

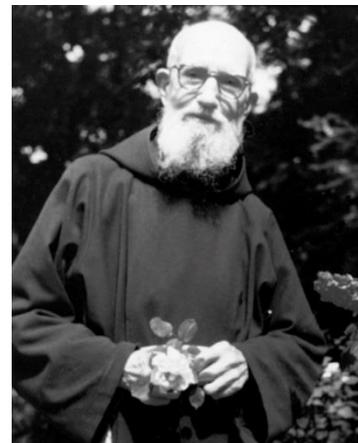
Saint Andrew Abbey Vocation Newsletter

November, 2015

Thanking God Ahead of Time for His Call

Venerable **Fr. Solanus Casey, OFM. Capuchin**, the humble friar from Detroit who died in 1957 and whose cause for beatification proceeds, had a famous saying, **“Thank God ahead of time.”** It is also the title of a book about his life that was published in 1985. He explained that we can show our confidence and trust in God’s providence by periodically thanking Him for how He will choose to answer our petition prayers and what He will allow to happen to us in our lives in the future. In other words, even if our prayers for a particular cause are not answered the way we are hoping for, there will still be reason to thank God because He will have a good reason for how He responds.

As we move through this beautiful month of November with golden leaves and warm, red sunsets that culminates in the major celebration of **Thanksgiving**, it is a very appropriate time to reflect on our lives and **“Thank God ahead of time.”** This is especially true of those who are praying sincerely for God’s guidance to help them know their vocation. A vocation is simply a call from God telling us in subtle, yet increasingly clear ways, how God wants us to use the unique gifts that God has given us to help build his Kingdom in this world.



It takes courage to **“Thank God ahead of time”** about a **future vocation**. It certainly means that we trust that God’s plans for us are more significant than our personal interest in what we would like to do for the rest of our life. It also gives God a clear signal that we will welcome all the hints and nudges He will give us to show us the vocation He is calling us to follow.

With that in mind, the end of the year and the arrival of winter are good times to provide God with effective opportunities to communicate with us. Saint Andrew Abbey will host its next **“Living with Benedict”** Monastic Experience weekend retreat beginning **Friday evening, November 13** and ending **Sunday morning, November 15**. The theme will appropriately be **“Thanksgiving in Christian Life.”** Any single, Catholic man between the ages of 18 and 45 is welcome to register by contacting **Fr. Finbar** at either 216-721-5300, ext. 273 or by e-mail at finbar@cbhs.edu. There is no charge for the weekend.

You are also invited to join the monks for their annual **Thanksgiving Eve** celebration at the abbey the evening of **Wednesday, November 25**. It is considered the most enjoyable gathering of the year because there are no meetings or liturgical events so all the monks are home. The night begins with **vespers** at 5:00 PM, followed by snacks and drinks, and then the holiday **Thanksgiving** dinner with all the trimmings. After supper, there will be a community group competition game with prizes and finally, a holiday movie. If you are interested in attending or even staying overnight and leaving Thanksgiving morning, also contact Fr. Finbar.

Abbey Seminarians Take Summer Trip to EWTN in Alabama



Abbey seminarians **Bro. Louis** and **Deacon Fr. Thomas** drove to Eternal Word Network's studio in Birmingham, Alabama in late August and were able to participate in the audience of Jesuit **Fr. Mitch Pacwa's** (right) Live interview show with **Bishop Michael Burbidge** of Raleigh, North Carolina about the increase in priesthood vocations in that diocese. The next day, they attended the Daily Mass televised nationally from the original EWTN chapel and **Fr. Thomas** served as deacon for the Mass. On September 23, **Fr. Thomas**, **Bro. Conrad**, and novice **Bro. Charbel** traveled to Washington DC to see Pope Francis canonize St. Junipero Serra.





Abbot Gary celebrated the Opening Mass for the start of the 89th school year of Benedictine High School on Thursday, August 27, 2015. **Fr. Finbar** (above) distributes the Eucharist.



Praying with Confreres - Living and Deceased

For Benedictine monks, the **vow of stability** is one of the unique characteristics of monastic identity. At the time of profession, Benedictine monks do not just promise to live the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, but instead promise **stability, conversion of life, and obedience** (Chapter 58 of the Rule of St. Benedict). An English Benedictine Bishop of the 19th century named **John Cuthbert Hedley** described the importance of the vow of stability in this way, *“Every Benedictine monastery is and ought to be a home. It would be a mistake to encourage anyone to profess as Benedictine monk unless he could look forward with pleasure to live, for better or worse, until death, in the monastery of his profession.”*

This “Spirit of Stability” is so important that it unites members of the same monastery who are physically in a location apart from the abbey itself. Every night, at the end of the last communal prayer of the day, the monks pray for their “absent brothers.” Saint Andrew’s Abbey has a beautiful custom each November of physically visiting the monastic burial plot at Calvary Cemetery where 66 of the 67 deceased confreres are buried (**Novice Bartholomew Lukac** is buried in Slovakia). Vespers of the Dead are prayed allowing a spiritual unity between those chanting God’s praises on earth and those echoing the psalms in heaven and purgatory.



On November 3, 2015, confrere **Bishop Roger** (left) joined the monks to chant vespers at the monastic burial plot at Calvary Cemetery located about 15 minutes from the abbey.

