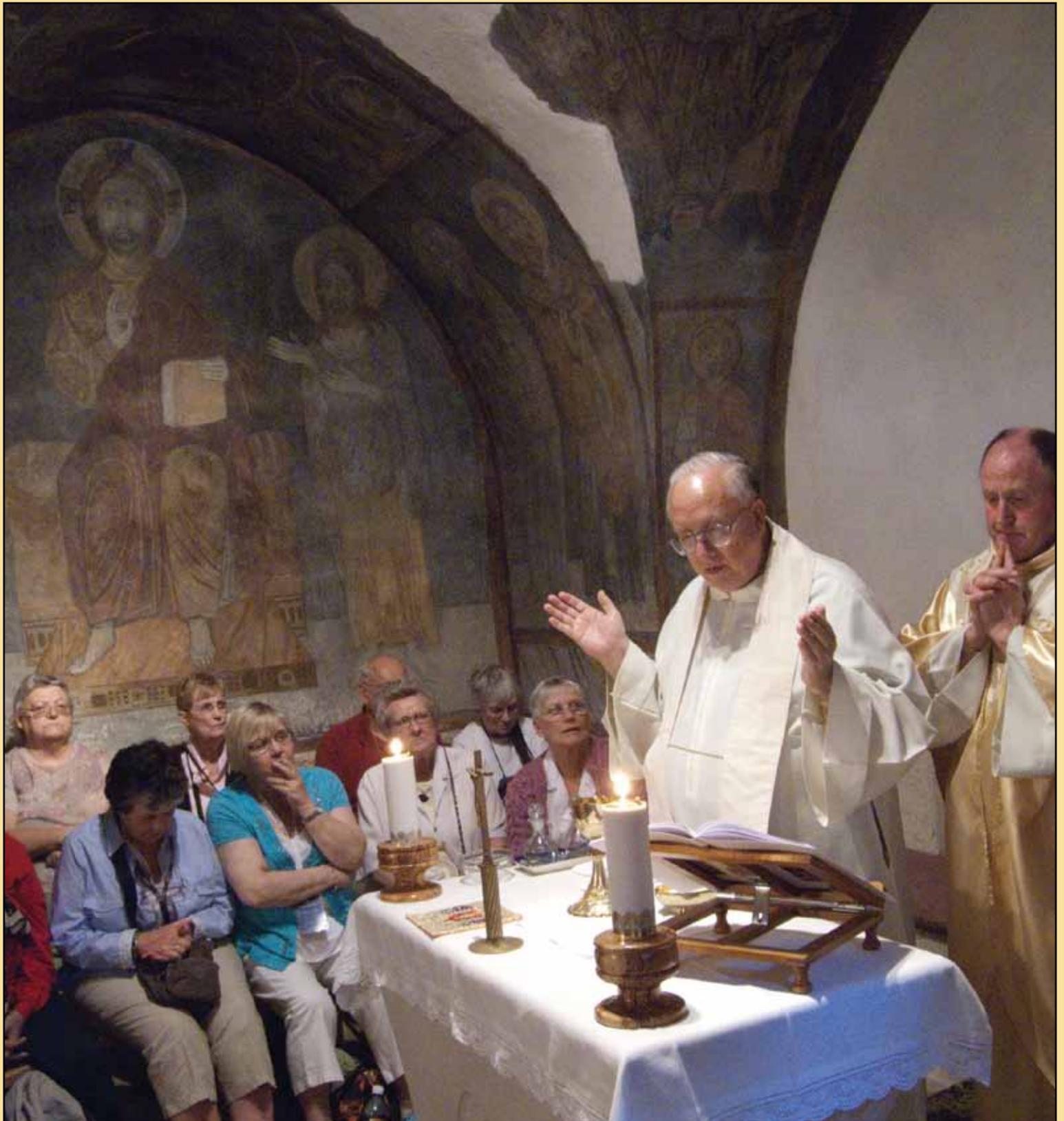


Magazine  
**MonksOK**

Volume IV, Number 1



Publication of The Benedictine Monks ✕ St. Gregory's Abbey ✕ Shawnee, OK 74804



# GAUDETE! Reflections from Abbot Lawrence



Making a pilgrimage is an ancient and venerable practice of the Christian tradition. In fact, many religious traditions honor the practice of pilgrimage.

