

# OUR JOURNEY

Saint Andrew Abbey      Benedictine Order of Cleveland



# From the Abbot, Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, OSB



Pope Francis said, "For each one of us the Lord has a vocation, that place He wants us to live our lives. We must seek it, find it; and then, continue in it, always going onward."

Just recently, a few of the monks and I were talking about our own vocations to the Benedictine lifestyle. It was interesting to see how the Lord worked through various people and experiences to bring us to the monastic life at St. Andrew Abbey. For one monk, he knew from early on that he wanted to be a religious. For another, he initially wanted to be a priest. For another, he wanted to teach. For a fourth, when asked by his mom where he was going to college, he blurted out, "I'm going to be a monk." For another,

someone suggested to him that they thought he should become a religious and he rejected that suggestion initially. Whether one "just feels" a calling or someone else encourages them; whether one "knew" early in life or discerns later in life many years of experiences after high school. When God calls us, He does so in His own way and time. And should we resist, He continues to persevere in reaching out to us.

Pope Francis is right on saying that the Lord calls each one of us to "that place He wants us to live our lives." For some, it is the religious life. For others, it is Priesthood or Diaconate. Still others, it is the married life. And still others, the single lifestyle.

The first step is to hear/discern the Lord calling you.

Perhaps you are already on your life's journey. Pray to the Lord to strengthen you along the way, especially giving you the courage to meet and conquer the challenges that you may be or are facing. Pray for religious vocations, especially for the Benedictine life. Encourage others who are discerning to reach out to the Lord to respond through the religious life. Remember, God is working through you to touch others' lives!

Perhaps you are now in the discerning process. Pray to God to show you the way. After all, He has created and called you forth for a specific vocation with your own gifts to reach out to His people at this point in salvation history. Take time to talk with others, with those who know you. Ask them what vocation they see you called to live. Also, talk with and visit others who are living the various vocations and ask them to share their story with you. You may find yourself resonating/identifying with their reasons. Take the time to make contact with the vocations director of the various religious orders or seminary. Remember, God is reaching out to you! Take the time to listen!

Perhaps you haven't even thought of your vocation. Jump in the waters now. God has a reason why you are reading this letter at this point in time. Be not afraid to open to the voice of God speaking to you within the core of your being. Be not afraid to say, "Yes Lord, here I am!"

Remember, our vocation, whatever path the Lord has called us, is a lifelong journey of responding to God's call; "always going onward" working with His grace and His love day by day. Even if at times you feel discouraged, remembering that Christ walks with you and, when needed, carries you. Daily we are called to work with God's grace, for He is always working with us. Our vocation is a partnership with God!

Peace,

*Abbot Gary OSB*

Abbot Gary, OSB



# The Monastic Life

Pope Francis declared this year as The Year of Consecrated Religious Life. There are many different Orders which have their own charisms. The monastic life is one of them. Life as a monk is truly a different life than the secular world. Having experienced both, I can say the monastic life is more than what I had anticipated.

God created us and breathed the Holy Spirit into us to give us life. Thus, we belong to God, as all things He has created. Our souls are always searching for God, our Creator, while our mind always desires the things of this world. Our souls continue to yearn for God. In looking back over my life, I realize how true this is. I stopped being faithful to God and stopped practicing my Catholic Faith. During this time I was seeking pleasure elsewhere, always yearning for something better. After many years I came to the realization it was God that I was searching for. God was patient and waited for me to hear Him. (Go to [www.abbeybound.wordpress.com](http://www.abbeybound.wordpress.com) for Brother Paul's journey to becoming a monk.)

I finally heard God calling and responded to him. In the monastic life, this is always the way we communicate with God. God calls, we respond. Prayer is the way in which a monk communicates with God. Prayer is the monk's work, but he can also find peace in it. Lectio Divina allows the monk to hear God speak to him and the Office is the response from the monk to God. Silence allows the monk to continue praying and conversing with the Lord. Prayer is the monk's life. Louis Bouyer gave a great description that opened my eyes to this fact; "In the Body of Christ, priests are like the hands, destined to produce sacred actions. Monks are like the lips." Monks intercede for people, lifting up their prayers.

