

# Magazine MonksOK

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# GAUDETE! *Reflections from Abbot Lawrence*



*The Lord is Risen, Alleluia!  
He is truly risen, Alleluia!*

This is the joyous greeting that burst forth in churches and gatherings throughout the world a few weeks ago on Easter Sunday. During the weeks following the beautiful liturgies of the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday, the liturgy of the Church has continued to celebrate this mystery with great joy and to tell the story of how the first disciples transformed the world through their experience of the Easter event.

Unfortunately, many Christians quickly lose sight of the transformative power of the message of Easter. For many, the day that celebrates the foundational and central event of our faith is celebrated as only one day, Easter Sunday. They quickly lose sight of Easter as the cares and concerns and distractions of everyday life begin to take hold on the Monday after Easter. Even those who very scrupulously observed the season of Lent for forty days also often forget that the joyous season of Easter surpasses the penitential season of Lent, and lasts for fifty days as we await the celebration of Pentecost.

For this reason, the Church uses the fifty days of the Easter season to remind us again and again of the reality of God's love for us, a love that is so strong that it has broken down the barriers erected by sin and death so that we might be reunited with God and one another in peace.

We know, of course, that we still must face many challenges in our lives. Some of these challenges arise from our personal frailty and sinfulness. Some of these challenges arise from misunderstanding or conflicts with others, even from within

the Church. And some of these challenges arise from forces beyond our control, forces like natural disasters, political unrest, economic downturns, disease and infirmity, or even from those who are hostile to our faith.

And yet, such challenges are nothing new for the disciples of Jesus. In the story contained in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Epistles of the New Testament, we see that the leaders and members of the Early Church had to overcome the same types of challenges that we face today. Early believers had to cope with their own moral and physical frailty. They had to resolve misunderstandings and conflicts within the community of believers. And they certainly had to overcome persecution, skepticism, and powerful opposition from all sides.

Despite such challenges they maintained their faith in Jesus Christ. Their experience of the Resurrection of Jesus was so powerful that it lasted not just for a day, nor was it limited to fifty days. Rather, their entire lives were transformed by their encounter with the Risen Lord.

Such a transformation was made possible, of course, through the gift of the Holy Spirit that descended upon the Church at the first Pentecost.

Jesus promised several times that he would send another Advocate, a Consoler, the Spirit of Truth, and the Gift of the Father. This promised gift was and is the very presence of God in the Holy Spirit. With the gift of the Holy Spirit, the apostles and other disciples were able to break through the limitations of fear and doubt so that they could give effective witness to the Gospel. Through the Holy Spirit, the apostles were able to resolve the challenges and conflicts that arose within the community of believers. And with the gift of the Holy Spirit the apostles and other early disciples were able to proclaim courageously the Gospel even in the face of hardships, persecution and even martyrdom.

Because we believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, we are called to *live* as an Easter People with faith, hope and love. What is more, we have received the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we can share our faith with a world in need of the mes-

sage of Easter. It is true that very few of us will be called to go forth as missionaries to preach the Gospel in far off lands, or to shed our blood for the faith. Nonetheless, we all can proclaim the reality of

God's saving love to those around us by the way we live our lives in the day to day circumstances that we face, even when those circum-

stances are challenging. We can let God's gifts of faith, hope and love shine through us in the way we perform our jobs, in the way we treat our family members and neighbors, and even in the way we cope with sickness, disappointments, grief and the limitations that come with age.

As the Easter season draws to its close, it is a good time to ask ourselves if we embody the joyful message of Easter. If we do, then we can give thanks to God. And if we find ourselves faltering in our witness to Easter, then we can ask Jesus to send forth once again the gift of the Holy Spirit so that we might be renewed in faith, hope and love, not just for a day or a season, but for the entire course of our lives. In this way, we will be able to share with others and with the world the Good News: *The Lord is risen! He is truly risen! Alleluia!*

*This promised gift was and is  
the very presence of God  
in the Holy Spirit.*

MonksOK is published four times per year by the **Benedictine Monks of St. Gregory's Abbey** for our friends, oblates, and sponsors.