A pilgrimage is not just any type of journey to get one from point “A” to point “B.” And a true pilgrimage is not something that one can make simply by plugging a destination into a global positioning system. Nor is a pilgrimage simply another form of tourism, even though it might lead one to see new and exciting places.

A pilgrimage is a journey that involves more than physical movement – a pilgrimage is a journey of faith that takes one not only to a physical destination, but more importantly to a new spiritual destination of grace-filled conversion.

Many people are fortunate to make pilgrimages to special destinations. Some are able to travel to the Holy Land, where our Lord Jesus and the other great figures the Bible lived out their response to God’s call. Some make pilgrimages to special shrines where Our Lady has appeared, or where saints have lived and ministered, or where great miracles have occurred. Such journeys involve advanced planning, an interruption of normal routines, at times difficult travel, and often no small sacrifice of financial resources.

Last November, through the generosity of others, our own Father Patrick and Brother George were able to make this type of pilgrimage to the Holy Land in the footsteps of St. Paul. They share some of their reflections in this issue of *MonksOK!*

Most people, however, are not able to make these types of pilgrimages. Even

though they might want to travel to Jerusalem, or Rome, or Lourdes, or any number of other special destinations, they might be prevented from doing so due to commitments to care for family members, or they might have some physical illness that prevents them from traveling. They might have obligations at work, or might not have the financial resources to make such a pilgrimage journey. There are many reasons why someone is not able to make a pilgrim journey to a far-off land. Perhaps you yourself face such challenges that prevent you from making an elaborate pilgrim journey.

But even if that is the case, one can still make some form of pilgrimage in order to grow spiritually or in order to express one’s faith. In fact, with a little reflection, one can even make such a pilgrimage without leaving one’s home or parish boundaries.

The season of Lent is a great opportunity to make this type of pilgrimage. During the forty days of Lent, each of us has an opportunity to journey with Jesus through the purification of the desert and to the joy and new life of Easter.

As with a long-distance pilgrimage, a good Lenten pilgrimage takes careful planning and no small amount of sacrifice. For instance, in preparing for a Lenten pilgrimage we can ask ourselves where we want to end-up at the end of our Lenten journey and what we want to see

and experience when we arrive at Holy Week and Easter. We can ask what we need to leave behind so that we will not be weighed down or encumbered as we make our journey. We can ask what the itinerary of each day will bring: who we will meet and what we hope to learn. We can anticipate the obstacles that we might face along the way so that we will be prepared to overcome them. And we can invite others to journey with us, whether physically alongside us or within us as we carry them with us in our hearts through loving prayer.

Yes, Lent is a great opportunity to make a pilgrimage of faith. And while we might not be making a journey to a venerated shrine or faraway place, we can remember that we do not need to go anywhere to encounter the Lord Jesus. In fact, Jesus comes to us where we are. He comes to us in the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist and Reconciliation. He waits for us in the tabernacles of our parishes and chapels. And, He comes to us to abide in our hearts.

Whatever form your Lenten pilgrimage might take this year, please know that the monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey are making the journey with you, both through our own observances of Lent and through our continued prayers for you. May God bless you on your journey and one day through His grace bring us all together to the everlasting Easter of Heaven!



**Pilgrims make their way through the ruins of the ancient city of Ephesus in Turkey, where tradition holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary lived with St. John after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.**

# Parking Lot Complete!

With the combined blessings of many kind donors, favorable weather and a well-organized construction crew, the solution to the “Monastic Upheaval” of the Abbey parking lot has been completed well ahead of schedule!

