

Saint Andrew Abbey Vocation Newsletter

February, 2015

Pre-Lenten Retreat Weekend February 13-15

In Chapter 49 of his Holy Rule, Saint Benedict writes, "The life of a monk should be a continuous Lent. Since few, however, have the strength for this, we urge the entire community during these days of Lent to keep its manner of life most pure and to wash away in this holy season the negligences of other times."



Single men between the ages of 18 and 45 are welcome to register now for the **"Living with Benedict"** Pre-Lenten Monastic Experience Retreat weekend that begins with vespers on **Friday, February 13 at 5:15 PM** and concludes **Sunday morning, February 15**. There is no cost and three rooms have already been reserved. Contact **Fr. Finbar** at finbar@cbhs.edu or at 216-721-5300, ext. 273.

The weekend retreat will include three conferences on Lent presented by monks of the abbey, a Holy Hour with Eucharistic exposition, praying the Liturgy of the Hours with the monks, Mass, common Rosary, group reflections, and

quiet time for personal prayer and reading. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will also be offered. Lent is a special time in all Benedictine monasteries and St. Andrew's Abbey is no exception. Beginning with Ash Wednesday, silence is observed at daily breakfast and while walking from the Church to the refectory. The Wednesday social evening is dropped and amenities like beer and ice cream are not available. The abbot meets individually with each monk to assess his spiritual life and to accept his penitential Lenten practices as well as the book he has chosen for Lenten reading as described in the Rule of St. Benedict. Monks are assigned to prepare and deliver spiritual conferences at vespers each Wednesday.

First "Maurus and Placid Dinner" Held with Nine BHS Participants

On Friday, December 12, 2015, nine Benedictine High School seniors and juniors accepted a personal invitation to attend the first **"Maurus and Placid Dinner"** at Saint Andrew Abbey. Taking place on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe who appeared to the Indian Juan Diego and gave him a special mission from Jesus, this dinner is modeled after **"St. Andrew Dinners"** that many dioceses sponsor that bring together high school age young men with current seminarians and the bishop to invite them to prayerfully be open to a possible call to priesthood. The abbey evening was named after **Saints Maurus and Placid**, who were students in St. Benedict's monastery at Monte Cassino who became two of his most famous disciples. The students arrived before vespers and viewed a power point presentation of all the monks and the duties they are assigned. After vespers and supper, they had a tour of the cloister and then watched a DVD of young Benedictine monks from Saint Bernard's Abbey in Alabama on the popular EWTN youth TV program **"Life on the Rock."** This was followed by an informal discussion with the monks and concluded with praying Compline.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Celebrations at the Abbey

As the liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas take over the spiritual focus of monastic life between the national celebration of Thanksgiving in late November and the ecclesial feast of the Baptism of the Lord in early January, the social element of monastic life is strengthened with some of the most enjoyable community gatherings of the year. Once again this year, the frenetic pace of monastery and school duties came to a sudden halt on the Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving as the monks enjoyed their Thanksgiving Eve supper and party. After early vespers and a pause for snacks and drinks, the delicious full Thanksgiving dinner was served with all the trimmings. After dishes were washed, the community was divided into teams for a trivia competition involving identifying famous Catholic **"Faces of Faith."** Cash prizes were awarded to the winning team. Then those present enjoyed viewing the new PBS video on **Newark Abbey** and its school, **Saint Benedict's Prep**, that is titled **"The Rule"** because it analyzes the success of the unique approach to urban education the monks have pursued for the last 40 years based on elements from the Rule of Saint Benedict. Joining the monks for the evening were BHS graduates **David Majewski, Casey Parker, Bobby Heinrich,** and **Jonathan Diaz** as well as confrere **Bishop Roger.**

The calefactory took on a colorful look during the annual **Christmas Decorating Party** that brought together monks of various degrees of artistic talent to trim the tree and other sections of the room on Wednesday, December 17. A fire was lit in the fireplace and strains of carols and holiday music provided background atmosphere to inspire the decorators. Ample snacks were also provided.

Finally, with all the busyness and activities of the week between Christmas and New Year's completed, the monks gathered as a community on Wednesday, January 7, 2015 for the annual **Abbey Gift Exchange.** Vespers, snacks and drinks, and another great supper were followed by a relaxing and at times humorous distribution of the wrapped gifts under the tree. Even **Casey Parker** walked away with a useful present. The Christmas season and the evening came to an inspirational end with the singing of Christmas Carols.