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# Easter on the High Seas

*Publisher's Note: Fr. Phil Creider was ordained as a priest of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City on April 16, 1977. After serving in the Archdiocese of OKC, he became a US Naval Chaplain in 1990, and continued in this special ministry until August 1, 2010. He has been a friend of our monastic community since his time as a seminarian. He is currently residing at St. Gregory's Abbey as part of a sabbatical experience. We are very grateful for his generous service as a priest, especially in his special and challenging role as a chaplain to our men and women in uniform and to their families. +LS*

For the last twenty years, I have served as a Navy and Marine Corps Chaplain. My most memorable celebrations of Lent and Holy Week have been in some interesting places and surroundings.

One Lent was spent in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait with Second Battalion, Tenth MARINES, Second Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm. Ashes for Ash Wednesday came from a palm branch that we bartered for from a man in a one-camel desert oasis town for one can of pop, an MRE (military field food), and one piece of fruit. I later dug a hole in the sand and burned it. I celebrated Ash Wednesday Mass after our artillery battery arrived in place after dark and "laid in our guns," getting our howitzers ready to fire if necessary. Mass was celebrated at 2000 (8 PM) in a pitch-black starless night by using a "chem light," a glow stick, to read the scriptures and prayers. We were mostly surrounded by over 60 far off plumes of fire from burning oil and gas wells. As I began to impose ashes, the sky lightened as bombs impacted close enough for us to feel the earth shake. Almost everybody came to Mass, Catholic and non-Catholics alike. After all, it was war and we wanted to be prepared to meet God.

The Holy Week Liturgies were faith-

fully celebrated in a desert camp. For our Easter Candle I had decorated a thick altar candle with magic markers and inscribed the Cross with a Marine K-Bar, a kind of combat Bowie Knife. As I began chanting the "Exultet" hymn proclaiming the Resurrection, the mussein from the mosque nearby began calling the Faithful to twilight prayers in his own house of worship. The next day, an Ecumenical Sunrise Service was held as the sun came up from behind the upraised tubes of our howitzer cannons. We re-enacted the Passion. I was Pilate.

My last Lent and Holy Week in the Navy was spent in the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman on board USS BOXER. Wanting to prepare myself spiritually for

*It was not hard to make our worship space look stark on Good Friday. Navy warships are stark, by nature.*

Holy Week, I got to fly ashore once for the Sacrament of Penance. It was literally "in and out": thirty seconds after absolution was given, I as told to return to the already "turning and burning" helicopter for the return flight to our ship. All of the Holy Week Liturgies were celebrated under the shadow of some world-class military operations.

Our library-chapel on Palm Sunday was decorated palm branches helicoptered out to the ship at my request and with the Captain's approval. Holy Thursday was celebrated with a library full of people. Many stayed for Adoration in the Chapel (more than in some stateside base chapels and civilian parishes) until midnight when we prayed Compline [night prayer] together. I had made a tabernacle for the Altar of Repose out of cardboard, covered with crinkled tinfoil and decorated with magic markers. It was not hard to make our worship space look stark on Good Friday. Navy warships are stark, by nature.

On Holy Saturday, our Commanding Officer, a Faithful Catholic, told me that because of military operations, Holy Saturday's Easter Vigil had to be cancelled. The next day, our Navy SEALs would rescue an American civilian captain of a merchant ship who had been captured by Somali Pirates. His rescue on Easter added new meaning to that Day. I began the Mass of Easter Day



**Pictured is the altar onboard the USS Boxer as it appeared on Good Friday. The palm branches were air-lifted to the ship at the request of Fr. Creider.**

by singing parts of the "Exultet," still relevant to the day and time.

We also observed Passover that week by celebrating a Seder Meal with our Jews and other interested personnel. It was as authentic as it could possibly be. It has been a joy for me, nearly each year in the Armed Forces, to join with our Jewish Sailors and Marines and their families in the Passover. I missed doing that this year and I am the poorer.

My ship is now out at sea again, doing our Country's business and I miss her, her crew and the Marines on board.

This year, I had the great delight of spending most of Lent and all of Holy Week here at St. Gregory's Abbey. For me, it was the first time in a long time that I could spend it in a calm and reflective manner. Together, the monks and I observed Holy Week with reverence and solemnity that easily lent itself to prayer and reflection. It was the first time in a long time that I did not have anything to worry about. I had only to come, to pray, and to celebrate. I relaxed and enjoyed the beautiful cadence of the Lord's Passion, Death, and Resurrection unfolding before me.