The contract for general oversight of the project was awarded to Nashert Constructors of Oklahoma City and the paving component was awarded to Donnelly Paving also of Oklahoma City. The monks

are especially thankful to Mr. Jeff Bradley, of Baughman Company in Wichita, KS, who donated the overall design of the project, and Tyler Hand of Tyler Striping and Paving who donated the final touches of painting the actual spaces in the completed parking lot.

This project represents the largest capital improvement project at the monastery since the establishment of the Abbey Development Office three years ago. The

new parking area not only provides a safer environment and protects our buildings from flooding, it also is a great encouragement to the monastic community and to those who are discerning a vocation to our way of life. We are grateful to everyone who has helped to make this much-needed project a success!

We hope you will enjoy these images of the entire project, from the blessing of the work site, the removal of the old pavement, the construction of the new paving and the final touches of professional striping before the new parking area was occupied.



# In the Footsteps of St. Paul

In November 2011, Father Patrick McCool, O.S.B., and Brother George Hubl, O.S.B., had the opportunity to travel with several other Oklahomans on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to the lands where the Apostle St. Paul proclaimed the gospel and established some of the earliest communities of Christian faith. Fr. Patrick and Br. George share the following memories and reflections from their experience of pilgrimage.

## Remembering Holy Sites

by Fr. Patrick McCool, OSB

While celebrating the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul on January 25, I began thinking of the many places and people I met when I was on a pilgrimage last October and November. The pilgrimage was called “In the



Fr. Patrick praying at the Western wall.

Footsteps of St. Paul.” It covered places in modern-day Turkey, Israel and Greece.

We began our pilgrimage in Turkey. The most memorable place for me was Ephesus, where we visited the House of the Virgin Mary. This was the place where Mary stayed with the apostle John after Christ ascended into heaven. We celebrated Mass there and I was privileged to be the principal celebrant of the Mass in Mary’s honor. At this Mass, I remembered all those present and also those back home. We also stopped at Mary’s Well and brought back some water from the well.

After touring several ancient cities of Turkey, we proceeded to Israel, where we spent the day in Jerusalem and walked the Via Dolorosa [the traditional Way of the Cross] to the tomb of Jesus in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Although the streets were narrow and crowded with pilgrims and local people, it gave us a special feeling especially for those who were able to help carry the cross through the streets and to the tomb of Jesus. It felt very inspiring to be among so many who were obviously emotionally moved

by the realization of what we were doing: following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ during his passion and death. Later we went to the Western Wall along with many other pilgrims out of respect for its importance for the Jewish people.

While in Israel we joined other pilgrims in a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. The boat was a replica of a boat found buried in the mud of the Sea of Galilee. The original boat is called “The Jesus Boat.” While we were on the boat we prayed, listened to an inspirational speaker and even sang some songs. This experience gave many of us a feeling of peace and tranquility as we wondered if these was how the apostles felt when Jesus was on a boat with them.

The final part of our pilgrimage was to Greece. Among many places we visited one that especially impressed me was Philippi, where St. Paul spent time preaching and converting the people. Among his converts was a woman named Lydia and we were able to visit St. Lydia’s baptistry.

Everyone should have the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and experience the many places mentioned in the Bible, especially in the New Testament. This is the second time that I have been able to visit Israel. After my return the Bible takes on altogether new meaning for me and reminds me of what this should mean for all Christians.

## Appreciating Scripture Through Pilgrimage



by Br. George Hubl, O.S.B.

In November of last year I was able to grow in my understanding of how scripture can change my life, and in my feelings toward and experience of the Bible. My appreciation of scripture is deeper in me now than before my pilgrimage in “The Steps of St. Paul.”

Seeing the places where Jesus and the disciples and apostles like St. Paul walked and worked was just simply amazing! The accounts of the places in the life of Jesus, like Capernaum, became very real to me. When I was at Capernaum I was really sick, not even knowing how sick I was. The sickness that I experienced was such an awful feeling!