The monastic life is a movement and not a "state." A monk constantly seeks God, which is a response to God's continuous calling, moving closer to God and obtaining a purity of heart. A monk is dying all the time, detaching himself from the worldly things. This allows him to keep his mind clear from distractions and wholly focused on God and His will. A monk remains in the monastery, a place of solitude, the place of his vocation. If he seeks to continuously go out, other than to do the Lord's work, he risks falling for the

temptations in this world, causing him to lose all he has gained in Heaven.

The habit is an important aspect of the Consecrated Religious Life. I often hear "It is not the habit that makes a monk." However much this is true, the habit does have meaning and not worn just as a "uniform" or to distinguish one from another Order. As Louis Bouyer stated; "The sacramental meaning of the habit which he has put on, revivifying the significance of the baptismal robe, is to put on Christ himself." The habit is a reminder that we live in Christ. It also provides a great way to evangelize when the need arises to go outside the monastery. In our baptismal robe, we entered a new life into the Church and became adopted children of God. The habit is a great reminder of this for the monk. The habit is worn to do the work of the Lord, the prayerful life of the monk.



The monastic life is a continuous search for God, a devotion in which to obtain a purity of heart, by living not only with Christ, but in Christ, in hope to speak with God face to face in heaven. It is a life of constant response to the call of God. It is a life of Heavenly joy.

*by Brother Paul Culver, OSB*

# The Dramatic Monk

When I entered the monastery I entered to become a monk. A Benedictine monk. A holy monk. A praying monk. Never in my life did I ever think that I would become a dramatic monk. It all started many, many years ago. I had just been ordained and joined the teaching staff at Benedictine High School. Benedictine is an all boys school that the monks of my abbey, St. Andrew Abbey, run. One evening I was outside walking around the school property when I noticed the lights were on in the school's auditorium. Out of curiosity I went into the school to see what was going on. As I entered the auditorium on the second floor of the school, to my surprise there were students running around on the school's stage. Since Benedictine is an all boys school, I was even more surprised to see that some of the students were female. I stood quite still at the door watching. Suddenly the person whom I noticed seemed to be in charge saw me standing there. Welcome he said. Come on in and join us. That was the beginning of a long career of being part of the Benedictine Drama Club. God certainly can work in strange ways. For after joining the monastery I never had thoughts of directing plays at the school. But I truly believe that God pushed me in that direction on that one night in March. How God uses the talents he provides. I had always enjoyed the theater—plays, musicals, variety shows. I even performed a little as I was growing up. However, I was never really serious about it. I



was serious about my vocation, my vocation to join the monastery and to become a monk and a priest. That is what I felt God calling me to do. And that is what I pursued with all my heart. Once I achieved those goals I felt I had fulfilled God's plan for me. But that was not to be the case. God had other plans for me besides what I thought. Never did I think that would

include becoming a dramatic monk. Now after more than 40 years and more than 100 plays I can conclude that directing the Benedictine Drama Club was also in God's plan for me. God certainly does work in strange ways. And usually His way brings a sense of joy and fulfillment one might not have expected. And because of that I have learned to be open to His will. He is the one whom I must allow to lead for He knows better than I do what I need to do for Him. This is only one of many things God has led me to do for Him, but it is the one that helped me learn to rely on Him always, to follow where He leads. Yes, I began by discerning His call for me to the monastic life. Little did I realize

then that discerning God's will was going to be something I would be called upon to do that rest of my monastic life. I have learned that if God gives you certain talents He expects you to use them. Oh I know I was still able to say no but I'm sure glad I didn't.

*by Father Timothy Buyansky, OSB*

# Year of Consecrated Life

We are in the middle of the Year of Consecrated Life which ends February 2016. This year was called by Pope Francis to be a reflection on those who have vowed themselves to the consecrated religious life in all of its forms. In the Catholic Church there are a variety of ways that the religious life can be lived. While there are a variety of forms there is also one call, and one source of this call. By being able to hear this call, and respond to this call we are able to fully live in and therefore live out our vocation. The call is typically seen as the call to priesthood and/or religious life. While this is one of the calls it is something that we might often overlook the variety of ways this can be done. When we look specifically then at one response to this call in the monastic life as it is lived here at St. Andrew Abbey we see a type of vocation lived out in a small way.