Each year, Lent and Holy Week give me new things to notice and love. This year was no different. I was surrounded by a beautiful Abbey Church, beautiful chanting and ceremony, and a monastic community whom I have known for thirty-eight years, and with whom I am now living. Yet amidst this calm, I sometimes shook inside as I considered where God had placed me in the past, what He had wanted me to do, and the memories of the great men and women with whom I have served. This year, too, I am surrounded by great people again, the Monks of St. Gregory's Abbey in Shawnee... in the Great State of Oklahoma.

**Fr. Phil Creider  
Combat Chaps (Retired)**



**Fr. Phil (at left) is pictured with crew members and marines after adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Holy Thursday onboard the USS Boxer.**

# Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley Installed as Archbishop of Oklahoma City

The Church of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City welcomed its new chief shepherd with the installation of the Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley as Archbishop on February 11, 2011.

The monks of St. Gregory's were very honored to have Archbishop Coakley make his first visit to the Abbey on Shrove Tuesday, March 8. Archbishop Coakley joined the monks for a festive dinner followed by Vespers in the Abbey Church. After Vespers, Archbishop Coakley not only took the time to continue his visit with the monks, but also to make a brief tour of campus and to have an impromptu



Archbishop Coakley, pictured with Abbot Lawrence, visited the Abbey a second time on May 17 to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the ordination of Fr. Charles Massoth, OSB. See story on page 6.

meeting with students of the university who were attending a Campus Ministry event on campus.

Born in Norfolk, VA, in 1955, Archbishop Coakley was raised primarily in Overland Park, KS. He attended the University of Kansas where he was deeply influenced by KU's integrated humanities program. After graduating with a degree in English and Classical Antiquities in 1977, he briefly considered a vocation as a Benedictine monk of Fontgombault in France.

Discerning that he had a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, he began seminary studies for the Diocese of Wichita in 1978 and was ordained as a priest on May 21, 1983. He was appointed as Bishop of Salina by Bl. Pope John Paul II on October 21, 2004, and was ordained as bishop on December 28, 2004.

Pope Benedict XVI appointed him as the fourth Archbishop of Oklahoma City on December 16, 2010, and he was installed as Metropolitan Archbishop on February 11, 2011.

Abbot Lawrence commented that the monastic community is especially grateful that Archbishop Coakley has a deep appreciation for the role of consecrated life in the Church and a particular appreciation for Benedictine monasticism. He said, "Not only did Archbishop

Coakley at one time consider a monastic vocation, but he also was a member of the USCCB Committee on Clergy, Consecrated Life and Vocations between 2007 and 2010, and continues to serve as a consultant on the committee. He also serves on the Board of Trustees at Conception Abbey Seminary which is sponsored by the monks of Conception Abbey. We look forward to working in close collaboration with Archbishop Coakley in the years to come."



Archbishop Coakley met with monks of the Abbey and toured the monastery.



He also met with students (above right) and had an impromptu meeting with university students.

## Art Is for Everyone!

The Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art has announced that it is offering free admission for the months of June, July and August. This is being made possible through the generous sponsorship of the Ad Astra Foundation, the Inasmuch Foundation and Loves' Travel Stops and Country Stores. The museum is located on the campus of St. Gregory's Abbey and University and is open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. on Sunday. For more information or to reserve tours for groups of 10 or more please call the museum at 405-878-5300.

The Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art (MGMoA) is the home of the home of the priceless collection of art and artifacts assembled by the monks of St. Gregory's Abbey. Founded in 1919, the MGMoA is one of the oldest museums in the state of Oklahoma. Father Gregory Gerrer, for whom the museum is named, was monk of St Gregory's who possessed considerable artistic talent. During Father Gregory's travels to Europe, Africa and South America, he collected objects of artistic and ethnological value. Other items have been added to the collection since his death in 1946.

The museum's permanent collections include Egyptian, Greek and Roman objects; art from the Renaissance through the early 20th century; and large holdings of Native American African/Oceanic and Eastern cultural artifacts. In addition, the museum offers exciting special exhibitions throughout the year.



Photo: Br. Isidore Harden, OSB, is pictured giving a tour at the MGMoA.

## Reflection on Luke 24:13-35 Fr. Martin Lugo, OSB, Director of Oblates

We are all familiar with the Easter account in the Gospel of Luke of the two disciples walking to the village of Emmaus, and of their encounter with Jesus as they recalled all the upsetting events that had taken place in Jerusalem.