It was the Monday of the First of Advent. The gospel for Mass that day was Matthew 8:5-11, the story of the centurion from Capernaum who asked for healing for his servant who was seriously ill. My sickness at Capernaum is not something that I want to remember, but I do remember the way I felt when I was there. I was not paralyzed, but like the servant I was suffering a dreadful sickness! And yet, I also remember the centurion’s prayer to Jesus, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed...” Now with the new translation of the Roman Missal we pray these same words together at Mass. Again, this pilgrimage experience was amazing!

**Do you ever wonder where God is leading you?  
Are you interested in becoming a monk  
of St. Gregory’s Abbey?**

**Contact Father Boniface Copelin, O.S.B., for more information.  
405-878-5455 or frboniface@stgregorys.edu**

## Book Suggestion For Lent

by Br. Benet Exton,  
O.S.B.

Abbey Librarian

In his teaching on Lent, St. Benedict in the *Rule* prescribes that each monk is to receive a book from the library at the beginning of Lent and should read it straight through. As you prepare for your Lenten pilgrimage, I suggest you might consider the following book for your own seasonal reading.



### **The Work of Mercy: Being the Hands and Heart of Christ.**

Mark P. Shea.  
Cincinnati, OH: Servant Books, Jan.  
2012. 176 pages. Paperback. ISBN  
978-1-61636-009-2. \$14.99.

This is a wonderful book to ponder and meditate on and would be a great aid for those who are looking for something to read during the up-coming days of Lent. Mark Shea is a columnist at CatholicExchange.com. In this book he gets to the point about what a work of mercy is and how Christians of any stripe can do these works for the betterment of our world.

Shea discusses what the various works of mercy are with a social justice view in mind and describes how people can actually do these works today. Some are easy and some are hard. Shea reminds the reader of the classic corporal and spiritual works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, harbor the harborless, visit the sick, ransom captives, bury the dead, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, admonish sinners, bear wrongs patiently, forgive offenses willingly, comfort the afflicted, pray for the living and the dead. This book is highly recommended.

To our Friends and Benefactors:

It is our concern to protect your name and to assure you of this, OUR POLICY, to never rent, sell or lend your name to any other organization.

-Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, O.S.B.

## Balancing Observance with the Law of Love

by Fr. Boniface Copelin, O.S.B.

Abbey Vocation and Formation Director



Observance and Charity: Is it really a question of one or the other?

In the third chapter of St. Mark's Gospel we find the story of the man with the withered hand. Jesus heals this man in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The Pharisees and Herodians respond to Jesus doing this work of charity on the Sabbath by plotting together to put Jesus to death. The important point of this Gospel is that charity (i.e. our need to do acts of charity) overrides any sense of superficial observance. This is not to say that observances are unnecessary, but that observances should lead us to charity.

In the monastery, we can try to hide behind observances when it might actually be best to err on the side of charity. The problem is that it then becomes too easy to hide behind the rules when our charity is needed. When we do that we misuse the rules in order to play it safe: to hide and take no chances.

The problem for us who call ourselves Benedictines is that St. Benedict says that whatever strictness exists in the *Rule* is about amending faults and for safeguarding love (charity). So if the *Rule* is about safeguarding charity, how can one hide behind the observance of the *Rule* when his or her charity is required? True observance of the *Rule* will be the observance of the letter guided and animated by the true spirit of charity.

The same is true of our Lenten observances. They are not about making us hard or sad – except perhaps for the sadness which comes from acknowledging our own sins. Rather, our observances of fasting and almsgiving and other acts of self-denial are about opening and softening our hearts so that we may do those acts of kindness which present themselves at the times when they need doing. We cannot impose our penitential practices on others in their time of need nor let our own penitential practices prevent us from giving of ourselves. If we do, what good is our penitence?