Summer provides in many ways opportunities to see the fruition of this. Life in many ways is in full swing, but also in many ways slows down. The beautiful days and summer vacation, at least for those of us who teach and are students, provide sun and an ease of schedules. It is also a time for ordinations and monastic vows. July 11th is an important day in the Benedictine tradition as we celebrate St. Benedict's feast day. All of this provides chance and opportunity for celebration during the lazy, hazy, and potentially crazy days of summer. Yet as we are all aware these days can fly by as the long days of sun begin to shorten little by little. After all who doesn't look forward to Cleveland winters? The days of fun and sun provide tremendous opportunity, but can also provide distractions that

prevent us from seeing and appreciating the days for what they are as moments of grace.

The season provides that break and rest, which all in some way need. An opportunity to recharge and reflect on what has been given and lessons learned. For it is not just for the new school year that these lessons tend, but for the lessons and life that we have responded to in the monastic life. Our Holy Father Benedict looks in his Rule towards vocations, and for those discerning his focus points to there being a need to test the vocation. We see that in ch 58 of the Rule of Benedict where the following is written: "The concern must be whether the novice truly seeks God and whether he shows eagerness for the Work of God, for obedience and for trials. The novice should be clearly told all the hardships and difficulties that will lead him to God."

These trials are not done as a means of pushing or discouraging the vocation. It is a way to ensure that those entering are aware that in responding to the vocation it is not strictly a summer vacation. After all we are all aware that summer also brings sunburn, weeding, and humidity where precautions are taken and time set aside for the yardwork. So does each monk bring their own story, talents, and struggles with them into the monastery. The bringing together of all the good and struggles through prayer, work, and conversation allows the community to grow and foster their own individual vocation as well as those discerning one.

## Deacon Ordination

Abbey seminarian Brother Thomas Sanders, OSB was ordained to the transitional diaconate on Saturday, April 25, 2015 at Saint Vincent Archabbey Basilica in Latrobe, Pennsylvania by Bishop Lawrence Brandt of the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Brother Thomas is completing his third year of theological studies and will pursue his fourth and final year of studies this fall at St. Vincent's while being assigned to weekend diaconate ministry at a parish near Latrobe. His priesthood ordination will be in Cleveland next year.



Brother Thomas

Brother Thomas, 36, entered the novitiate of our abbey in June, 2009. He professed his first vows on June 11, 2010 and his solemn vows on June 15, 2013. Born in Amherst, Ohio, he is the son of Gary and Joanne Sanders of Sheffield Lake, Ohio. He has a sister Shondra. He was a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Sheffield Lake and is a graduate of Brookside High School. He holds a bachelor of life science degree in biology and chemistry from Otterbein College in Columbus in 2003. After graduation he worked at Mt. Carmel/St. Ann's Hospital in Columbus in the Acute Care Center as a multi-skilled technician. He also worked in chemical research.

With a family background in music, Brother Thomas has honed his skills on the organ since joining the abbey and has worked with Father Cyprian Constantine, OSB organist at St. Vincent Archabbey. He is also a member of the Schola Gregoriana at St. Vincent's. When home at our abbey, he is one of the assistant organists. He made his deacon retreat with the Benedictine nuns at St. Emma's Retreat House in Greensburg.

*(Year of Consecrated Life Continued)*

Summer is often a time where we have moments to rest and play, but as we are well aware in the monastic life one of the Benedictine mottos is *Ora et Labora* (prayer and work). The season should provide those opportunities that are needed in regards to rest and opportunities to prepare for the school year ahead. Yet just as important is the reminded for us of the chance to continually grow in response to the call we have received. This work is never done, and if we recognize this it is also work from which we can never rest. For that continual growth requires us in more ways than we might realize to continually reflect through our prayer so that as the season let alone seasons progress we are not caught off guard and can take advantage in a positive sense of that word of the time provided through our rest, relaxation, and work done in response to the one who has called us from the beginning.

