurping power they foster scandals and cause dissensions in the community” (RB 65.2). Since Benedict’s time nearly every community has ignored his warning and had a prior anyway. What makes it work now? For one thing, monastic tradition and Church law clearly define the role of the prior. Nor is anyone confused about the source of the prior’s power—least of all the prior. It has also helped to assign to the prior all sorts of responsibilities that no ambitious monk would want to tackle.

Perhaps most important has been a renewed appreciation of the kind of service that Benedict expected of anyone in authority. “Let him know that his duty is rather to profit his brethren than to preside over them” (RB 64.8). Addressed to the abbot, this admonition applies equally well to the prior, the cellarer, the novice, and everyone in between.

Father Eric Hollas, O.S.B., is deputy to the president for advancement at Saint John’s University.

Rule of Benedict
Gregory the Great
Aidan Putnam, O.S.B.

Saint Gregory the Great has been called the Doctor of Desire because he, as much as anyone, contributed to the Benedictine spirituality of preparing for the joys of Easter with a holy longing (Rule of Benedict 49). His pastoral and theological insights reveal a passionate and complicated man shaped by competing pulls toward worldly life and contemplative prayer. In his Life of Saint Benedict, we see Gregory illustrating a lifelong journey, not without struggles, toward a balanced life in community, marked by moderation and deep awareness of God. His ideas and examples have strongly shaped both the tradition of monastic vows and the pilgrimage of Christian life outside the cloister, demonstrating the virtues of temperance and compunction in a life committed to self-knowledge leading to prayers of repentance. However, if we keep his messages on justice and temperance in mind when we consider his theme of compunction, or being “pierced to the heart” by awareness of God, we find that Gregory espouses a more redeeming than condemning view of guilt. “Whoever wishes to be an adherent of the true wisdom,” he says, “must steer a steady course between two extremes: the heart that can feel no pain has no solid virtue; on the other hand, the one who feels pain to be greater than it is, is a stranger to the guidance of virtue.” May Saint Gregory the Great, servant of the servants of God, intercede for us that we may be shaped by such wisdom and led by such virtue!

Gregory lived in a tumultuous time much like our own. He was born in 540 to a wealthy Roman family, and pursued a secular career until his 30s, when he became a monk. He had held civic responsibility, prosecution, and ambition—not to mention humility and abundant grace. For instance, Gregory’s description of Benedict’s search for self-knowledge leading to knowledge of God puts flesh on the idea of obedience in a way that rules and statutes cannot. One commentator on the Dialogues notes: “Living with yourself is the root of living with others; it is the password to all communal life. In this interior solitude the monk can begin to recognize and learn continuously how to live with the Other.”

Gregory emphasizes that the divine will is eternal life for us, and that eternal life comes about through long, sometimes arduous, conversion. To illustrate the “conversion to the monastic way of life” promised in monastic vows, Gregory’s Dialogues contrast spectacular miracles with invisible miracles. To Gregory, the raising of Lazarus from the dead was less of a miracle than Paul’s conversion. Lazarus’ return to physical life would be temporary, but Paul’s entrance to spiritual life would be eternal. “Conversion,” says another commentator, “is the greater miracle, even though it may be evoked by nothing more than a prayer or a word of consolation.”

Perhaps the most challenging aspects of Gregory’s thought for our modern sensibilities is his seemingly pessimism in regard to human nature and his apparent appreciation for sorrow and repentance. However, if we keep his messages on justice and temperance in mind when we consider his theme of compunction, or being “pierced to the heart” by awareness of God, we find that Gregory espouses a more redeeming than condemning view of guilt. “Whoever wishes to be an adherent of the true wisdom,” he says, “must steer a steady course between two extremes: the heart that can feel no pain has no solid virtue; on the other hand, the one who feels pain to be greater than it is, is a stranger to the guidance of virtue.” May Saint Gregory the Great, servant of the servants of God, intercede for us that we may be shaped by such wisdom and led by such virtue!