In the end, we must each stand before the Judge and plead our cause. We will each hold up our heart and ask that it be weighed on the scales of God's justice. Will we raise up a heart full of charity; or a withered, empty heart?

## From the Development Office: T.G.I. God

by Robert J. Allen

Many years ago I had a professor who looked like the third person of the Trinity, started class by saying, "GOD..." Then, after a long pause, said, "Whatever you thought was God when I said; 'God' is not God." After some 160 credit hours of classes, there are not many teachings I can quote, but this one stuck.

During these next forty days we are again blessed by having God show us how deeply He loves us through the suffering, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus the Christ. God, just the grace to say this name. These forty days are a great gift. This is a special time when the Church helps us to look at who we are in relationship to God. We are people whom He created. We are necessary in how God wants His creation to function. What we

do with our time this Lent is up to us and God is walking with us during each day.

*What we do with our time this Lent is up to us and God is walking with us during each day.*

His gifts are many and often His grace and love are unending and we are unable to measure the depth of these gifts. What we can do is measure how we want to use these gifts, to whom and how much. We will never be asked to endure the sufferings that Christ endured for us, but we can make a sacrificial gift to help the monks of St. Gregory's Abbey who give their life for all of us. This happens daily and without hesitation. We are remembered in the Liturgy of the Hours, in the daily Mass and in their many works. When we give to the Abbey, we are seeking to expand and multiply our own gifts because who we touch through our generosity will only be known by God.

## Long Awaited Missals Blessed

For over a year, the monks have joined Catholics throughout the world in preparing for the implementation of a new English translation of the *Third Edition of the Roman Missal*. The *Missal* contains the instructions and prayers used for the celebration of the Mass and the new edition was launched on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, November 27, 2011. Abbot Lawrence blessed the five copies of the *Missal* to be used at the Abbey.



## Oblate Days Held

The annual fall gatherings of the Oblates of St. Gregory's Abbey were held at St. Benedict Parish in Montebello, CA, on October 2, and at St. Gregory's Abbey on October 9. The Oblates enjoyed gathering for prayer and fellowship, as well as hearing news from the monastery. At the Shawnee gathering, Abbot Lawrence received Teresa Stoops as an Oblate Novice, pictured.

For more information on Benedictine Oblates, please contact Prior Martin, Oblate Director, at 405-878-5449.



## In Memoriam

We remember in a special way the following Oblates of our Community who have recently entered eternal life.

- ❖ Leone Bies of Montebello, CA
- ❖ Gaye Higdon of Shawnee, OK
- ❖ Alex Sandoval of Montebello, CA

## Christmas at the Monastery



Christmas is always a special time at the monastery. Once again this year the liturgies were celebrated with solemnity in the Abbey Church that was decorated with dozens of poinsettias grown by Br. Andrew and evergreen wreathes donated by a friend of the monastery.

Several worked together on Christmas Day to prepare our monastery dinner. The feast featured two "heirloom" turkeys raised organically by an Oklahoma farm family and prepared with care by Fr. Boniface. New treats this year were deviled eggs and fresh eggnog prepared with eggs



harvested by Br. George from his flock of French Faverolle chickens. The monastery Christmas party once again featured the fun of Abbey Bingo, organized by Subprior Joachim and including a challenging dart-toss for prizes hidden in balloons.

Along with all the community fellowship, we kept before us during this holy season the prayer intentions of our many family members, oblates, friends alumni and benefactors.

## Monks in New Assignments

**Fr. Brendan Helbing, OSB**, has accepted a new ministry assignment as Associate Pastor at Sacred Heart Parish in Oklahoma City. One of the largest parishes in Oklahoma, the parish serves diverse

population and is home to many Spanish-speaking immigrants. Fr. Brendan's fluency in Spanish will be a great blessing to this parish. He will reside full-time at Sacred Heart Parish.

Fr. Brendan professed vows as a monk on July 11, 1959, and was ordained as a priest on May 23, 1965. As a monk he has served in parishes in Oklahoma and California. Most recently he has been serving as Associate Pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Kansas City, MO.

