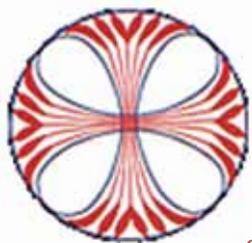


VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5
WINTER 2014



OUR JOURNEY

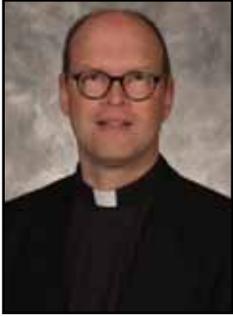
SAINT ANDREW ABBEY · BENEDICTINE ORDER OF CLEVELAND



Abbatial Blessing

Of Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, OSB

From the Abbot, Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, O.S.B.



Dear Friends,

When the angel Gabriel appeared before the Blessed Virgin Mary and declared to her that God had found favor with her and that she would conceive a son and name him Jesus, the Son of the Most High, Mary pondered what this greeting meant and how this would happen. The angel answered that it would happen through the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High. Mary then responded, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your Word.” Mary responded with a resounding YES! Yes to God, Yes to her son Jesus, Yes to us! She took the leap of faith and trusted that God would be faithful to His Word.

At this time in my life, the Lord has called me to serve my monastic brothers in a new way as the Abbot of our Benedictine Community. Upon my election, when I replied with my “yes” to the Abbot President of our congregation, who asked if I would accept the responsibilities as the Abbot, or the Father, of St. Andrew Abbey, I was ultimately saying “yes” to the will of God the Father. Just like Mary, I must trust in God that He is true to His Word and that Jesus will walk with me, that He will walk with all the monks of St. Andrew Abbey as I am called to serve our Lord in a new way.

While we can't add to the glory or greatness of God, you and I can witness to and proclaim His love and presence to others and to the world through our lives.

While I have been Administrator of the Abbey for one and half years, I truly do not know what lies ahead of us, blessings as well as challenges. However, what I do know is that God has brought together a group of prayerful, caring and dedicated men in the Spirit of St. Benedict to follow His Son, Jesus Christ in proclaiming and living the Gospel values in the world. Along with each of you, walking with the monks on our journey towards the Heavenly Kingdom, we will make a difference, the “Christ” difference in this world.

In Mary's beautiful testimony of God's love for her and for us, she greets Elizabeth, her cousin who is pregnant with John the Baptist, with her Canticle beginning with the line, “My soul magnifies the Lord...” While we can't add to the glory or greatness of God, you and I can witness to and proclaim His love and presence to others and to the world through our lives. I have chosen this phrase as my abbatial motto. I pray and ask that all of you please join me and the monks, along our journey and together say and live, “My soul magnifies the Lord.”

Peace,

Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover OSB
Abbot Gary, OSB

Prepare for the Coming of Christmas

By Br. Peter Ancell, OSB

Advent is the four-week season that starts our liturgical year. The most poetic and appealing of seasons, this is the time when we prepare ourselves for the coming feast of Christmas. Advent means ‘coming’ that is the coming of Christ our Redeemer. But there are different comings of Christ. Some of us think that Advent is concerned only with the coming of the Christ Child in Bethlehem, 2000 years ago. But the liturgical prayers of the Church during this season refer to Our Lords Second Coming at the end of the world. There is also a third coming – the Lord's coming into our hearts and lives, by divine grace. If we are trying to live by the teachings of Jesus Christ and of His Church, then this Advent will be a liturgically rich, profoundly religious experience that will lead us to the Lord's coming in grace at Christmas.

The various readings and texts of the Advent Masses and Liturgy of the Hours mention these three comings of Christ. So we should try to understand the Advent liturgy as referring to those developments before the coming of Jesus in Bethlehem. We should note the various references to the Lord's Coming – Parousia – at the end of time. And we should think often of His coming at this Christmas – His coming to our souls in the Eucharist and in grace. ‘For grace although already within us,



can come to us again and again and in fuller measure’ (Pius Parsch, *The Church's Year of Grace*).

There are many wonderful Advent and Christmas customs – special hymns and carols, the Advent wreath, Saint Nicholas, the Christmas tree, Christmas lights, manglers, gifts and celebrations. For adult Catholics, however, the finest custom is a liturgical observance of Advent. In this way with the Church we recall the centuries long gone by. In the liturgy we remember the past ages, the ancient hopes and longings for a Messiah. In the antiphons the Holy Church chants at Mass and in the Liturgy of the Hours, She throbs with the hopes and pains of a thousand years.