Brother Aidan Putnam, O.S.B., assists at the abbey guesthouse and teaches theater at Saint John’s Preparatory School.

Love itself is knowledge: the more one loves, the more one knows.
Saint Gregory the Great

Monks and Dragons
A certain monk there was so inconstant and fickle of mind, that he desired to leave the abbey and continually begged that he might be discharged. He was no sooner out of the abbey gate, when he found a dragon waiting for him with open mouth. About to be devoured, he cried out, “Help, help! For this dragon will eat me up.” At the noise the monks ran out, but they saw no dragon, only the reluctant monk, shaking and trembling. They brought him back, and he promised that he would never more forsake the monastery. By the prayers of the holy man Benedict, he saw the dragon coming against him, whom before, when he did not see him, he had willingly followed.

Life of Saint Benedict, chapter 25

Abbey Banner Fall 2016
Meet a Monk: David Paul Lange

Brother David Paul was born in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, one of four children of John and Rita Lange. His family was no stranger to Saint John’s as his father, now retired, taught mathematics at Saint John’s University for forty years and served as its dean from 1969-1972. His mother worked as a special education teacher in the Saint Cloud school district for over thirty-five years. Besides his father’s faculty connections, the family would often visit the campus to enjoy the lakes and woods.

After graduating from Apollo High School, David Paul attended Saint Olaf College where he was awarded a bachelor’s degree in philosophy in 1985. It was during his junior year, however, that the first of three crucial conversations in his life took place. While he was home for the holidays, Father Daniel Durken, O.S.B. (1929–2014), who was a frequent guest of his family, casually asked him a question that would change the course of his life. Would he be interested in staying at the monastery? Would he be interested in staying at the monastery to see what it was like to be a monk? It was a question that no one had ever asked him, but he was more than excited to accept the offer. It wasn’t until his senior year abroad, however, that what he had experienced during his visit to the abbey began to blossom in his mind. Away from home and country, he had more time to think, and he began to ask the bigger questions. What was life really all about? How did he want to spend his time? The world was in the midst of a Cold War, and David Paul reflected on the real possibilities of war, destruction, and societal decline. His ruminations led him to decide quietly that he would give monastic life a try.

The first person he told was his father who gave him immediate and generous support, something which David Paul says helped affirm his choice. “It seemed like the right path forward,” he recalls.

A second crucial conversation took place in 1992, during the summer he professed his solemn (lifetime) vows as a Benedictine monk. And it happened at a cookie jar! As David Paul was reaching for an afternoon treat, Father Hugh Witzmann, O.S.B. (1928–2012), a veteran art teacher at Saint John’s University, suddenly and unexpectedly said to him: “David Paul, I think you should take my sculpture class this fall. I think you’d really enjoy it.” It should be noted that as a college student, David Paul had taken a drawing class that he remembers as “a disaster.” So much so that he avoided the art building from that semester forward. But something deep inside him responded positively to Father Hugh’s invitation, and from that moment on, art became his passion, his career, his purpose. David Paul adds: “I guess the moral of that story is: eat more cookies!”

He went on to get a degree in art at Saint John’s and soon set off to study further at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design from 1996–1998, where a third crucial conversation would cement his future as an artist and teacher. Mr. Robert Archambeau, a noted ceramic artist and potter, was passing through the Twin Cities and stopped to visit with David Paul’s sculpture teacher. When David Paul poked his head into the office, he was introduced to and instructed to give this visitor a quick tour including his own studio. When David Paul mentioned that he was in the process of visiting graduate schools and shared his list of possibilities, Professor Archambeau encouraged him to visit Southern Illinois University Edwardsville which he claimed had a great sculpture program. It turned out that this was indeed the perfect place for the young monk artist, and it was there that he earned a master of fine arts degree in 2001 under the mentorship of Professor Tom Gipe.

The Holy Spirit has ways of touching our lives, if we are open to trying something that might stretch us a bit,” he asserts. His life was changed by three serendipitous conversations that led to three amazing invitations. He’s mighty thankful for accepting all three.