**Fr. Manuel Magallanes, OSB**, has accepted a new ministry as Associate Pastor at St. Benedict Parish in Shawnee. Fr. Manuel will assist with sacramental celebrations, hospital and prison ministry, and outreach to Spanish-speaking persons in the parish. He will reside at the monastery while assisting in the local parish.

Fr. Manuel professed vows as a monk on June 24, 1964, and was ordained as a priest on June 25, 1976. He has served in pastoral assignments in Oklahoma and California. In residence at the monastery, he has provided pastoral support at Tinker AFB and Altus AFB, and on weekends at various parishes throughout Oklahoma. He has also assisted at St. Gregory's University, especially in promoting inter-cultural awareness and interaction.

## External Review Board Holds Annual Meeting

The External Review Board of St. Gregory's Abbey held its annual meeting on Saturday, December 17. The External Review Board assists the monks of St. Gregory's Abbey in maintaining and promoting the monastery's policies and practices to create a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults.

St. Gregory's Abbey was accredited in its efforts to promote a safe environment in 2009 by Praesidium, Inc., the official agency working with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men of the United States in this important and groundbreaking initiative. Members of the St. Gregory's Abbey External Review Board were chosen for their unique and diverse backgrounds in the areas of pastoral care, clinical counseling, criminal justice, medicine, Benedictine spirituality, and family life.

# Earthquake Damage Closes Historic Benedictine Hall



At far left – photos show the damage and demolition of one of the turrets of Benedictine Hall that did not collapse during the initial earthquake on Nov. 5. Left – Abbot Lawrence makes a personal inspection of the demolition work from the 150 ft. high view of the construction crane.

Students returned to class inside historic Benedictine Hall on January 11, more than two months after damage caused by an earthquake forced St. Gregory's University officials to close the building. Four turrets atop Benedictine Hall were badly damaged on November 5 by the 5.6 magnitude temblor. Crews have since

removed and capped them. Benedictine Hall, an Oklahoma landmark, is the main academic and administrative building on campus.

Most of the earthquake damage was contained to the building's turrets, which rose 120 feet from the ground and gave the building its "castle-like" appearance.

One of the turrets fell to the ground during the quake, and the remaining three had to be removed because they were so badly damaged. Minor damage from the quake and its aftereffects included broken windows, water main breaks, water damage, cracks to interior surface finishes, damage to the outside façade of Benedictine Hall and some roof damage. The building was closed from the time of the earthquake through December 15, when workers completed a phase of the project that included removing and capping the turrets. Classes and administrative offices were relocated to various locations on campus while the work was in progress.

The cost to fully restore Benedictine Hall is estimated at \$2.8 million. SGU set up the Benedictine Hall Restoration Fund in the days following the quake and have raised more than \$1.5 million through the support of alumni, friends of the institution, and various organizations. University officials hope to begin the restoration process later this year.

Built in 1915 and subsequently renovated, Benedictine Hall is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. It contains most of the university's administrative and faculty offices, classrooms, science laboratories, computer laboratories, campus mailroom and the James J. Kelly Library, which contains more than 50,000 bound volumes.

For information on how to contribute to the Benedictine Hall Restoration Fund, visit [www.stgregorys.edu](http://www.stgregorys.edu) and click on the "Donate Now" button.