It is interesting that their eyes were not opened to the reality of Jesus walking along with them and asking them questions. It was not until the "breaking of the bread" with Jesus that their eyes were opened. Then they could see with their own eyes the Jesus whom they sought. He was right in front of them. He had been all along.

This is a story we have lived again and again in the celebration of the Eucharist. We may wonder why it took the disciples so long before they could recognize Jesus

in their midst. Can we wonder why we ourselves may not recognize Jesus present among us beyond our celebration of the Eucharist?

We are called to see Jesus in the stranger, the sick and the guest. In the monastery, we are called to see Jesus in the abbot and in the brothers with whom we share our daily lives.

It is indeed a gift of the Holy Spirit to be able to see Jesus in others as attested in the life of someone like Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She saw Jesus in the least among us, in the sick, the destitute, those cast off to die alone in the gutters of the streets.

This glorified Jesus presents himself to us in our daily lives, perhaps in many unexpected ways. Let us pray that our eyes and hearts may be opened to His glorious presence in unexpected ways. Jesus himself has told us: *"Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers and sisters, you do to me."*



On May 1, at the Spring Oblate gathering, Abbot Martin received three oblate novices: Donna McLerran, Debra Brannigan, and Peggy Morris.

Mrs. Genevieve Saucedo made her commitment as an oblate of St. Gregory's Abbey.

After Mass the oblates gathered for dinner at Salvatore's Restaurant in Montebello, during which Abbot Lawrence updated those gathered on news from the monastery and Fr. Martin reflected on monastic spirituality.

The spring gathering of Oblates at the monastery in Shawnee took place on Mercy Sunday, May 1. Around fifty oblates gathered for Mass, followed by Midday Prayer and lunch in the monastery dining room. Abbot Lawrence gave an update monastery news and answered questions from the oblates. Fr. Martin again gave a reflection on monastic spirituality.

Following the presentations, the oblates joined the monks in the Abbey Church for the celebration of Solemn Vespers. During Vespers Abbot Lawrence received three oblate novices: Donna McLerran of Euless, TX, Debra Brannigan of Del City, OK, and Peggy Morris Doman of Shawnee, OK. Abbot Lawrence also received the final commitments of three new oblates: Bruce Dunphy and Jason Brown of Oklahoma City, Lorinda Holland of Denton, TX.

The fall oblate gatherings will be on Sunday, October 2, at St. Benedict Church in Montebello, CA, and on Sunday, October 9, 2011, at the monastery in Shawnee. For more information contact Oblate Director, Fr. Martin Lugo, OSB, at 405-878-5449.

### In Memoriam

We commend to God our oblates who have entered eternal life in recent months.

+ Deacon Jose Lopez, Obl. OSB

Montebello, CA

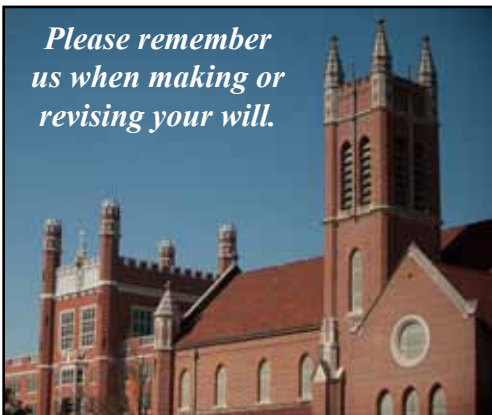
+ Mr. Nick Valdez, Obl. OSB

Montebello, CA

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Please remember us when making or revising your will.

Our official name is:  
The Benedictine Monks  
of St. Gregory's Abbey  
Our federal ID # is: 73-117-4716

### Spring Oblate Gatherings

The annual spring Oblate gatherings were held as usual in California and Oklahoma. Oblates in California gathered at St. Benedict Parish in Montebello for the celebration of Mass on Sunday, April 10. Abbot Lawrence preside at the Eucharist, with Oblate Director Fr. Martin and Fr. Frank Hicks, oblate of St. Gregory's Abbey concelebrating. During the Mass

Do you ever wonder where God is leading you?

Are you interested in becoming a monk of St. Gregory's Abbey?