When asked what monastic life has to offer our world, Brother David Paul notes that, more than anything else, our way of life offers constant prayer that helps keep an individual focused on the bigger picture and the most important issues of any life: the search for God, the support of others, and the beauty of simplicity. “The Holy Spirit has ways of touching our lives, if we are open to trying something that might stretch us a bit,” he asserts. His life was changed by three serendipitous conversations that led to three amazing invitations. He’s mighty thankful for accepting all three.

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Aaron Raverty, O.S.B.

The urge to elaborate seems to be a deep-seated mark of humanity. In her book What Is Art For? anthropologist Ms. Ellen Dissanayake emphasizes this creative impulse as a basic and universal feature of the human spirit. The mantra from the movie Steel Magnolias, “accessorize, accessorize, accessorize,” would seem a ringing endorsement of this fundamental itch. Perhaps this inclination may help explain the surge of decorative stone walls and other stone buildings that appeared at Saint John’s in the 1920s. May we surmise, as some have, that Abbot Alcuin Deutsch, O.S.B.—abbot of Saint John’s from 1921 until 1959—was fascinated by such decorative stone-building efforts following his European travels?

But let’s go back to our rocky beginnings. We know that farmers in central Minnesota had their families into the fields every spring to help pile fieldstones on a stoneboat—a plank of wood for dragging large stones overland—and then dumped the boulders into a heap. Thus boulders were hand-colored. The Old Stone House: one of the earliest photographs by Father Peter Engel, 1880, subsequently hand-colored

The earliest permanent building—and the first habitation of the monks—in Collegeville was the Old Stone House. This summer marked its 150th anniversary: the cornerstone was laid on July 1866 by Bishop Thomas L. Grace of Saint Paul. Its original designer is unknown, but both monks and lay workers were involved in its construction. Under the watchful supervision of then Prior Benedict Haindl, O.S.B. Originally erected only a few hundred feet from the shore of Lake Sagatagan, the Old Stone House was positioned near the quadrangle’s south wing. The Old Stone House was ravaged by fire in 1877, and the resulting damage led to raising its remains in 1893.

Prior to the proliferation of decorative stonework aboveground, boulders embedded in wet clay cement provided the bedrock (“How Firm a Foundation?”) for such campus buildings as the old church, the quadrangle, and the cow barn. A monastic bath/beach house—still standing—was erected by a crew of young monks out of rubble stone beginning in 1922 and completed the following year. In 1930 a stone wall was begun around the monastery’s backyard, an area that was once an orchard, and completed the following summer. Little information is available about the stone bridge on the prep point of Lake Sagatagan. We know that it was constructed sometime in the early twentieth century and was replaced this summer with a wooden structure. The story of the lonely but stately stone arch on the side of the old road east of the prep school is also something of a mystery. It once marked the entrance to Saint John’s and today welcomes many hikers and runners into the Saint John’s Abbey Arboretum.

In addition to Abbot Alcuin’s startup and the muscle power provided by young monks, two notable local laymen were involved in stone work in the early days of decorative construction. Mr. Max Schmoecker (1869–1959) was the “mud mixer” who oversaw the manufacture of the clay concoction into which stones were inserted for building purposes. Mr. John Pueringer (1875–1946) was the “master mason” who directed all operations. Mr. John Pueringer (1875–1946) was the “master mason” who directed all operations. Mr. John Pueringer’s apprentice, took over where he left off, eventually becoming a master mason himself. Together they supervised the construction of the stone walls under the aegis of Abbot Alcuin, and in particular the sturdy structure paralleling the old roadway along the monastic gardens.