Pictured with Abbot Lawrence are members of the External Review Board. L to R – Br. Benet Exton, OSB, monk of St. Gregory's Abbey; Rev. Mr. Paul Albert, a Catholic deacon and attorney with certification in parish and school risk management from Cambridge University; Sister Rachel Dietz, O.S.B., who serves as Subprioress of St. Scholastica Monastery in Ft. Smith, AR, and is a Licensed Social Worker specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy; Abbot Lawrence; Mrs. Mary Boerner-Barrs, a Board Certified Physician Assistant working in the OB/GYN Delivery unit at the Choctaw Nation Indian Hospital and having professional experience in the medical aspect relating to abuse and the judicial system; Mrs. Melody Harrington, M.Ed, LPC, (ERB Chair), who has extensive experience in counseling and teaching and has served with "top secret" clearance for the CIA as a certified Polygraph Examiner and Intelligence Officer, as a volunteer on the Board of Directors of Project Safe, Inc., with the Oklahoma Crime Victims Centre, and is certified to conduct adoption home studies; and the Rev. Joseph Jacobi, pastor of St. Eugene Parish in Oklahoma City, who holds a MA in Theology from the Catholic University of America and has served on numerous archdiocesan committees and panels, including as a member of the Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City.

# St. Gregory's Abbey Annual Golf Tournament

Monday, June 25, 2012  
Twin Hills Golf  
& Country Club  
Start Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Registration:  
8:30 – 10:00 a.m.

4-Person Scramble  
Putting Contest  
Prizes:

There will be 3 flights  
Pro Shop Gift Certificate  
for each flight



Play is limited  
to 88 persons

Supper at 6 p.m.  
Location: Speak Easy, 1116 NW 51st St  
Oklahoma City, OK 73118

(across from McGuinness High School)  
Southwest style dinner  
Bring a guest for \$25.00

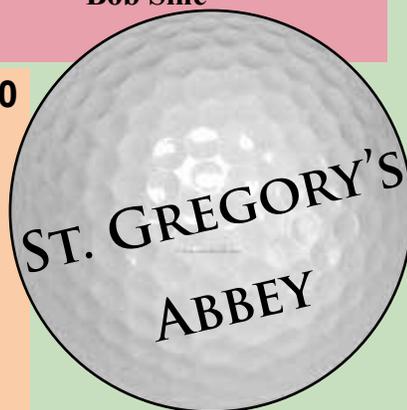
Fee: \$150 per player  
which includes:  
Cart • Green Fee •  
Box Lunch Dinner •  
Special Events

Golf Committee  
Abbot Lawrence Stasyszen, OSB  
Mike Moxley • Joe King  
Bob Sine

Corporate Sponsorship: \$1,000  
Party of 4  
Plus 4 guests for Dinner  
Advertising Sign on Tee

Signs: Tee Sign \$100

Registration Booth Sign \$500



## 2012 Triduum & Easter Schedule

### Holy Thursday – April 5

6:00 a.m. Office of the Readings  
7:15 a.m. Lauds  
8:00 p.m. Mass of the Lord's Supper  
Eucharistic Adoration until  
Midnight

### Good Friday – April 6

7:15 a.m. Office of Tenebrae  
12:05 p.m. Midday Prayer  
3:00 p.m. Solemn Liturgy  
of the Passion  
6:45 p.m. Night Prayer

### Holy Saturday – April 7

7:15 a.m. Office of Tenebrae  
11:30 a.m. Midday Prayer  
5:00 p.m. Vespers  
9:00 p.m. Easter Vigil

### Easter Sunday – April 8

8:30 a.m. Lauds  
10:00 a.m. Eucharist for Easter Day  
11:30 a.m. Midday Prayer  
5:00 p.m. Solemn Vespers  
7:00 p.m. Compline

All are welcome  
to join us.

Cover photo: Fr. Patrick McCool,  
O.S.B., presides at a Mass for pil-  
grims in the ancient Chapel of St.  
Helena, which is located adjacent to  
the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethle-  
hem.

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[www.monksok.com](http://www.monksok.com)

The public is invited to the Inauguration  
of D. Gregory Main as the Fifteenth  
President of St. Gregory's University  
on Friday, March 30. Inauguration  
Mass at 11:00 a.m. in the St. Grego-  
ry's Abbey Church and the Inaugura-  
tion Ceremony at 2:00 p.m. in the W.P.  
Wood Field House of St. Gregory's  
University.

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