We listen to and allow Isaiah and the other the Prophets to guide us. In the December darkness we stand again in holy darkness which surrounded them. As did our ancestors in faith and liturgy, we wrap our souls in the veil of their ancient Messianic visions. A Blessed Advent and Christmas to you and your families.

In this Year of Consecrated Life, Pray for Vocations

By Fr. Finbar Ramsak, OSB

Preparations are rarely undertaken for no particular reason. We prepare for competitions, tests, meals with families, interviews, and careers. Should it come as any surprise to us that in the life of the Church we enter a season of preparation before the Solemnity of Christmas? The Season of Advent is a period of preparation. As this season begins this preparation is necessary, but also a good reminder for us of where we are and what is coming. Advent as a time of preparation is necessary today for all that can distract us with the holiday shopping season. While this can be a valid part of our preparation for Christmas, it should not be the only types of preparation we are undertaking.

This year as we begin a new liturgical year, Pope Francis has announced 2014-2015 will be the Year for Consecrated Life that begins November 21st. In making the announcement for the Year of Consecrated Life, it was explained the first objective would be to “make a grateful remembrance of the recent past,” the second objective “to embrace the future with hope” and the third, “living the present with passion” This passion, speaks of “being in love, of true friendship, of profound communion.” The Year of Consecrated Life will have an evangelical focus, helping people to realize “the beauty of following Christ” in the various types of religious vocations.

As those living a monastic life, the Year of Consecrated Life provides a means to show and remind both others and ourselves about one of the ways in which people are able to follow Jesus. We are reminded through this year how we are able to help others by explaining what we do and why. Yet as we reflect on the life we have been called to, the only way we are able to live the monastic life is because of the preparations and traditions that have been passed down to us throughout the centuries.



The entrance to the monastic life should not be done in haste for we see in chapter 58 of the Rule of St. Benedict: “Let easy admission not be given to one who newly cometh to change his life; but, as the Apostle says, ‘Try the spirits, whether they be of God’ (1 Jn 4:1).” The reason for this is, as St. Benedict will allude to in places throughout the RB, the monastic life is not easy. So why test and try through the discernment process?

The term vocation is a reference to our call from God to serve and come to know Him in a particular way that leads to entrance into the Kingdom of God. Through discernment we not only are able to hear in a positive light the call to a particular vocation, but if we will the paths we are not called to follow. The preparation through discernment and the way one comes through the process of hearing God’s call leads us further on the road. Our entrance and journey into and in the monastic life begins as do all things with a process, and there are certain steps that must be made. Can these be tedious? Yes, but what we must not lose sight of is that this period and these steps are done for the reason of preparing us for what we will face.

The Season of Advent is a set period of time that prepares us for Christmas. The season comes every year and we reflect on the readings and prepare for the birth of Christ. In our lives we may look past the preparation in anticipation of what is to come. Unfortunately we may find this to be true when it happens every year, and there are many distractions in the air. Whether we are in the monastic life or the Season of Advent, the preparation cannot be overlooked for the simple reason that what we are preparing for is the coming of the King. The coming of the King which we remember both in the present moment and for life’s journey should lead us home. May this Season of Advent, in our preparation for the coming of the King, let us not lose sight of what we are truly preparing for and when He comes.

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 encourage that love of God. St. Benedict...pray for us.

The Season of Advent prepares us for the coming of the King. The life we live as monks prepares us to meet the king. The preparation for this meeting begins with the discernment process to determine whether or not to enter the monastic life. This period of preparation is a time to reflect before entering the monastic life to ensure that one has been called to the monastic life.

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

Publisher

Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, O.S.B.

Directors of Abbey Stewardship

Robert J. Allen

Mary Kay Swenson

Public Relations & Design

Susan Garrison

If you have questions or comments about this publication, please address them to:

St. Andrew Abbey

10510 Buckeye Road

Cleveland, OH 44104

(216) 721-5300

www.standrewabbey.org

Christmas Eve (Midnight) Mass – 9:00 PM
Because of limited seating, seating will be on a first come - first serve basis. Reservations can be made by calling (216) 721-5300. After the Mass, a cookie/punch reception will be held in the high school cafeteria.



