

# *Saint Andrew Abbey Vocation Newsletter*

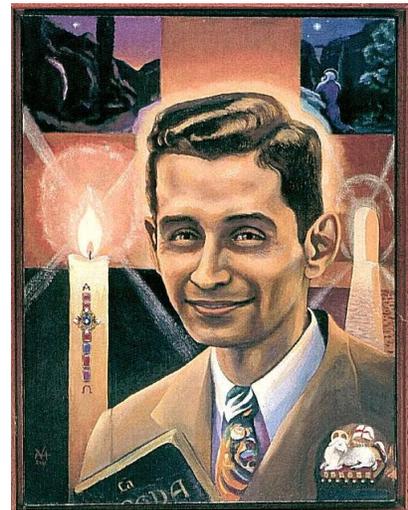
## July, 2016

### ***“Living with Benedict” Weekend Coming Aug. 5-7***

If you haven't had the time or money to take a break from work for a restful and reflective vacation before the summer ends, clear your calendar for **Friday evening, August 5 to Sunday Morning, August 7** for the next “Living with Benedict” monastic expedience weekend. Single, Catholic men between the ages of 18-45 are welcome to participate in the entire weekend or at least one or two days and an overnight. There is no charge, but reservations must be made by **Tuesday, August 2** by contacting Fr. Finbar, OSB at 216-721-5300, ext. 273 or [finbar@cbhs.edu](mailto:finbar@cbhs.edu).

The theme of this weekend will be **“The Works of Mercy”** connected with the special Holy Year of Mercy called by Pope Francis from December, 2015 to November, 2016. The Holy Father believes that God has called the Church to reach out to those who have become alienated from Faith for various reasons by extending to them the merciful and loving touch of Jesus especially through the traditional 7 Corporal and 7 Spiritual Works of Mercy.

Two unique features of this weekend will be a visit to **Assumption Parish** in Broadview Heights on Saturday afternoon to participate in a special outdoor procession in honor of the upcoming patronal feast of the Assumption. Also, on Saturday evening, a new DVD on the life of **Blessed Carlos Rodriguez**, the first candidate for sainthood from Puerto Rico will be shown. Blessed Carlos was a very holy layman whose brother was the first Benedictine abbot in Puerto Rico. Blessed Carlos was very devoted to teaching college students about the power of beauty of the liturgy. He suffered most of his life from poor health and died in 1963 at the age of 44.



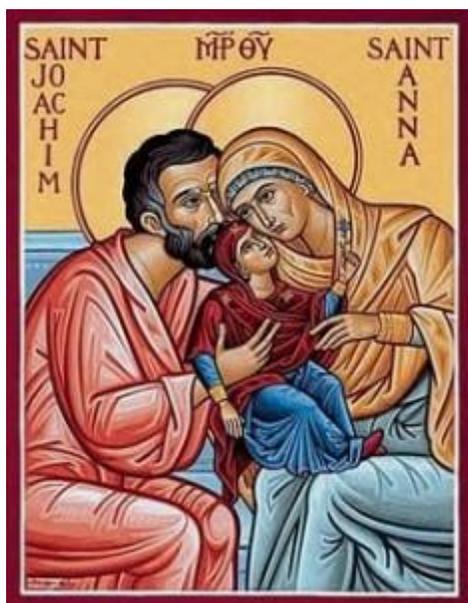
The weekend will also include a Friday evening Holy Hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Each Friday, the monks of the abbey maintain an all-night prayer vigil for vocations. Each monk who participates is assigned an hour of private adoration and prayer between 8 PM and 7 AM. There will also be three conferences on the theme of Mercy.

Those attending the “Living with Benedict” weekend, may also want to stop by **THE FEST**, on Sunday afternoon. **THE FEST** is the annual family festival of faith that takes place on the grounds of Borromeo Seminary in Wickliffe. Several Christian rock bands are featured. It attracts thousands of people especially for the outdoor Mass that takes place in the early evening. Several of our monks will participate in **THE FEST** along with Fr. Finbar.

# Honoring the Grandparents of Jesus on July 26

Take a look at your summer calendar and see if you can be free for all or part of the morning and afternoon on Tuesday, July 26. For many years, the Cleveland District of the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association (FCSLA), a national fraternal insurance and benefit society that is headquartered in Beachwood, Ohio honors its patron Saint Ann and her husband Saint Joachim, parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary and grandparents of Jesus on their feast day of July 26.

Benedictine Bishop Roger Gries, OSB, will celebrate an 11:00 AM Mass at the beautiful outdoor shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Euclid, Ohio at 21281 Chardon Road. A pork tenderloin luncheon will be served at noon at St. Ann's Dining Room by the Trinitarian Sisters who staff the shrine. *If interested in the luncheon, contact Fr. Gerard ([gerard@cbhs.edu](mailto:gerard@cbhs.edu)), Cleveland District chaplain by July 18 so tickets can be reserved.* After the luncheon at 2 PM, Fr. Gerard will lead a rosary and celebration Benediction at the grotto. You can just attend the Mass and/or the afternoon devotions if you choose.