Please continue to pray for vocations to the monastic community as well as for all those discerning God's call in their lives. May we all be the presence through God's grace to help foster and courage that love of God and perseverance through the journey. St. Benedict...pray for us.

by Father Finbar Ramsak, OSB

## Evangelizing Students through Example, Education, and Prayer

*The following e-mail was sent to all of the monks on the Benedictine High School faculty by one of our seniors after he returned from the Rite of Election at St. John's Cathedral on Sunday, February 22, 2015:*

Good Evening Clergymen of St. Andrew Abbey:

This evening I participated in the Rite of Election downtown at St. John the Evangelist Cathedral with Bishop Lennon as the celebrant. This took place after first signing my name in my parish's book of the elect at mass earlier this morning. The book was taken down to be presented to Bishop Lennon in the service. During Bishop Lennon's homily at the service tonight he talked about the four different types of people that were present there. First he talked about the Catechumens. Secondly, he talked about the Candidates that wanted to continue through the sacraments of initiation. Thirdly, he spoke about the RCIA team leaders that have helped the Catechumens and candidates along the way. The last group he talked about were the people that inspired the Catechumens and Candidates to choose to follow through and continue on in our faith development.

When he spoke about this last group he mentioned that this person could be a parent, close friend, relative, neighbor, etc. He described it as anyone who has given us inspiration or who have had influence on our faith lives. Sitting there in the Cathedral with one of my team members filling in for my Godparent, I really couldn't decide who it was that led me to be sitting there tonight. It wasn't a friend or relative or even a parent for me. That's when I realized that it wasn't just a specific person. The reason I was sitting there was because of the inspiration and mark the Benedictine community- specifically the Monks- brought onto me. I want to officially thank the entire community of St. Andrew Abbey, specifically the Monks who teach and work at Benedictine. I really appreciate the lessons, support, openness, and respect that have been taught to me over the past four years at Benedictine. Specifically I'd like to thank Abbot Gary, Father Timothy, Father Michael, Father Paschal, Father Finbar and Father Gerard. In some way or another you were the reason I made it through this process so far. With the theological education and first-hand witness that Benedictine has provided for me, I now humbly sit ready and eager to receive the sacraments of initiation this Easter. I just wanted to take a brief moment of my time to thank the men who have helped drastically shape my faith; it's the least I owe to you all.

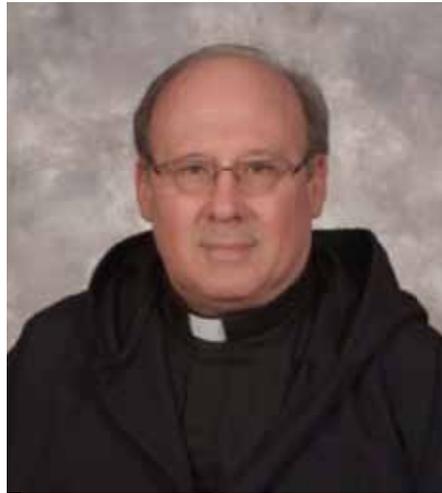
by Joshua



Father Finbar meets Joseph, a 2012 BHS Freshman

## We hear that...

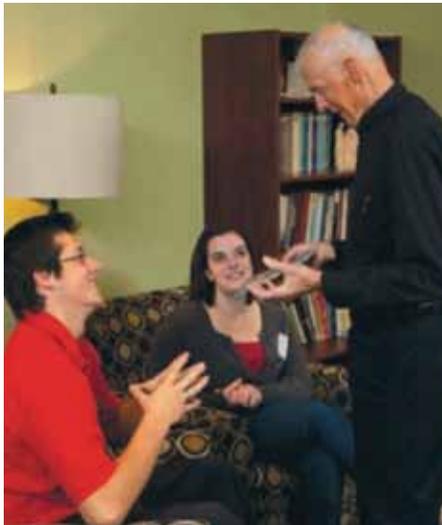
**Father Paschal** became the first monk of Saint Andrew Abbey to preach a bilingual English/Spanish parish mission when he accepted an invitation from his cousin Father Leo DeChant, CSJ to lead a Lenten mission this year at Blessed Junipero Serra Parish in Lancaster, California where Father Leo serves as pastor. Soon the parish will have to modify its name since Blessed Junipero will be canonized a saint this fall. Many years ago some monks of our abbey were popular preachers of parish missions in English and Slovak.