Schedule for Christmas Day:

7:10 AM Lauds

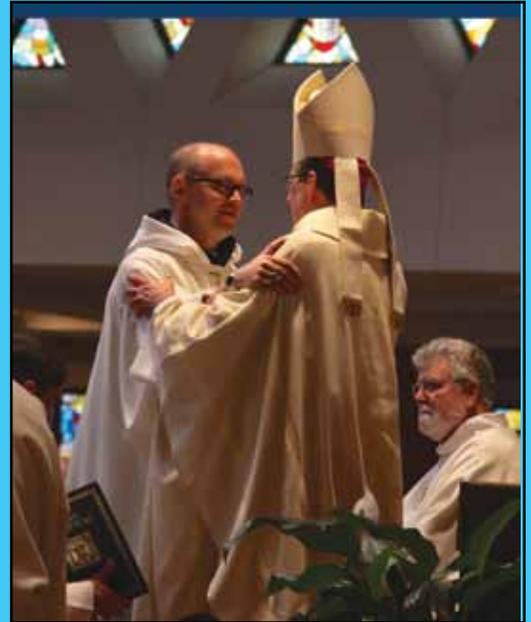
7:30 AM Mass

7:05 PM Vespers.

Abbatial Blessing of Rt. Rev. Gary A. Hoover, October 5, 2014



Servers, including students of Benedictine High School, lead the procession.



Abbot Gary and Bishop Richard Lennon during the ceremony.



The community processes into the church.



Abbot Gary greets Auxiliary Bishop Roger Gries, OSB.

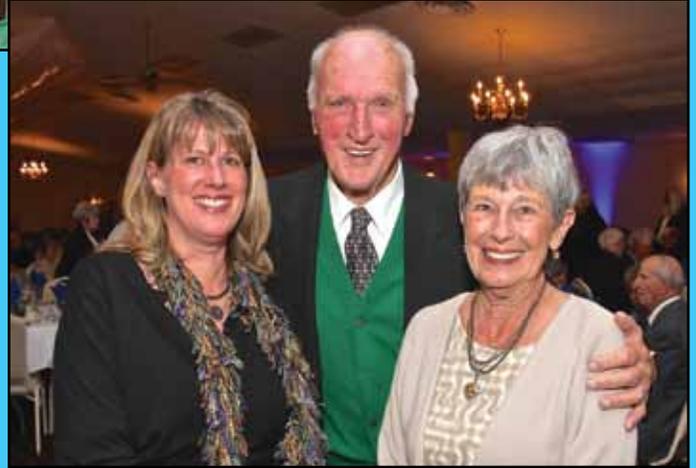


The Abbot and Br. Gabriel during the sign of peace.

Photos on this page by
Debbie Furst.



The monks singing the Ultima.



Scenes from the reception.



The Slovak Institute has the following available for purchase:

Books in ENGLISH about Slovaks

Slovak Songs and Dances by Michael Sinchak, Original edition, 1942, \$7

Slovaks in Florida, as researched and written by Andrew F. Hudak, Jr., \$10

Remembrances and Testimony, Dr. Jozef Tiso and the Slovak Republic 1939-1945 by Dr. Charles (Karol) Murin, Secretary for Tiso, \$18

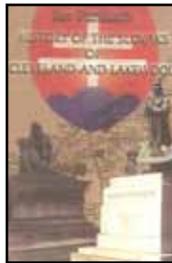
Cleveland's Buckeye Neighborhood, Collection of early ethnic photos with captiuons by John T. Sabol, \$22

Cleveland Slovaks by John T. Sabol and Lisa Alzo, described vintage photos, \$22

Slovaks of the Greater Mahoning Valley, Vintage photos from Ohio cities Youngstown to Warren, plus border towns in Pennsylvania, by Susan J. Summers and Loretta A. Ekoniak, \$22

History of the Slovaks in Cleveland & Lakewood, Jan Pankuch's forty years in America, translation of his 1929 book, \$24

The Night of the Barbarians, Experiences under Communism, by Cardinal Jan Chryzostom Korec, S.J., \$28



Odporú ame knihv v Sloven ine

Sv. Andrej-Svorad in 1952 by Fr. Mikuláš Šprinc, \$7

Slovenské Rehole v Amerike in 1955 by Dr. František Hrušovský, \$10

VKrá_och Dediny in 1968 by Jozef A. Mikuš, \$10

Slovenská Republika (SF) 1939-1949 by Slovak Institute Member

Writers, 1949, \$20

Driftwood Poems by Mikulas Sprinc, translated to English from Slovak, \$12

Various Slovakia Landspaces, Large used picture books of Slovensko or regions or cities of high interest. Your choice, \$15

Seasonal Items

Large map of Slovakia (black and white), \$10

Flag of Slovak Republic, Lg. 3'x5', \$20

Flag of Slovak Republic Sm, \$" x 5.5", \$4

Slovak Christmas cards (10 pack), \$10

Slovak Christmas cards TO CANADA, \$12 (U.S.)