In 1934 a stone wall arose around the sisters’ convent (Frank House), supplanting some of the original hedgerows with fieldstone boundaries. Brother Eddie assembled the apple cellar immediately south of the Liturgical Press building about 1938. In 1939 the largest and most magnificent of the stone structures came to dominate the entrance to the football stadium, eventually succumbing to the construction of Alcuin Library in the early 1960s. Also in 1939 the student newspaper, The Record, reported the erection of a stone wall around the gymnasium and adjoining areas. Notable stone structures still grace the backyard gardens south of the monastery: the stone arch, the fountain in the shape of a bishop’s miter, and the four pillars supporting the grapevine arbor.

Though many of the handsome stone walls were razed over the years to accommodate the development of the university campus, the art of stone building has not been lost. In the 1990s sculptor Mr. Tadd Jensen reintroduced the art form. In 1992 after Joe Hall was inched across campus to its present location, artist-in-residence Mr. Richard Brenanah worked closely with physical plant to create the pottery studio in the building’s basement. In setting its new foundation and façade, fieldstone collected from the nearby Pfueger family farm encouraged Mr. Jensen to imitate the campus stone architecture. He also created new stone walls over the Watah/Stampf Lake causeway and at the main intersection (four-way stop) near the Warner Palaestra.

Constructed during the summer of 2015, the Stella Maris trailhead marker on the north shore of Lake Sagatagan is the most recent stone structure at Saint John’s, though the stones themselves are not local. According to Mr. Mickey Saatzer, who completed the masonry work, the stones are from the Bagley, Minnesota, area where they were cut in half to assure stronger adhesion before being affixed to the support columns.

We can treat the historical elaboration of stone structures at Saint John’s as a fundamental reflection of their firm foundation, the rock who is Jesus Christ (Matthew 7:24–25).}

The firm foundation on which Saint John’s had been constructed was given an additional architectural flavoring by Abbot Alcuin Deutsch. With an abundant supply of young monks and an even more abundant supply of boulders, he engaged master stone-mason Mr. John Pueringer and several monks to direct the creation of huge stone walls, stairs, arches, and even a fountain on the grounds. Many of these handsome structures were removed in later years as the inner campus was developed. Mr. Tadd Jensen reintroduced the art form in 1992 with the foundation of Joe Hall (below, center).
Thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude. Gratitude is the completion of thankfulness. Thankfulness may consist merely of words. Gratitude is shown in acts.

Henri Frédéric Amiel (1821–1881), philosopher and poet

Each year at this time Saint John’s Abbey recognizes and gives thanks to those who so generously assist the abbey through their contributions, planned giving, and volunteering. We express our gratitude publicly in Abbey Banner by listing the names of our donors and volunteers. We also demonstrate how your gifts have been put to use; how they help us operate, implement, and sustain the programs and ministry we are called to do.

We read in Scripture, “Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and passed it to them, and they all drank from it” (Mark 14:23). Jesus, the perfect steward, gave thanks and passed the cup just before he gave himself to us completely for our salvation. He offers us the chance to drink from his cup. We know what drinking from his cup means for each of us. Often it means our own sacrifice—giving up some of what we have in order to do the Lord’s work on earth—recognizing that we are not only responsible for our own lives but also for the lives of those around us. Looking out for our brothers and sisters is also an important Benedictine value.

The monks at Saint John’s Abbey thank all our donors and volunteers for making their own special sacrifice to assist the abbey and our mission. The gifts that you have made a vital difference. May God bless you!

Father Geoffrey Fecht, O.S.B.
Abbey Development Director

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Abbey Healthcare

Before all cares, a lot must be taken of the sick. Healthcare for the community’s elderly, retired, and infirm is supported by Abbey Healthcare.

Thank you!

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Monastic Witness

Increasing and encouraging monastic vocations are vital to the future of Saint John’s Abbey and its ministries. Outreach programs and the formation and education of monks are sustained by generous donors. Thank you!

Sustained by generous donors.

