



NAABOD Newsletter October 2013

Greetings Oblate Directors,

It has been too long (6 months) since my previous newsletter. The season of autumn is upon us and the spectacular colors associated with this time of year are a feast for our eyes. Soon, the season of Advent will begin and we will begin a new Church Year.

As many of you know, I just returned from three months in East Africa teaching technology skills to the religious sisters of Kenya, Tanzania, Congo, Sudan, and Uganda. I also did some teaching at Bigwa Secondary School for girls in Morogoro, Tanzania. I was sponsored by the African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC). Here is a Youtube video re: ASEC <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hjsL3SvMv04>. This was my 3rd visit to East Africa. I have fallen in love Africa, the sisters, and the people of this region and I am very committed to and honored to be a part of the mission and the ministry of ASEC.

In July, many of us attended NAABOD 2013 hosted by the sisters of Annunciation Monastery at the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND. A BIG thank you to the sisters of Annunciation Monastery. If you or your community has ever hosted a conference or meeting, you know how much work is involved.

The theme of NAABOD 2013 was "Living the Benedictine Charism Faithfully in the World." 69 people attended the conference. Our speakers were Fr. Terrence Kardong, OSB of Assumption Abbey, Richardton, ND; Sr. Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB, Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Clyde, MO; and Sr. Thomas Welder, OSB, of Annunciation Monastery, Bismarck, ND.

The presentations were recorded and were made available to NAABOD 2013 participants. The quality of the recordings is very good. Another thank you to the Sisters of Annunciation Monastery is in order here.

At our business meeting, three communities volunteered to host NAABOD 2015: Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, AK; St. Scholastica Monastery, Duluth, MN; St. Benedict Monastery, St. Joseph, MN; and Mount Angel Abbey, St. Benedict, OR. I will try to visit each of these communities in the next few months.

Also, at our business meeting, we discussed making a scholarship contribution for the World Congress and a contribution to a charity in North Dakota that serves the homeless. These contributions have been made.

All of the bills for NAABOD 2013 have been received and paid. Sr. Priscilla is working on the financial report for the conference.

As we anticipate NAABOD 2015, please remember that each Monastery's oblate directors along with two oblates are invited to attend the conference. The oblates who are selected to attend the conference should be those who show or have already demonstrated leadership within the Monastery's oblate organization. The NAABOD Conference is designed to renew and to strengthen the leadership within our respective oblate organizations.

The NAABOD website has been updated.

- There are new books (the two books reviewed in this newsletter) listed in the Ongoing Formation section
- The text for Fr. Kardong's presentation at NAABOD 2013 is posted
- The text for Sr. Colleen Maura McGrane's presentations at NAABOD 2013 is posted.

BOOK REVIEWS

Notker Wolf, OSB (Orleans, Mass.: Paraclete Press, 2013)
ISBN 978-1-61261-303-1, \$15.99.

Anyone who has heard the Abbot Primate speak knows that he is a man of great wisdom and practical faith. According to the cover of this book, he gets asked Frequently, "Why are you so happy?" and this book is an attempt to answer that question. He starts with responses to the even more basic question that is the foundation for his happiness, "Why have faith?" This is rock solid theology that can be read and considered by anyone. Almost every page has an example from ordinary daily life and a place where ordinary people can identify and make a personal connection. His recipe for happiness is composed of the Benedictine values: praying, reading scripture, living simply, seeking counsel, letting go of fears and learning to fly above our suffering and doubts to enjoy life with a loving God. With lead sentences like "Faith is not like a suit we put on for church each Sunday," subheadings like "Get off the hamster wheel," and italicized pithy sentences that jump off the page, this is spirituality for everyone from someone who knows what he's talking about and how to convey it.

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Jon Cannon. *The Secret Language of Sacred Spaces: Decoding Churches, Temples, Mosques, and Other Places of Worship Around the World* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2013) ISBN 978-0-84899-111-8, \$35.00.

When this book arrived unsolicited, the title made me wary that it was another of those conspiracy theory or new age books. What I found was one of the most reasonably priced, yet absolutely beautiful large format books I've seen in a long time. It's 224 pages of color photos of worship spaces around the world. The "decoding" is analysis of the various elements and how they relate to the beliefs, worship style and historical period. The explanations are clear and concise, integrating the various dimensions of social history into simple narrative descriptions that illuminate each photographic example. That's not to mention a price that seems too good to be true for such a quality, hard-cover book with excellent art reproduction – meaning a modest monastic library or generous gift-giver might actually consider purchasing it. This is a coffee table display book, a crash course in liturgical art and architecture, a resource for comparative religions, and a feast for the eyes.

Some Upcoming Events Which May Be Of Interest To You And/Or Your Oblates

Pre-Convention Workshop for Oblates The topic of the 2014 ABA Convention Benedictine Monasticism: The Past Receiving the Future

will receive particular attention at a pre-convention workshop designed especially for oblates. The event will take place during the morning and afternoon of Thursday, July 24, and will culminate with the convention's opening presentation in the evening. Consisting of a series of "mini-presentations" made by various oblate members of ABA, the aim will be to facilitate conversation around the convention theme, particularly as it applies to Benedictine oblates. Registration will be available through this newsletter or on-line at the ABA website. Look for further details to come.

BENEDICTINE MONASTICISM: THE PAST RECEIVING THE FUTURE July 24-27, 2014 Conception Abbey Conception, Missouri

Featuring speakers:

Father Joel Rippinger, OSB, Marmion Abbey, Aurora, IL
Sister Christine Vladimiroff, Mount St. Benedict Monastery, Erie, PA
Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Rutba House, Durham, NC.
Sister Julie Upton, RSM, St. John's University, Queens, NY

- Benedictine Mission House, Schuyler, NE --
<http://www.benedictinemissionhouse.com/>

Re-Connection – Germany & Austria

You are invited to participate in a pilgrimage Tour visiting Benedictine monasteries and shrines of Germany and Austria, July 6 – July 22, 2014. If you are interested, contact Fr. Volker Futter, Benedictine Mission House, Schuyler, NE.

FrVolker@BenedictineMissionHouse.com

- Sacred Heart Monastery, Cullman, AL -- <http://www.shmon.org/retreat-center-upcoming-programs.html>
- Monastery of St. Gertrude, Cottonwood, ID -- <https://www.spirit-center.org/>
- The Benedictine Sisters of St. Gertrude Monastery, Ridgley, MD --
http://media.wix.com/ugd/04930d_9841dddb2bc94af2d44ea8d1f547e77f.doc?dn=Newsletter%2B2013%2BOctober%2B6%2BIssue%2B4.doc
- St. Benedict's Monastery, St. Joseph, MN -- <http://sbm.osb.org/events/>

- St. Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, PA -- <http://www.saintvincentarchabbey.org/news>
- Mother of God Monastery, Watertown, SD --
<http://watertownbeneditines.org/what%E2%80%99s-new/retreats-workshops/>
- Sacred Heart Monastery, Yankton, SD --
http://www.yanktonbeneditines.org/documents/Strong_Women_2013_flyer.pdf

Disclaimer: I visited each member web site and looked for upcoming events. If I have missed something, please accept my apologies.

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Please, remember to maintain an ongoing list of deceased oblates and oblate directors since NAABOD 2013. Prior to NAABOD 2015, please email me this list so that it can be included in the Memorial Service that will open NAABOD 2015. On the subject line of your email, please write "Deceased oblate directors & oblates since NAABOD 2013." Thank you.

Also, please send me news of upcoming events at your monastery.

Blessings & Peace,



S. Bonita Gacnik
President, North American Association of Benedictine Oblate Directors