ENGLISH Christmas cards (10 pack) \$10

ENGLISH Christmas cards TO CANADA, \$12 (U.S.)

Christmas Oplátky (1 env. of 3 pcs), \$1



Order now for Christmas!

ORDER FORM

Items and Number you would like:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Payment Enclosed \$ _____ + \$4.00 shipping & hndlg

Total _____

We thank you for your support of the Slovak Institute.

– Andrew F. Hudak, Director

– Joseph J. Hornack, Assistant Director

For more information or questions,
slovakinstitute@cbhs.net



Please consider us when making or revising your will.

Our legal name is
Benedictine Order of Cleveland, Inc.

The following chapter is taken from a book entitled, "The Wisdom of the Benedictine Elders: Thirty of America's Oldest Monks and Nuns Share Their Lives' Greatest Lessons" by Mark McGinnis published by BlueBridge Books in 2005.

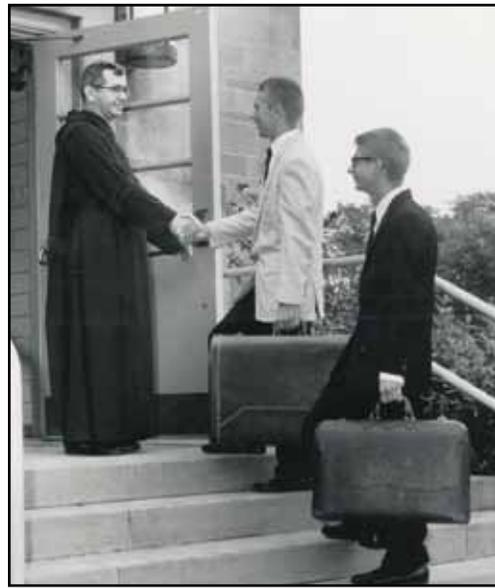
Father Placid Pientek / Born 1918

Fr. Placid is a member of the Benedictine community at St. Andrew Svorad Abbey in Cleveland, Ohio. St. Andrew Svorad is an urban abbey, but one with well-designed buildings and lovely grounds, where one can quite easily forget that downtown Cleveland is only ten minutes away. But there are reminders of the surrounding city, like the pigeons that make for the abbey's primary "wildlife." Father Placid has been a city dweller most of his life, growing up on a street in New York City that later gave way to the World Trade Center.

I was born in New York City, in lower Manhattan in the shadow of Wall Street. I always wanted to be a priest. It was during the Depression and I needed to make a decision about schooling as I reached the eighth grade. I grew up in the Slovak parish attending a Catholic school taught by Slovak sisters. The Depression was very bad and many kids were quitting school, under the pretense of helping their parents make some money. I knew that wasn't for me. I asked one of the sisters what school she would recommend, and she sent me to the Slovak pastor who said there were two Slovak possibilities: the first was St. Andrew Svorad in Cleveland which was just starting out and St. Procopius Abbey in Illinois. I chose Cleveland and I think it was mainly because it was Slovak and because it was closer to New York and travel would be cheaper.

I came here in 1932 at the age of fourteen. I began high school here and I really enjoyed it. My plans were to become a Slovak pastor and return to New York, but Father George, of happy memory, kept saying that I should become a Benedictine. In my fourth year I applied to the monastery. I admired their lifestyle. The Benedictines were active with us in our sports, conversation, and recreation – they were family. It was a very loving, wholesome environment. The funny thing was that Cleveland then sent me to study at St. Procopius, where I could have gone in the first place, for two years of college. After the two years there I was eligible for the novitiate. I was then sent to St. Benedict's in Atchison, Kansas, to finish my college education.

I completed my degree in Atchison in 1941 and returned to Cleveland. There were twenty-six seminarians here at that time. We started our own seminary and I studied theology here for four years. I was ordained a priest in 1944. I then began teaching Latin, English, and religion at our high school here and also did quite a bit of coaching. I loved athletics. In 1948, I was appointed novice master. I spent all my life at the monastery except two years that I was sent to Rome to study to be a novice master from 1952 to 1954. After my time as novice master I returned to more teaching but also started with some administrative duties. I worked as treasurer at the high school and also at the monastery for some years. By 1969 I was doing full-time administrative work that continued for about the next twenty years.