Contact Fr. Charles Buckley for more information.

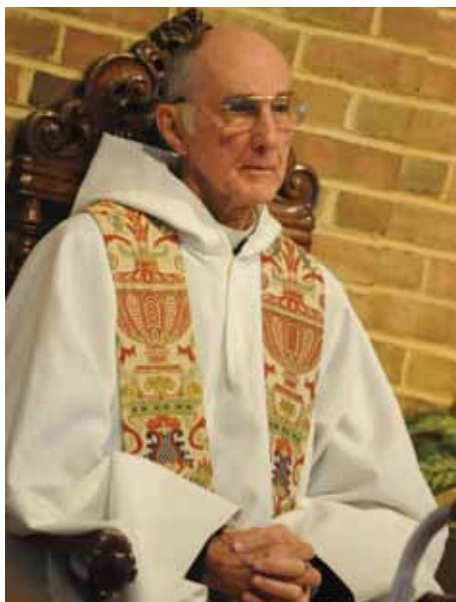
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## Fr. Charles Massoth, OSB, Celebrates 60 Years of Priesthood

Fr. Charles Massoth, OSB, reached an important milestone on April 7, it being the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary or “diamond jubilee” of his ordination to the priesthood on April 7, 1951. Joining Fr. Charles and the monks to celebrate on April 7 were his niece, Vera Webster and her husband Larry from Topeka, Kansas.”



This important anniversary was celebrated in a more public way during the annual monastery retreat on Monday, May 15. Most Rev. Paul S. Coakley, Archbishop of Oklahoma City, presided at the celebration of Mass in the Abbey Church. Abbot Lawrence delivered the homily, commenting on how Fr. Charles has been an exemplary model of the “Good Shepherd” described by Jesus in the Gospel.

Fr. Charles also offered some reflections on his vocation as a priest. He summed up his experience of the priesthood by beautifully singing the stirring ballad “The Impossible Dream” from the musical *Man of La Mancha*. He expressed gratitude to God for his many experiences as a priest and monk of St. Gregory’s Abbey.

Raised near Piqua, KS, Fr. Charles came to St. Gregory’s as a college student in 1943, having been honorably discharged from the Navy following a bout with rheumatic fever. He entered the novitiate at the Abbey and made his first profession of vows on February 25, 1946. Following his ordination in 1951, he completed a master’s degree at the University of Oklahoma.

Fr. Charles has served in a variety of positions in the abbey, high school and college, including as Business Manager, Dean of Admissions and Records, Registrar and as an instructor of business courses at both the high school and college level. He served from 1971 to 1986 as pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Montebello, CA. During that time he was honored with an honorary Doctor of Divinity Degree from the San Diego-based Ministry of Salvation, Inc.

Fr. Charles returned to the monastery in 1986 to serve as Prior of the community. He was elected Abbot of St. Gregory’s on Jan. 3, 1989, and blessed on March 5, 1989. He completed his five-year term as Abbot on Jan. 5, 1994. The Sarkeys Performing Arts building was built on the campus of St. Gregory’s during his tenure as Abbot, which was very appropriate given his great appreciation for the performing arts, especially musical theater.

After his retirement as Abbot, he returned to pastoral ministry, first in Montebello, CA, and then as pastor of St. Benedict Parish in Shawnee for four years.

Fr. Charles now lives at the monastery, where he serves as guest master.

## Monks Review Principles of Chant

Br. Damian Whalen, OSB, who serves as Abbey Choir Master, recently led the monastic community in a review of the latest scholarship and methods for the singing of Gregorian Chant. Abbot Lawrence explained that this review of chant is in response to the call made by both Blessed Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI for a renewed usage of chant in the celebration of the liturgy.

As Br. Damian stated in a recent interview, “Through the writings of both the late Blessed John Paul II and Pope Benedict, we as Catholics have been encouraged to re-appropriate our earliest musical heritage, which is Gregorian Chant. This treasury of Church music is most particularly Roman Catholic and sacred because chant has been connected with the Roman Catholic liturgy from the beginning. We are rediscovering our spiritual heritage and treasure.”

He continued, “There is a pretty strong movement now in parts of the Church to recapture that. We are trying to participate in this movement and prepare for this particular Easter by reintroducing music that has been sung for centuries. And to

use this time also to reintroduce more and more of the chant tradition into our liturgy both in English and in Latin.”