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Land Stewardship

For the care of this land and the lakes, the abbey is committed to environmental stewardship. Generous donors support Saint John's Abbey Arboretum and the abbey's sustainability practices. Thank you!
Sacred Space

Our church requires ongoing maintenance to accommodate our worshipping community. Upgrading the Holy Lingam altar, along with ongoing maintenance and upkeep, are supported by generous donors. Thank you!
Brother Paul David Fitt, O.S.B., the second son of Joseph and Marie (Weglarz) Fitt of Chicago's Polish Community, was born in Chicago on 8 December 1945. He attended grade school at his Polish parish school, Saint Turibius, and then enrolled at Brother Rice High School, from which he graduated in 1963. In 1967 he completed a bachelor's degree, majoring in chemistry, at Saint John's University.

For two years after his graduation Paul was a science instructor at the Melrose Junior High School, Melrose, Minnesota. In August 1969 he returned to Collegeville, serving as a university admission counselor. Responding to a call to religious life, he applied for the novitiate at Saint John's Abbey, professed and jubilarians inside the church—the three-day total of rain was about 4.5 inches. It was a wet but good summer.

April 2016

• The John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation announced that Father Columba Stewart, director of the Hill Museum & Manuscript Library, has been awarded a 2016 Guggenheim Fellowship (humanities/religion), one of 175 awardees chosen from nearly three thousand applicants. Guggenheim Fellows are appointed on the basis of scholarly productivity, achievement, and exceptional promise for future accomplishment. Father Columba is spending this academic year in residence as a member of the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. The fellowship will support his completion of a forthcoming book, "Between Earth and Heaven: Interpreting the First Thousand Years of Christian Monasticism."

Since its establishment in 1925, the Guggenheim Foundation has granted more than $334 million in fellowships to more than eighteen thousand individuals, among them three other Saint John's colleagues: author Mr. J. F. Powers (1948), musician Father Henry Bryan Beaumont Hays (1952 and 1953), and author Mr. Jon Hassler (1980).

May 2016

• Brother Aidan Putnam and Novice Cassian Hunter received Honorable Mention for their respective essays: Anger and Conversatio Morum and Does Monasticism Have a Future? in the Junior Essay Competition sponsored by the American Benedictine Academy. The biannual competition encourages scholarly research among those in monastic formation.

• Fifty years after its dedication, Alcuin Library is undergoing major renovation and expansion. Ms. Gregory Friesen of CSNA Architects heads the design team that aims to improve the library's functionality, update technological and mechanical systems, and create a gallery for The Saint John's Bible. The wall
separating the upper level and the lobby has been removed, affording spectacular views: inward, of the Marcel Breuer designed trees of knowledge (above) that support the structure; and outward, of Mr. Breuer’s masterpiece, the abbey and university church.

• Father William Skudlarek, secretary general of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue, gave the opening address, “The Dignity of Being Human: A Christian/ Benedictine Approach to Human Rights,” at the fourth meeting of Catholic Press Association in Saint Louis, Liturgical Press authors, publications, and staff received a combined twenty-three awards, the most of any book publisher in the annual competition. For the second consecutive year Give Us This Day was honored with first place for general excellence, prayer and spirituality magazine. The judges recognized the periodical as a “unique combination of daily Catholic prayer and readings from the Mass thoughtfully augmented with stimulating reflections.” Give Us This Day was also honored with three other awards, including first place for best essay by editor Ms. Mary Stommes.

• Along with many friends and administrators of Saint John’s, Abbot John Klassen traveled to London to witness the induction of Mr. Donald Jackson, M.V.O., artistic director and scribe for The Saint John’s Bible, into the Order of Saint Gregory the Great, a papal knighthood granted for outstanding service to the Catholic Church. Cardinal Vincent Nichols, archbishop of Westminster, presided at the investiture ceremony in Westminster Cathedral. In his nomination letter, Saint Cloud Bishop Donald Kettler noted: “The Saint John’s Bible has touched the lives of Catholics within our diocese as well as millions around the world . . . Mr. Jackson and the Benedictine monks of Saint John’s Abbey have once again pointed to the central role of the Bible to the vitality of the Catholic Church.” In accepting the honor, Mr. Jackson (right), a member of the Anglican communion, thanked Pope Francis for the award and went on to say, “I am delighted to accept it as both a symbol of his recognition of what has been achieved and of his encouragement for Saint John’s mission ‘to ignite the spiritual imagination of all peoples.’”