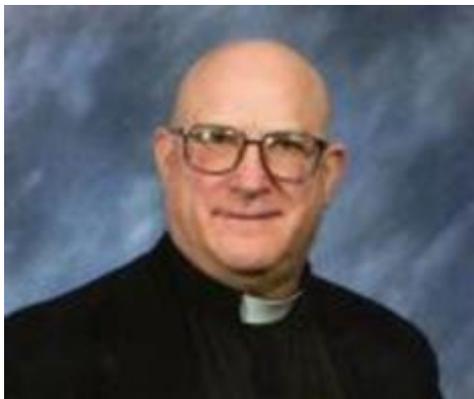
By tradition Joachim and Anne are considered to be the names of the parents of Mary, the Mother of God. We have no historical evidence, however, of any elements of their lives, including their names. Any stories about Mary's father and mother come to us through legend and tradition. We get the oldest story from a document called the Gospel of James, though in no way should this document be trusted to be factual, historical, or the Word of God. The legend told in this document says that after years of childlessness, an angel appeared to tell Anne and Joachim that they would have a child. Anne promised to dedicate this child to God (much the way that Samuel was dedicated by his mother Hannah — Anne — in I Kings).

For those who wonder what we can learn from people we know nothing about and how we can honor them, we must focus on why they are honored by the church. Whatever their names or the facts of their lives, the truth is that it was the parents of Mary who nurtured Mary, taught her, brought her up to be a worthy Mother of God. It was their teaching that led her to respond to God's request with faith, "Let it be done to me as you will." Devotion to St. Anne grew in Europe through a popular French tradition. The French believed that Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Martha, and other friends of Jesus crossed the Mediterranean Sea and landed at the southern French city of Marseilles where they spread the news about Jesus' death and resurrection. According to this tradition Mary Magdalene's group brought with them the remains of St. Anne and reburied them in a cave. They were supposedly found 600 years later by miners. So many countries in Europe with mines, like Slovakia, honor St. Ann.

# Fr. Dismas Publishes His Vocation Story

Fr. Dismas Boeff, OSB, a member of Saint Andrew Abbey since his profession of vows in 1967, has published an interesting pamphlet outlining his unusual path to monastic life. He is also marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his ordination as a priest which took place on June 12, 1976. Having worked most of his monastic priesthood as a prison chaplain and chaplain at Southwest General Hospital, Fr. Dismas now works on a weekly basis with several support counseling groups that deal with alcohol, drug, sex, and food addictions.

Feeling called to the priesthood when he was quite young, Fr. Dismas was not able to become a Mass server in grade school because he could not memorize the prayers of the Latin Mass. He saw a Hollywood movie titled, *The Hoodlum Priest*, which was based on a real priest who ran a half-way house for prison parolees. That was his first inspiration to work with those in prison.



He struggled with academics while a student at our Benedictine High School. After buying a car and getting his license, Fr. Dismas (known as Ray at the time) had a girlfriend and hung around with friends that weren't always the best influence. After he broke up with his girlfriend, thoughts of the priesthood returned. However, since he still struggled with Latin, his guidance counselor suggested that he might have a vocation to the monastic brotherhood which would not require Latin and philosophy studies.

He made the courageous decision to enter St. Andrew Abbey as a novice several months after graduating from high school. He was sent to St. Benedict's Abbey in Kansas for his year of novitiate. After profession his vows, he took college classes to prepare for teaching math in the high school. However, he continued to struggle with his studies and soon was inspired by a priest he met who worked at the Cleveland House of Corrections. Fr. Dismas saw the value of being ordained in he wished to go into prison ministry. So with that motivation, he entered the seminary and made it through with many challenges.

His religious name "Dismas" after the Good Thief who hung next to Jesus on the cross and was the recipient of the Lord's mercy. As a priest, Fr. Dismas served not only at the Cuyahoga County Jail, but also at the famous Leavenworth Federal Prison in Kansas. He also earned a master's degree in Criminology from Sam Houston State University in Texas.

***"If it is God's will, you can reach out for the impossible. I could write about my forty years of priesthood, but I am limiting the story to my vocation. I can't say that I had it easy over the years. I had to go through difficult times recovering from addiction. But God is doing for me what I could not do for myself.... Let God take over and you will get a surprise!"***



KEEP THE FAITH ALIVE

'I CHOSE TO BECOME A  
PHYSICIAN OF SOULS.'

I was on my way to becoming a doctor, preparing for medical school and working in an emergency department, when I started to think differently about healing. Doctors can write prescriptions, but how can they heal guilt, anger and other forms of pain?

I found value in spiritual direction and in the sacrament of reconciliation for healing such wounds. This led to a deepening of my prayer life, and I began attending daily Mass and spending time before the Blessed Sacrament.

After reading about the life of St. Francis of Assisi, I recognized signs of a calling to religious life. I made a retreat with the Benedictines, continued to visit the community and found that monastic life has much to offer in bringing health and healing to God's people.

I chose to become a physician of souls. All of my experiences have been useful in the monastery and our high school apostolate. As a priest-monk, I want to bring God's healing mercy through teaching the Catholic faith, preaching the Word of God and celebrating the sacraments.

FATHER THOMAS SANDERS, OSB  
*St. Andrew's Abbey  
Cleveland, Ohio*



Photo by Roger Mastromanni

*We hear that* ..... newly-ordained **Fr. Thomas** is currently being featured on the back cover of **Columbia**, the international monthly magazine of the Knights of Columbus. In his vocation reflection, Fr. Thomas explains how he originally wanted to become a doctor, but while working in a hospital emergency room, he soon saw that many people had deeper needs. **Fr. Finbar** will attend the National Vocation Conference meeting in Chicago from July 13-17. Our prayerful support goes out to **Prior Timothy** who celebrated the funeral Mass for his sister Joan in the abbey church on Sunday evening, June 26 ..... **Abbot Gary** and **Fr. Bede** represented the abbey at the General Chapter of monasteries of the American Cassinese Congregation that was held at Belmont Abbey in North Carolina June 19-24. A new Abbot President was elected – **Fr. Elias Lorenzo, OSB** of St. Mary's Abbey in New Jersey who has been representing the American Cassinese abbeys in Rome. He was immediately blessed as an abbot.