The community made use of their review of chant by preparing the Mass setting “*Obis Factor*” or “Mass XI” in time to sing it during the liturgies of Holy Thursday and Easter. Abbot Lawrence states that the community will be reviewing and learning more settings of sacred texts in Gregorian chant in the coming year.

## Documentary to Feature Monastic Community

St. Gregory’s Abbey and the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art were fortunate to host the producers of a unique project that will explore the “interaction between art, environment and creativity.” According to the project’s website: “The Creative-Native Project is a collaboration between Fran Hardy, M.Ed., Environmental fine artist/educator and host and producer of the Artist’s Process, and Bob Demboski, executive director of CNP, educational film producer and director.”

This dynamic team is in the process of producing programs that will be available for broadcast to PBS affiliates and other educational channels, as well as for schools and educational institutions. The project website states that “the programs will feature interviews with Painters, Scientists, Archeologists, Environmentalists, Writers, Educators, Psychologists, Chefs, Sculptors, Collaborators and anyone else where the creative mind is at work in response to their environment and culture. We see these programs as an inspiration for the viewer. By seeing the creative acts of others, they will be encouraged to follow their passion and live in greater harmony with their environment.”



**Br. Andrew Raple, OSB, was one of several monks interviewed by documentarians regarding the daily work and hobbies of monks.**

During their stay at St. Gregory's Abbey, this team explored how Catholic theology and Benedictine monasticism in particular embody this interaction between art, sustainability and creativity, with the particular appreciation of how human artistic expression of humanity's participation in the creative action of God. Artist Fran Hardy interviewed a number of the monks regarding their own hobbies and creative activities, as well as the way in which the monastic community has promoted education and human culture since they first arrived in Indian Territory, including through the establishment of the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art.

## ***The Abbot's Table Dinner and Auction a Great Success!***

Over eighty guests from around Oklahoma gathered on the campus of St. Gregory's Abbey and University on Friday, May 13, for the 2011 edition of *The Abbot's Table Banquet and Auction*. The event, held every other year, raises funds to support the mission of St. Gregory's University and the activities of the Abbey. The evening began with a reception

held in the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art and moved to a special dinner held in the refectory (dining room) in the monastery. After the dinner a number of collectable wines, *objets d'art*, and special events were offered by auction.

The monastic community is especially grateful to Chef Tuck Curren of Tulsa and Chef Kurt Fleischfresser of Oklahoma City for preparing exquisite cuisine, and to Mr. and Mrs. Richard "Dick" Sias of Oklahoma City and Mrs. Beth Nickel of Oakville, CA, for providing fabulous wines for the evening event.

## **Annual Retreat Features Rev. Cyprian Consiglio, OSB Cam**

Rev. Cyprian Consiglio, OSB Cam, a monk of New Camaldoli Monastery in Big Sur, CA, served as the director of the annual retreat for our monastic community during the week of May 15-20, 2011. Fr. Cyprian focused on the theme of the dignity of our identity in Christ. Drawing upon his extensive expertise in inter-religious dialogue and the monastic and mystical traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam, Fr. Cyprian gave examples of similarities in these traditions, but emphasized the fullness of truth and life that is revealed and won for us in Jesus Christ.

Each year the monastic community gathers for an annual retreat. It is a time for renewal, formation, rest and celebration.

## **Summer Retreats at the Abbey Announced**

St. Gregory's Abbey will offer two retreats to the general public in the summer months. Information on registration and cost for the retreats is available at the Abbey Office at 405-878-5490.

*July 8-10, 2011 • The Eucharist and the New Roman Missal Retreat with Abbot Lawrence*

The new edition of the *Roman Missal in English* has been approved by Pope Benedict XVI and will be implemented throughout the

English-speaking world on the First Sunday of Advent this year, November 27, 2011. During this retreat, Abbot Lawrence will place the issue of the revised English translation of the *Roman Missal* into a broader context of the theology and spirituality of the Eucharist and our understanding of the universal Catholic Church. Along with offering theological and spiritual reflections, Abbot Lawrence will practice with participants the various changes in the Mass.

