

Magazine MonksOK

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Year of Faith

GAUDETE! Reflections from Abbot Lawrence



With this issue of *MonksOK!*, we turn our attention to the *Year of Faith* that has been proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI. This special time of prayer, study, and openness to the saving grace of God began on October 11, 2012, the 50th anniversary of the convening of Second Vatican Council and the 20th anniversary of the promulgation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The *Year of Faith* will end on November 24, 2013, the Solemnity of

Christ the King. As Pope Benedict stated in his announcement of the *Year of Faith*, this is "... a moment of grace and commitment for an ever fuller conversion to God, to strengthen our faith in him and to proclaim him with joy to the people of our time."

As it happened, the regular readings for Mass on October 11 provided a very appropriate keynote on the first day of the *Year of Faith*. The readings were for the 27th Thursday in Ordinary Time: *Galatians 3:1-5* and *Luke 11:5-13*. The message of these readings challenges us to examine our own faith in the providence of our loving God and in the salvation that we can receive only through Jesus Christ and the action of the Holy Spirit within us.

The first reading, *Galatians 3:1-5*, opens with the rather blunt phrase: "O stupid Galatians! Who has bewitched you...?" In the passage, St. Paul minces no words as he passionately applies a bit of a spiritual "dope slap" to the Christians of Galatia. This community originally had accepted faith in Christ with great fervor. Unfortunately, it seems that they began to fall back into former ways of behaving when St. Paul left them in order to preach elsewhere. They began to place their trust once again in old comfortable practices of the Law that had no power to bring salvation. In this passage, St. Paul reminds them of the true source of their salvation: Jesus Christ. He calls them to allow the grace of Christ to transform their lives once again so that they might again give faithful witness in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This is a message that we Christians of today need to hear from time to time as well – perhaps especially as we observe this *Year of Faith*. Every person of faith has experienced at one point or another in his or her life a moment of intense grace. Many have responded to such a moment of grace with such fervor that they changed the entire course of their lives.

And yet, even with this initial response, it is also easy for us to fall into previous ways of thinking and behaving. We can begin to live our faith in a way that is simply comfortable. We might even fall back into a way of thinking marked by the logic of this world and passing promises of this current age. We can become lukewarm in our relationship with Jesus Christ and thus no longer give witness to a fervent and transformative life of faith.

If that is the case, St. Paul challenges us: "O you stupid

Galatians!" He does not do so to ridicule us or to make us wallow in shame. Rather, he calls out to us in love, in order to fan into flame the faith and passion that once marked our relationship with Christ. He is calling us to trust in the "... one who supplies the Spirit to [us] and works mighty deeds among [us]."

The passage from chapter 11 of the *Gospel of Luke* is also a great source of instruction and encouragement to us in this *Year of Faith*. With a rather humorous image, Jesus tells the story of a man whose neighbor comes knocking at his door in the middle of the night to ask for some loaves of bread so that the neighbor can feed an unexpected guest. Despite the fact that the man had already

Every person of faith has experienced at one point or another in his or her life a moment of intense grace.

secured his house and that he and his family were settled into bed for the night, he nonetheless got up to respond to his neighbor's request for food. He did so not out of friendship, Jesus tells us, but because the neighbor would not stop knocking at the door!

With this story, Jesus makes the point that if we human beings who are often selfish, or who are often settled in our own personal comfort, can be stirred to come to the help of someone who persistently knocks at our door, how much more will our Loving God respond to us in our needs. Jesus says: "And I tell you, ask and you will receive; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

Of course it is possible that God will respond to our petitions, our prayers, and our supplications, in ways that we do not expect, anticipate, or perhaps even want. Nonetheless, God always responds to the prayers that we *offer in faith*. During this *Year of Faith*, we would do well to ask ourselves whether or not we truly believe this and practice it.

The *Year of Faith* is a type of pilgrimage being taken by believers throughout the world. Reflecting on the challenging call of St. Paul, and the encouraging yet also challenging words of Jesus, may we indeed experience the goals of the Holy Father, Pope Benedict, for believers to experience the *Year of Faith* as "... a moment of grace and commitment for an ever fuller conversion to God, to strengthen our faith in him and to proclaim him with joy to the people of our time."