• At the annual meeting of the Benedictine Monastic Association of Saint John’s Abbey made their final oblation in the presence of Abbot John, Father Michael Peterson, director of oblates, and the community. Reflecting on this special occasion, Mr. Alex Duval, an architect from Minneapolis, expressed the hope that he would “develop a closer relationship with God and those practicing Benedictine spirituality.” Mr. Richard Jessen, a retired judge, stated: “An important part of being an oblate is the opportunity to visit the abbey occasionally. That’s the part I miss now that we live in Surprise, Arizona.” Mr. Jerry Liddell, a member of the counseling and school psychology department at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, identified several of his expectations: “a deeper spiritual life, help in living my faith in the world, help in discerning God’s will for me, and a closer relationship with the monastic community of Saint John’s Abbey.” Ms. Sally Haik of Minnesota Communities Coalition “Better Together: Feeding our Communities” meal packaging event. The group joined dozens of other volunteers in packaging thousands of meals of beans and rice or macaroni and cheese for distribution to various local charities and food shelters.

• Brother Joe Schneeweis (above), and Mr. David Wuolu led a van load of monks to Saint Cloud Apollo High School on 28 July to participate in the Central Minnesota Communities Coalition “Better Together: Feeding our Communities” meal packaging event. The group joined dozens of other volunteers in packaging thousands of meals of beans and rice or macaroni and cheese for distribution to various local charities and food shelters.

• On 14 July an otherwise lovely summer day took an ominous turn when Abbot John announced that the community’s 35-pound kettlebell has gone missing.

• During Evening Prayer on 16 July four oblates of Saint John’s Abbey were granted for outstanding service to the Catholic Church. Cardinal Liddell, a member of the department at the University of Minnesota, identified several of his expectations: “a deeper spiritual life, help in discerning God’s will for me, and a closer relationship with the monastic community of Saint John’s Abbey.” Ms. Sally Haik of Minnesota Communities Coalition “Better Together: Feeding our Communities” meal packaging event. The group joined dozens of other volunteers in packaging thousands of meals of beans and rice or macaroni and cheese for distribution to various local charities and food shelters.

July 2016

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• During Evening Prayer on 16 July four oblates of Saint John’s Abbey made their final oblation in the presence of Abbot John, Father Michael Peterson, director of oblates, and the community. Reflecting on this special occasion, Mr. Alex Duval, an architect from Minneapolis, expressed the hope that he would “develop a closer relationship with God and those practicing Benedictine spirituality.” Mr. Richard Jessen, a retired judge, stated: “An important part of being an oblate is the opportunity to visit the abbey occasionally. That’s the part I miss now that we live in Surprise, Arizona.” Mr. Jerry Liddell, a member of the counseling and school psychology department at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, identified several of his expectations: “a deeper spiritual life, help in living my faith in the world, help in discerning God’s will for me, and a closer relationship with the monastic community of Saint John’s Abbey.” Ms. Sally Haik of Minnesota Communities Coalition “Better Together: Feeding our Communities” meal packaging event. The group joined dozens of other volunteers in packaging thousands of meals of beans and rice or macaroni and cheese for distribution to various local charities and food shelters.

August 2016

• The monks hosted a busload of sisters from Saint Benedict’s Monastery on 7 August for Evening Prayer, a social, and a festive meal in the Great Hall. Following dessert, Father Bob Koopmann (piano), Lew Grobe, and Nick Kleespies, and Brother Richard Crawford led the assembly in singing several lively show tunes. When it became clear that Saint Scholastica was not going to intervene with a downpour, the quartet serenaded the sisters right out the door with “Goodnight, sweetheart/ Well, it’s time to go.”