*Father Paschal*

**Abbot Gary** made a traditional 30 day retreat using the famous Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola during Lent at Loyola Retreat House in Clinton, Ohio. Retired **Abbot Clement**, chaplain at Loyola and Becki Haller, director of Loyola served as his mentors for the retreat.

**Father Anselm**, chaplain at Walsh University in Canton was featured in the February 22, 2015 issue of *Our Sunday Visitor* national Catholic newspaper in a feature article on chaplains at Catholic Universities. One student from Walsh interviewed in the story said, "Our chaplain Father Anselm Zupka, has made his presence known to all in such an admirable and humble lifestyle. He fulfills his call as a priest at Walsh University bring the person of Christ for each person he meets. I am definitely blessed to know him and to have shared the last four years with him during my undergraduate work.



*Father Anselm with students at Walsh*

He has influenced me to wake up each day and to place all my trust in the Lord by praying and living out that prayer. I am very appreciative for and hope to model his willingness to always put others before himself for their benefit." Father Anselm was also the celebrant of a Mass to dedicate the new Saint John Paul II Center for Science Innovation at Walsh on Friday, March 13. The Mass included a special address by the internationally known Catholic writer and philosopher Michael Novak.

**Brother Peter and Brother Paul** have been out and about giving various presentations on Benedictine life at parishes that are organizing events for the Year of Consecrated Life. Both monks went to St. Martin of Tours Parish in Valley City on February 1 and **Brother Paul** also spoke at St. Anthony's Parish in Akron on February 9... **Father Gerard** was the preacher of a three-night Lenten mission at Our Lady, Queen of Peace Parish (formerly Our Lady of Good Counsel) and at St. John's Cathedral... **Brother Conrad's** patron is **St. Conrad of Parzham** whose feast was April 21.

## Remembering the 1915 Cleveland Agreement

In 1914, the war in Europe was going strong. Immigrants from the Austria Hungary Empire dual monarchy, now established in America were feeling strength in finally having their voices heard and sensed this could be the opportunity to break the monarchy and create their own sovereign government. With industrialization growth stretching from Pittsburgh to Chicago offering employment, this area became home to many Slovak and Czech first generation who were leaders of this movement.

Cleveland was already strong with newspapers and publishing and the Slovaks had a representative group titled the Slovak League of America, organized at Grays Armory on May 26th of 1907. A Chicago and New York City group titled the Bohemian National Alliance were the other half who agreed to the Five Point proposal of the Cleveland Agreement on October 22nd of 1915, at the Bohemian National Hall on Broadway at E. 49th St., in Cleveland. This, remarkably, was the start to the formation of the country known to many living today as Czechoslovakia, after World War I.

This year, in 2015, a two day observance of the 100 year anniversary is being planned at the original building site on Broadway. Saturday, October 24th and Sunday, October 25th are the dates. Look for more details of the program coming from the Bohemian National Hall (BNH). Paul Burik (440) 934-4420.

Much information about the Cleveland Agreement, and more, can be found in files and books at the Slovak Institute and Reference Library located in the Saint Andrew Abbey building.

*by Joseph J. Hornack, Benedictine Alumnus 1951; Assistant Director, Slovak Institute*

## Upcoming Summer Events

The Cleveland Slovak Radio Club will hold their annual picnic on Sunday, June 28th; The American Slovak Zemplin Club's picnic is on Sunday, July 19th. Both are at The American Slovak Sokol Camp, 2096 Royalwood Road in Broadview Hts, OH from 12 to 8 pm.