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Recommended Practices for *The Year of Faith!*

In the document in which he called for the *Year of Faith*, Pope Benedict XVI writes that the year is a "...summons to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the One Savior of the world" (*Porta Fidei* 6). As stated on the website for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the year "...is an opportunity for Catholics to experience a conversion – to turn back to Jesus and enter into a deeper relationship with him. The 'door of faith' is opened at one's baptism, but during this year Catholics are called to open it again, walk through it and rediscover and renew their relationship with Christ and his Church." In fact, all Christians can find this year to be a "...propitious occasion for the faithful to understand more profoundly that the foundation of Christian faith is 'the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction'" (Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, *Pastoral Recommendations for the Year of Faith*).

But how can one make the most of the *Year of Faith*? Pope Benedict XVI has called for concentration in three fundamental areas: study, prayer and actions.

First of all, the Holy Father calls Catholics to come to a deeper understanding of their faith. In particular, he calls for study of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and Sacred Scripture. Daily recitation of the Nicene Creed or the Apostles Creed is also recommended so that the fundamental beliefs of our faith can be before us.

Secondly, the *Year of Faith* is a time when we can become more devoted to prayer. Prayer, of course, can take many forms. One might relearn or learn for the first time the prayers of the Angelus, which calls to mind and heart the Incarnation of our Lord and the faith of Mary three times each day. Daily reading of the Bible, recitation of the Rosary, or praying the Stations of the Cross are examples of other practices that immerse one in the mysteries of salvation. Frequent celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and even attendance at daily Mass when possible are wonderful opportunities to grow in faith. In addition to all of these possibilities, finding opportunities to pray with others helps us to recall that faith in Christ is by its nature a communal experience.

Finally, the study of the faith of the Church and a rich prayer life call us to put faith into action. Witnessing to the faith of the Church and the reality of God's Kingdom is essential for the success of the New Evangelization. In fact, Christians were first recognized and admired by others on account of their love for one another, their courage under persecution, and their self-giving service to others – especially to those who were not Christian. In this *Year of Faith*, the Holy Father calls us to find ways to proclaim the Good News of Salvation – to evangelize – in our families, our parishes, in our places of work, and in our towns, nation, and world.

The important thing is for each person to make a concrete plan to participate in the *Year of Faith* in each of these three ways. If one does, then it will truly be a time of grace and a new beginning for the cause of evangelization in our world!



The official logo of the *Year of Faith* being used throughout the world.

Brother's Books: Recommended Reading for the *Year of Faith*

Abbey Librarian, Br. Benet, offers his review of these books as helpful reading for the *Year of Faith*.

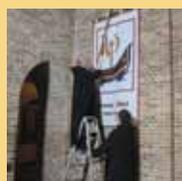
Seek First the Kingdom: Challenging the Culture by Living our Faith. Cardinal Donald Wuerl. Huntington, Ind. : Our Sunday Visitor, 2012. 190 pages. Hardback. ISBN 978-1-61278-505-9. \$19.95.

Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop of Washington, D.C., has written a book that has turned out to be timely considering the controversy over the mandate that all institutions have to provide insurance that covers things that go against the teachings of their faith and thus against the free expression of religion. He discusses how the teachings of Jesus have always been opposed by secular society. The Cardinal points out that the kingdom of Jesus Christ over time has improved the lives of many people and cultures. He also shows that the

Kingdom of God is made visible in the good actions of Christians like feeding the poor, education, health care and the promotion of social justice. I recommend this book to those interested in learning what the Church has done to improve society and culture.

Why Catholicism Matters : Celebrating the Importance of Faith. William Donohue. New York : Image Books, May 29, 2012. 288 pages. Hardback. ISBN 978-0-307-88533-3. \$22.99.

Dr. Bill Donohue is the president of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, a position that places him in the forefront of confronting controversial issues that threaten the rights of the Catholic Church and Christianity. In this book, Dr. Donohue shows how much Western Culture and Society owes to the Catholic Church and to Christianity, including in the spheres of art, morals, education, politics, and other important aspects. He presents how much secularism is trying to change Western ideals by showing what our country and society stand to lose if the forces of secularism were to succeed. Some people may get angry about this book, but others will rejoice!



On the cover: Br. Damian and Br. Benet hang a special banner commemorating the *Year of Faith* in the Abbey Church.