In the photo at left, **Fr. Michael** and **Fr. Justin** lead the singing of carols at the conclusion of the January 7 **Abbey Gift Exchange Party.** Near the Christmas Tree **Bro. Gabriel** and **Bro. Louis** add some harmony. The tree came down after that evening because there were so many hands available to help even though the actual liturgical end of the Christmas season was the following Sunday.

Abbey Seminarians in Latrobe Advance and Witness



On Tuesday, November 24, 2015, **Brother Louis Carey, OSB**, received the order of Acolyte at Saint Vincent's Seminary in Latrobe, Pennsylvania where he is in his second year of theological studies preparing for the priesthood. The order of Acolyte is one of the formal steps before ordination and gives the seminarian the responsibility of preparing the altar for the Liturgy of the Eucharist and cleansing the sacred vessels after communion and assisting the priest or deacon in other ways at Mass. In the photo above, **Bro. Louis** (center) is flanked left to right by **Bro. Thomas Sanders, OSB**, who is in his third year of theological studies at St. Vincent's, **Bishop Ronald Gainer** of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania who was the celebrant of the Mass of Installation, **Prior Timothy Buyansky, OSB** of our abbey and **Archabbot Douglas Nowicki, OSB** of Saint Vincent's Archabbey.

On Wednesday night, January 21, 2015, after supper, some of the monks at the abbey gathered in the north television room to watch the impressive opening procession of seminarians, deacons, priests, and bishops for the annual Vigil Mass in connection with the March for Life in Washington, DC that takes place at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. To their surprise they saw confrere **Bro. Thomas** in the procession with the large number of seminarians. He had traveled to Washington for the March with other St. Vincent Seminarians and the next day met confrere **Fr. Gerard** during the actual March to the Supreme Court. Fr. Gerard brought 16 Benedictine High School students to the March on buses provided by the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association.



We hear that **Abbot Gary** has started the practice of having the resident monks at the abbey celebrate Vespers and share supper with the confreres currently living at **Regina Health Center** in Richfield, Ohio. The monks drove in several vehicles for the first time on December 15. At Regina they gathered in a reserved room with confreres **Fr. Placid, Bro. Joseph, Bro. Patrick, Abbot Christopher, Fr. Dominic, and Fr. Joachim**. Sadly, it turned out to be the last time Bro. Patrick enjoyed the company of his monastic family since he passed into eternity 28 days later on January 12, 2015. The monks returned to Regina for another evening of prayer and fellowship on Monday, January 26.....**Abbot Gary** and **Prior Timothy**, along with several lay teachers and staff members from the high school, accompanied nearly 40 juniors and seniors from BHS to the annual **Kairos Retreat at Loyola Retreat House** over the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday weekend in January**Fr. Anselm**, chaplain at Walsh University, was interviewed by the National Catholic Register newspaper for an article they are doing on Catholic college chaplains. He was also pictured in the latest **Walsh University** magazine in an article focusing the spiritual life of the campus.**Bro. Conrad** was recognized for his studies for the priesthood with a check presented by the Maple Heights Council of the Knights of Columbus to **Abbot Gary** before the start of the annual Clergy Night dinner sponsored by the Knights on Friday, January 30. Also attending the dinner were **Subprior Bro. Gabriel, Bro. Peter, Fr. Paschal, Fr. Gerard, and Fr. Justin** who was publicly acknowledged as a role model by the winner of the “Clergyman of the Year” award **Fr. Doug Brown** of Mary, Queen of Peace Parish in Cleveland... **Bro. Paul** has been busy installing a new server and contact points for wireless connections for the computers at the abbey. He took time to drive to Jacksonville, Florida to deliver a personal library to one of the abbey benefactors and was able to visit with his parents....**Fr. Michael** gave a presentation on the Liturgy of the Hours and Lectio Divina for a parish cluster in early December at St. Matthias Parish in Parma as part of their adult education series....He also enjoyed a night at the Cleveland Orchestra on January 29 with his brother **Fr. Steven Brunovsky**, who is a diocesan priest and pastor of St. Hilary’s Parish in Fairlawn, Ohio – courtesy of their family as a Christmas present.....**Abbot Gary**, who for many years served as athletic teams’ chaplain at the high school, has passed the spiritual baton to **Fr. Finbar** and **Bro. Gabriel** who have been leading prayers for the BHS basketball and swimming teams respectively.....and the approach of the Lenten season of self-denial and renewal seems to be captured in the photo below of the dark, snow-covered cloister walkway that leads eventually to the warmth and life of the residential wing of the abbey quadrangle – similar to Easter.