*August 5-7, 2011 • Learning from Our Life Retreat with Fr. Charles Buckley*

Many books and sermons can be titled the spirituality of every day living. Such books help readers to realize that the "spiritual life" is to be found in the thoughts and deeds, the things we do and the things we leave undone in everyday life. Often we may not recognize the significance of the moments at the time, and only look back on them and say "God was with me in that moment; that was a moment that shaped my life."

During this retreat Fr. Charles will explore with participants ways in which one can recognize better such sacred moments in the present through the virtue of monastic virtue of "attentiveness."

## **Fourth Floor Renovations Underway**

Through the generosity of donors, renovations are underway on the fourth floor of the monastery, which is used to house visitors who are exploring monastic life, candidates and novices. Five rooms have received new dry wall and paint, ceilings and light fixtures, as well as new beds and wardrobes. Work will soon begin on five additional rooms.

## **Monks Continue Easter Monday Pilgrimage**

Maintaining a long-time tradition, several members of the monastic community made a pilgrimage on Easter Monday to the site of the original monastery founded in 1876. The pilgrimage included Midday Prayer in the current parish church at Sacred Heart, a picnic lunch – held indoors due to threatening weather, and a walking visit to the original monastery grounds and the cemeteries of the founding monks and the Sisters of Mercy who staff the school for girls alongside the school for boys operated by the monks.



**Scenes from *The Abbot's Table Dinner and Auction*.**

# Saints Perpetua and Felicity: Faith & Happiness

By Robert J. Allen

Since I was old enough to be an altar server and chant the Litany of the Saints, these two women always stood out: Saints Perpetua and Felicity, pray for us. There we have a noblewoman and her slave, forever, and I do mean forever, all eternity names are remembered together.

They are Saints from the early Church in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, imprisoned before being baptized. These two women, one the mother of a nursing child and the other advanced in her pregnancy, were brutally murdered in the amphitheater.

Saint Felicity is given the title by the Church as "Protector of Women in Child-birth". Having been raised in a home and

country that once believed abortion was wrong, that it is the taking of a life, perhaps more than ever we need to turn to her for the faith and courage to face our torments as she did.

*You can't have faith and not have happiness, just like you can't be charitable and not receive joy.*

Having studied Latin, I recall Father Hilary, our Latin teacher, telling us that Felicity means happiness and Perpetua has a Latin origin meaning eternal faith... and in her case, faith in Christ.

Happiness and Faith - these names are synonymous with who we are as Catho-

lics. You can't have faith and not have happiness, just like you can't be charitable and not receive joy. People need to be asked and they give because it makes them feel good. Catholics are asked to give because we are told that everything we have is a gift from God. This is enjoying the same faith as was enjoyed by these two Saints and although we may never be asked to give our lives for our faith, we must give our goods to live our faith.

Choose your charity, but give, what you can and often; because the CEO of Eternity tells us, "Give, and I guarantee your happiness with me forever".

## Help us with St. Gregory's Abbey "Monastic Upheaval!"

We recently appealed to our friends and benefactors to help address our "MONASTIC UPHEAVAL" at St. Gregory's Abbey. While the monks are not in revolt, the monastery parking area is! While this is not a typical abbey issue, it does affect each member of our community.

The poor condition of the parking area is a true hazard for pedestrians, contributes to the deterioration of our monastery vehicles, and its poor drainage causes flooding into the monastery itself! We have raised a total of \$31,200 of the \$88,021.50 needed.

This is not a glamorous project, but very necessary, and so I ask you for your help. Any amount you could give would be ap-

preciated. Here are the project statistics.

- 1 Sq. Yard of Concrete = \$34.00  
Total sq yards = 1445 or \$49,130.00
- 1 Sq. Yard Crushed Rock = \$8.00  
Total sq yards = 1470 or \$11,760.00
- 1 Cubic Yard Fill = \$4.00  
Total sq yards = 250 or \$1,000.00
- 1 Sq. Yard of Removal \$6.00  
Total sq yards = 1520 or \$9,120.00

With the help of many friends, we will be successful in completing this important project! If you wish to donate to this project, use the enclosed envelope or contact the abbey at: (405) 878-5470 or visit us on the web at: [www.monksok.com](http://www.monksok.com)



Expressing their faith in the Resurrection, the monks prayed for their predecessors during an Easter Monday pilgrimage to the site of Sacred Heart Abbey. Br. Simeon is shown in a moment of reflection in the cemetery of the founding monks.