Fr. Placid welcomes vocation visitors to the abbey in the 1960's.

year the skit was entitled "Holy Havana," and its plot was that the pope asked the Benedictines to start a monastery in Cuba and it featured characters such as Jimmy Hoffa and Elvis Presley who were hiding there.

My whole life here has given me joy. I have been in vows for sixty years and every day has had a glow to it, not boring but growing. It's a thanksgiving to God that I am still here and able to work and pray for Him. There has been no explosion of happiness, but a steady constant union with God. I just keep growing at it, never tiring of it. I'm living under my fourth abbot here. It seems that each one keeps getting better. The current abbot (Roger Gries) is a godsend. He was one of my novices.

Of course there has been some sorrow. It has been sad to see some men leave the Benedictine life. They seem to be running away. It's also sad to see young men come and sample the life but still be afraid to make a real commitment.

I believe family life is a core value the world needs more of today. Now with both parents working and so many single-parent homes, it's very difficult. We are founded on the precept of the abbot being the father of the family, and he is elected for life. We could teach family values through the stability of our lives. We have a vow of stability that could help marriages and families stay together. The Rule also is very thoughtful about the old and the young that could also benefit society today.

The Rule of St. Benedict has much guidance for us. I love the chapters on obedience and humility. It comes from the days I used to teach those chapters to the novices. I would try to teach them that humility and obedience are two sides of the same coin. I've always seen the Prologue and the first seven chapters as the most important ones; after that it's mostly details.

When I came here at the age of fourteen, I automatically became part of the spiritual practices of the Benedictines, and I have been part of that practice for the last seventy years. I began praying the Divine Office (The Liturgy of the Hours) as a novice. The Office creates the rhythm of life with the seasons, the

I stepped down from the administrative work in the late 1980's and focused on other work. I helped with our Slovak magazine for years. I help with mailings and fundraising in various ways. I also help organize an annual volunteer dinner. It's become quite a beautiful event. It seems like everyone wants to come. A

highlight of the dinner is a skit put on by the monks; one

year the skit was entitled "Holy Havana," and its plot was that the pope asked the Benedictines to start a monastery in Cuba and it featured characters such as Jimmy Hoffa and Elvis Presley who were hiding there.

My whole life here has given me joy. I have been in vows for sixty years and every day has had a glow to it, not boring but growing. It's a thanksgiving to God that I am still here and able to work and pray for Him. There has been no explosion of happiness, but a steady constant union with God. I just keep growing at it, never tiring of it. I'm living under my fourth abbot here. It seems that each one keeps getting better. The current abbot (Roger Gries) is a godsend. He was one of my novices.

Of course there has been some sorrow. It has been sad to see some men leave the Benedictine life. They seem to be running away. It's also sad to see young men come and sample the life but still be afraid to make a real commitment.

I believe family life is a core value the world needs more of today. Now with both parents working and so many single-parent homes, it's very difficult. We are founded on the precept of the abbot being the father of the family, and he is elected for life. We could teach family values through the stability of our lives. We have a vow of stability that could help marriages and families stay together. The Rule also is very thoughtful about the old and the young that could also benefit society today.

The Rule of St. Benedict has much guidance for us. I love the chapters on obedience and humility. It comes from the days I used to teach those chapters to the novices. I would try to teach them that humility and obedience are two sides of the same coin. I've always seen the Prologue and the first seven chapters as the most important ones; after that it's mostly details.

When I came here at the age of fourteen, I automatically became part of the spiritual practices of the Benedictines, and I have been part of that practice for the last seventy years. I began praying the Divine Office (The Liturgy of the Hours) as a novice. The Office creates the rhythm of life with the seasons, the