# Retreats & Events at Loyola

For more information and to register for upcoming retreats and events, visit [www.loyolaretreathouse.com](http://www.loyolaretreathouse.com) or call 330-896-2315.

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## PRE-CANA DAYS

June 7, July 26, August 23, September 13, 2015

10:30 am - 6:00 pm, Mass 11:00 am

Presenters: Jason and Brooke Roberts.

\$75/ couple (includes lunch at noon)

## 26TH ANNUAL FAITH & LIGHT RETREAT

June 12-14, 2015

Arrival: Friday 5:00-5:30 pm; Dinner: 6:00 pm

Presenters: Kirt Bromley, Elizabeth Haller, Sara Lanzola, Tom and Christi Nemcek

This retreat concentrates on the needs of people with developmental disabilities, their parents, siblings, and caregivers and on how the Beatitudes apply to our day-to-day lives.  
\$100/ person; \$250/ family up to four people (\$50 deposit)

## SPIRITUAL SLUMBER PARTY WOMEN'S RETREAT

"Celebrating Friendships that Breathe Life into Your Story"

June 26-27, 2015

Arrival: Sunday 5:30 pm; Dinner 6:00 pm

Retreat Director: Elizabeth Haller

\$90 per person (\$50 deposit)

## RETREAT FOR WOMEN RELIGIOUS, LAY ASSOCIATES AND PRIVATE RETREATANTS

"Psalms and Saints for the Consecrated Life"

June 28-July 3, 2015

Arrival: Sunday 5:00 pm; Dinner 5:30 pm

Retreat Master: Rev. Gerard Gonda, OSB

\$325/ person (\$50 deposit)

## PRIESTS RETREAT

"St. John XXIII, His Spirituality, Leadership and Vatican Council II"

August 3-7, 2015

Arrival: Monday 5:30 pm; Dinner 6:00 pm

Retreat Master: Fr. Nicholas Mancini

\$325/ person (\$50 deposit)

*Thoughtful, well planned decisions made during your life have the potential to invigorate far into the future. These decisions can be transformative, creating legacies that shape coming generations.*

*Please include Loyola Retreat House in your estate planning... your generosity ensures the future of our ministry.*

## Contributors

Our Journey is published four times per year by the **Benedictine Order of Cleveland, Saint Andrew Abbey**, for our friends, oblates, and sponsors.

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216-721-5300 Email: [standrewabbey@standrewabbey.org](mailto:standrewabbey@standrewabbey.org)

## Opportunities

**The Abbey Benefit Committee** welcomes additional volunteers to participate in the planning of this annual event. To be involved, please contact Rose at 216.721.5300 x0.

**The Abbey Liturgy Committee** is looking for volunteer/part-time assistance with preparing a new edition of the Liturgical Hours for monastery use. The person must be proficient in the use of Microsoft Word and its publishing programs.

Anyone willing to assist should contact Fr. Michael Brunovsky, OSB at 216.421.2080 x323 or [michael@cbhs.edu](mailto:michael@cbhs.edu)



# The benedictine order of CLEVELAND

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## Saint Andrew Abbey

### **Who will receive your assets? Will it be the State or your Beneficiary?**

One of the most important decisions of an effective Estate Plan is taking the time to meet with your attorney to identify the people and charities you want to be the Beneficiaries.

Legacy gifts to Saint Andrew Abbey include a wide range of giving opportunities, from simple bequests to charitable gift annuities. To learn more about your options for creating a legacy of support for the monks of Saint Andrew Abbey, or for guidance regarding estate planning, contact Abbot Gary Hoover at 216-721-5300 x207 or email at [gary@standrewabbey.org](mailto:gary@standrewabbey.org).

- Have you considered a Charitable Gift Annuity?
- Do you know how a Charitable Remainder Trust would benefit your Estate?
- Do you know how you can leverage a Gift of Life Insurance?

**Many companies match employee contributions.  
Please contact your human resource department for details.**

**Be a good steward.  
Use the enclosed envelope or call 216-721-5300.**

## Save the Date

### **Abbey Benefit**

Sunday,  
November 8,  
2015

Complete event  
details coming soon.