• Abbot John traveled to Trinity Benedictine Monastery in August to assist in the bittersweet farewell celebration of Saint John’s ministry in Japan. For sixty-eight years numerous confreres served at Saint Anselm’s Priory and Parish in Meguro (Tokyo) and at the Fujimi priory. Following the liturgies and leave-taking, Brother Liting John Chrysostom Long and Fathers Thomas Wahl and William Skudlarek accompanied Abbot John in the return trip to Collegeville. Prior Roman Paur is overseeing the details of the closure of the monastery: on 26 July the corporate board of the Fuji Hospital approved the purchase of the monastery building and land.

• More than a hundred friends and alumni of Saint John’s joined a score of monks at The Basilica of Saint Mary in Minneapolis for the artists’ reception for “Benedictine Creativity Inspired by the Spirit.” The artwork of more than a dozen confreres was on display until 5 September.

Abbey Banner Fall 2016
May 1966

• Excavation for one unit of the new dormitory complex [Saint Bernard, Saint Patrick, and Saint Boniface halls] was begun on 17 May. The first unit is located northwest of Saint Thomas Hall. The second unit, which is to be composed of two buildings joined by a connecting walkway, will be placed just north of the first. The buildings will be four stories high and house a total of 372 students. Both units should be completed by 1 September 1967.

• The campus center committee has been attempting to come to some conclusions on which facilities a new center should provide. A former plan to combine certain recreational facilities such as the swimming pool and handball courts with the dining room and other facilities of the campus center has been abandoned. Instead a suggestion has been made to consider construction of two entirely separate facilities, each to be planned in stages. The first stage would include dining facilities and a rathskeller with provision for social recreation, particularly dancing and billiards. The second would be a gymnasmium which would include the swimming pool and handball courts.

• Work on the new science hall [Peter Engel Science Center] is progressing toward the official completion date, 15 August. The ground floor will house physics and geology departments, the second floor the chemistry and math departments, and the third the biology and astronomy departments. A large lecture hall (300 seats) is nearly completed, and the foundations for the green-house have been laid. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the new building is the space now available for student research. Students from the College of Saint Benedict will most likely take their classes on this campus.

Father Godfrey Diekmann has been given the Cardinal Spellman Award for the year 1965. The American Catholic Theological Society awards the medal to one outstanding man each year. Past recipients included John Courtney Murray and Barnabas Ahern.

July 1966

• Clerics, brothers, and members of the science departments continue to pack and carry equipment from the old science hall [Simons Hall] to the new one. The ROTC staff will move from its present location in the basement of Benet Hall to the basement of the old science hall; the art department will take over the first floor, and the English department the second floor.

• Work continues on the third floor of the old library [Wimmer Hall], the location of the new FM broadcasting center. A four-hundred foot tower will be built near the prep field for the new station.

• Brother Hubert Schneider finds himself pressed for space as he and his helpers construct 480 new desks for the new residence halls.

T
here is something that draws me inexorably toward a kitchen. At a party, I almost always find myself in the kitchen—whether it’s helping as a sous-chef to the host, or expediting presentation and service of whatever is on the menu. I just can’t help it, because I am never happier than when I am in a kitchen, any kitchen! (I’m told that a former university president also commanded the kitchen of those he was visiting. Maybe this is a monastic tradition!)

For the last few years I have offered a catered dinner as an auction fund-raiser item for Saint John’s Preparatory School and, more recently, for other organizations. These dinners typically are held at the home of the winning bidder. The opportunity to prepare a multicourse meal in a stranger’s kitchen is thrilling! As Forrest Gump would say, “You never know what you’re gonna get!” It is always a fun opportunity to make new friends and experience the joy of a shared meal.

This summer I prepared a five-course Italian meal for eight. To accompany the dessert, I served my own homemade limoncello, a delicious Italian after-dinner liqueur. It was a hit, winning in a taste test over the purchased variety. I hope you give it a try. It is perfect for sharing with friends, and it makes a great gift for any dinner party.