Continued on page 8

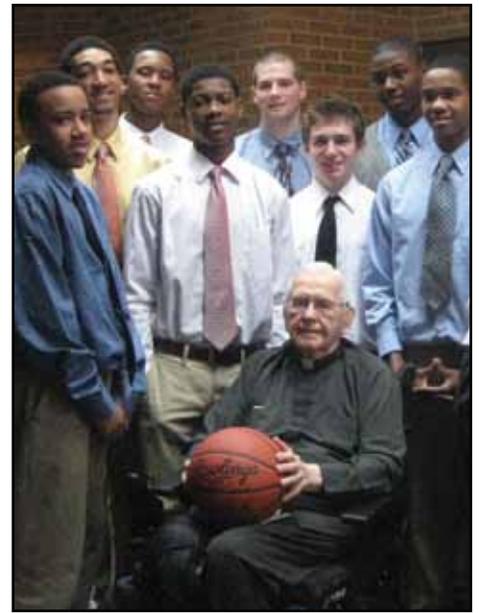
Father Placid Pientek / Born 1918 – Continued from page 7

psalms, and the readings. It grows on you over the years. Even the changes from Latin to English didn't upset me. It seemed a normal growth. The Office is living. Even during the Easter season, when some readings might have as many as nine "Alleluias," you might think one or two would have been enough, but I like it with all nine. Some days we sing the Office rather than recite it. You're happy with the embellishment for the Office never gets boring.

The Benedictine way is a healthy, balanced way of life. You have all your companions helping you and guiding you. You get into the flow of things. They can spot it when you veer off the beaten path with food, exercise, or diet. And it's not just the superior helping you, but even more so the ordinary fellow monks. They encourage and help you to take care of yourself. It's wonderful that way it works with no beating of drums or fanfare, just genuine concern. Even in the later years there is always work to do. I always say Benedictines never retire. It's a family and you want to continue to be part of it. The superior and other monks will never burden you with something beyond your capabilities or condition.

We don't have the concerns for security that so many people have when they grow older. We hear so much about planning for your retirement. That doesn't upset me because I don't have to worry about it. I don't need to worry about money or inflation, or deflation. Those things are not concerns of my monastic life.

I have hope for the future. I hope our monastery will grow. I hope we can return to the time when we were more numerous. We have about forty members now and at one time we were around seventy. Nature has many cycles and rebirths. Benedictines have their cycles and rebirth as well.



Fr. Placid, who played in the first BHS varsity basketball game on December 7, 1934 against John Marshall High School poses with the Bengal basketball team 75 years later on December 7, 2009.

Oblate Corner

When passing by the Freshman Latin class room at Benedictine, one could hear the recitation of the principle parts by the students: Offero, offerre, obtuli, oblatum- to offer, give up or sacrifice! But this is no mere chant or recitation. The boys are actually being introduced to something far deeper than ancient Latin grammar, though they will come to a fuller awareness later in life. The offering or oblation is going to be their lives on earth if they choose to incorporate themselves into Christ's oblation of Himself to His Father on the Cross for the Salvation of the world. No mean task is this, no rote memorization, but holy victimhood, self immolation and personal sanctification.

So the heart of Benedictine education is the training of those who offer themselves to the Father through Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. This offering is called oblation, and those who offer it are oblates.

No wonder then at the heart of the vow ceremony a monk sings the "Suscipe" unfortunately translated as "Sustain me o Lord!" The days we live in, find any self giving distasteful, hard and even meaningless. But a better rendering of this phrase would be "Receive me o Lord, take me up o Lord, I give myself to You, o Lord, in sacrifice!"- Receive me o Lord as You have promised that I may live and disappoint me not in my hope-three times, yes, and sung, three times for our incorporation into the Blessed Trinity. Repeated very much like the school boys' recitation in class for memories' sake, since repetition is after all the mother of studies.

And so from time immemorial, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac, the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, and the ritual of the Passover to the Last Supper of Christ and His own immolation on the Cross, this is at the heart of who we are and what we do as

Catholics, as ordained, as religious, as laity. Make no mistake this is the only royal road to heaven! And so I as co- oblate director invite you on this richly covered path filled with lights as our holy father Benedict trod his way to heaven, as he invites us monks and you laity to be oblates, offerings, living sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to the Lord!

Those who are not ordained or in vows can do this by sharing in the wonderful spiritual and corporal works of this monastery of St. Andrew Svorad as oblates.

We are not asking you to rap your children in the altar cloth as once was done, but to help us pray for vocations.

We are not asking you to stand in choir with us four times a day, but to share our pray when you can and offer your own divine office according to your state in life.

We are not asking for large donations of land, property and wealth as in the middle ages, but for your real and practical help in our service of God and neighbor in our locale as we struggle to meet the spiritual and physical needs of those we serve.

We invite you and challenge you to take up the call to be a Benedictine oblate of St. Andrew Svorad Abbey. We meet on every third Sunday at the Abbey around 3 p.m.

Thank You! God Bless you!

Fr. Bede Kotlinski OSB, Br. Mario Parisi OSB