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

Fr. Nicholas Leads University Community in Faith Development

If you have trouble finding Fr. Nicholas Ast, O.S.B., in the monastery these days, chances are that you need only walk across campus to the Rockwood Center, the student union at St. Gregory's University. Go upstairs to the second floor and you will find the Office of Mission and Identity, which includes Campus Ministry, the University Chaplain and the Office of Faith Integration, Development and Evangelization (FIDE, Latin for "faith"). Somewhere, in the midst of what is usually a bustle of activity, you will find Fr. Nicholas.

For generations, the monks of St. Gregory's Abbey have cared for the spiritual needs of the students who have attended the high school, college and university. Presently, Fr. Nicholas serves as both the Vice President for Mission and Identity and as the University Chaplain. Joining Fr. Nicholas in ministering to the university community is Fr. Boniface Copelin, O.S.B., who serves as the Assistant Chaplain. An alumnus of the university, Marvin Bennett, is the Director of FIDE, which also oversees the Buckley Outreach Team. Formed in 1991, this team of St. Gregory's students crisscrosses the state of Oklahoma to conduct retreats for Catholic youth, especially those preparing for Confirmation. Fr. Charles Buckley, O.S.B., whose parents' estate formed the endowment that funds the team, still actively participates in the spiritual formation of its members. Presently, Amy Bennett, an alumna of the university and the wife of Marvin Bennett, serves as the Coordinator for the Buckley Team. With the assistance of other monks, student workers and volunteers, the Office of Mission and Identity continues the pastoral work of the Abbey on campus.

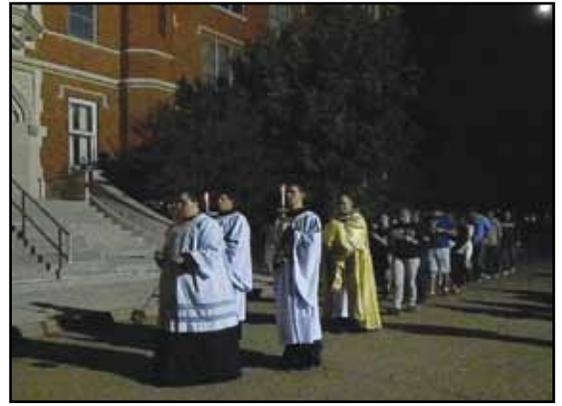
In keeping with the vision of Blessed John Paul II in *Ex corde Ecclesiae* and the directives of the US bishops, Campus Ministry and FIDE offer a wide array of activities to SGU students. "Of course," says Fr. Nicholas, "all students, staff and faculty are always welcome to attend Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours at the Abbey. With that said, our activities focus most particularly on the spiritual formation of our students." In addition to Abbey liturgies, Campus Ministry offers special Masses for students on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is held each Thursday. Other devotions such as the rosary, novenas and the stations of the cross are also part of the regular schedule.

Fr. Nicholas notes that "we had several activities to open the *Year of Faith*. One of the most successful was our Forty Hours Devotion." From the evening of October 31 to the afternoon of All Souls' Day on November 2, Campus Ministry held Forty Hours of Adoration in the Student Chapel. "We began with a Eucharistic Procession after the Wednesday evening Mass in the Abbey Church," says Fr. Nicholas, "and we processed to the Student Chapel with over forty students in attendance." Fr. Nicholas reports that every time slot was filled by a St. Gregory's student, staff or faculty member, "but the vast majority," he says, "were our students."

The Office of Mission and identity also offers evening programs to provide students with multiple opportunities to grow in their faith. Bible Study is held every Monday night. On Tuesday, a catechism study group meets. In response to the Holy Father's suggestions for the Year of Faith, Fr. Nicholas and Marvin Bennett are covering the documents of Vatican II with the students. Presently, five SGU students attend weekly RCIA classes.

Special monthly events include Coffee House – a series which

brings priests of Oklahoma City and Tulsa to St. Gregory's to speak on a topic of their choice to SGU students. Praise and Worship evenings are held on the last Tuesday of each month. The office's electronic newsletter, *Pro Multis*, is also published monthly.



Fr. Nicholas leads students in a Eucharistic Procession on the campus of St. Gregory's Abbey and University.