Brother Ælred Senna, O.S.B., is associate editor of Give Us This Day and a faculty resident at Saint John’s University.

Limoncello
(Yields 1 liter)

• 750 ml vodka (80 or 100 proof)
• Zest of 10 lemons
• Clean quart jar with a lid
• Clean 2-quart jar
• Syrup made from 1 c. sugar and 1 c. water
• Coffee filter and a funnel

Wash the lemons and use a vegetable peeler or a coarse zester to remove the zest (just the yellow part) from the lemons, being careful to avoid the pith (the white part).

Put the zest in the quart jar and pour in the vodka. Cap the jar and let it sit for a week, swirling it occasionally.

Filter the infused vodka into the 2-quart jar through a funnel lined with a coffee filter.

Heat the sugar and water, stirring until the sugar is completely dissolved. Cool, then add enough of the syrup (250 ml or about 1 c.) to bring the volume of the limoncello to one liter (a bit more than a quart).

Bottle as desired—pour it back into the vodka bottle, though it will not all fit, or into other decorative bottles. Chill in the freezer and serve cold. Ligoncello can be kept in the freezer for up to a year.
Please join the monastic community in prayerful remembrance of our deceased family members and friends:

Brad Appersbach
Joseph Balko
Robert “Bob” Barry
Edith Bedard, O.S.B.
Viola M. Bromen
Gabriel Bullock, O.S.B.
Jane Casey, O.S.B.
William A. Cohn
Genevieve Fuchs Deery
John Degiovanni
Shirley Anne Dominik
Terence Leonard “Terry” Dosh
Ida Eichten
S. Keith Eickhoff,
Ida Eichten
Moira Conway Eisele
S. Keith Eickhoff, O.S.B.
Alfed Aippersach
Gabriel Bullock, O.S.B.
Michael Prostrollo,
Sandra Backous, O.S.B.
S. Keith Eickhoff, O.S.B.
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This Issue
Robin Pierzina, O.S.B.

Listening and Respect
Abbot John Klassen, O.S.B.

Monastic Profession

Monastic Jubilees

Benedictine Volunteer Corps
Francesc Gomis Domènech

Autumn’s Sacred Triduum
Michael Kwatera, O.S.B.

Bridge Builders

Southerners in the Arboretum
Philip Chu

Hospitality
William Cahoy

Rule of Benedict: The Prior
Eric Hollas, O.S.B.

Lives of the Benedictine Saints: Gregory the Great
Aidan Putnam, O.S.B.

Meet a Monk:
David Paul Lange
Timothy Backous, O.S.B.

Upon These Rocks
Aaron Raverty, O.S.B.

Donor Honor Roll
Geoffrey Fecht, O.S.B.

Obituary: Paul Fitt

Abbey Chronicle
Robin Pierzina, O.S.B.

Fifty Years Ago

Monks in (Other People’s) Kitchens: Limoncello
Ælred Senna, O.S.B.

In Memoriam

Love: In sickness and in health
Timothy Backous, O.S.B.

Benedictine Days of Prayer
with Father Simeon Thole, O.S.B.

During this political season...
Friday, 16 September 2016: Praying the Kingdom of God: The World and Me
Friday, 21 October 2016: Praying the Kingdom of God: Spirit of God in the World? In me?
Friday, 18 November 2016: Praying the Kingdom of God: To Come Where? When?

The day begins at 7:00 A.M. with Morning Prayer and concludes about 3:30 P.M.
Cost: $50, which includes retreat materials, breakfast, and lunch.
Rooms are available in the abbey guesthouse for the preceding overnight.

Advent Retreat 2–4 December 2016
Aptate vestras lampades: Vigilance in Christian Spirituality
with Brother Lucián López, O.S.B.

The retreat begins with supper at 5:30 P.M. on Friday and concludes after lunch on Sunday.
Cost: Single room, $195; double room, $340 ($170 per person); meals included.
Register online at abbeyguesthouse.org; or call the Spiritual Life Office: 320.363.3929.