The FIDE Office sponsors a yearly high school youth conference during Christmas break, an event which typically draws about 150 students for a weekend of presentations and spiritual formation. Last year's conference, "Hail Holy Queen," featured talks by Abbot Lawrence, Fr. Boniface, Fr. Nicholas, and Br. Simeon. FIDE also sponsors the Catholic Culture Series, which has brought several events to campus. Last May, Scott Hahn spoke to 500 people in the university field house. Former *Catholic Answers* speaker, Mother Miriam of the Lamb of God, OSB, addressed the topics of conversion and vocation in a talk



Abbot Lawrence and Fr. Nicholas speak with noted Catholic author and speaker Dr. Scott Hahn.

this fall. Coming in April, Dale Ahlquist, the President of the American Chesterton Society, will speak at St. Gregory's. Fr. Nicholas notes that "Marvin Bennett does a wonderful job in bringing these high quality, Catholic speakers to campus."

Student organizations also add to the Catholic atmosphere on campus. The Knights of Columbus held its annual "Everything but the Turkey" food drive for the local St. Vincent de Paul pantry. A Catholic women's sorority, Kappa Phi Omega, promotes the mission of the university through a common witness to Catholic faith and morals. The Pro-Life Team is very active on campus. This year, Fr. Nicholas will accompany ten SGU students to the March for Life in Washington, D.C.

"In terms of our number of employees, we are very small" notes Fr. Nicholas. "But the number of people we serve keeps us extremely busy. Still, there is nothing we would rather be doing." Fr. Nicholas continues, "Having taught U.S. History for twenty years, the move to my present duties took some adjustment. Students keep very different hours than faculty members or monks. But the way I look at it, this is a different kind of teaching, and at this moment in our history, it has never been more necessary."

Living Our Life in Faith

By Robert J. Allen

No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God dwells in us, and his love is brought to perfection in us.

1 John 4:12

In early November, Dorothy and I traveled to Garden City, California, to participate with some 3,000 people in the Magnificat Day of Faith in the famous “Crystal Cathedral,” soon to be consecrated as Christ Cathedral. It then will serve as the Cathedral of the Catholic Diocese of Orange. In addition to those present, several million were tuned in on Catholic TV. This was a unique and historic event, but more importantly, a celebration of the unity of a believing people.

Pope Benedict XVI has dedicated this year as the *Year of Faith*, and I want to share with you a call to celebrate this with prayer, unity, and love for our Faith.

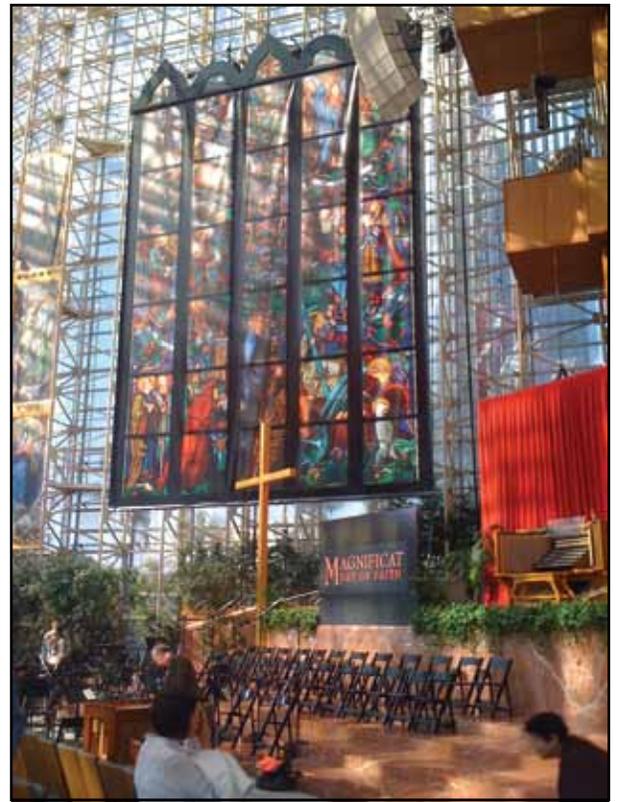
A beautiful building like the “Crystal Cathedral” can be very inspiring. Father Michael Morris, OP once said, “The struggle of the soul caught between the forces of good and evil, virtue and vice, has inspired visual arts for centuries.” It is true that Faith has been treated in a myriad of ways in the visual arts. But it is the unity between Faith and Charity that makes us known as Christians.

“What must we do to follow Christ?” “Who are we as a People of Faith?” These two questions need to be asked and re-asked each day. Jesus Christ gave us two commandments: Love God and Love one another. How we choose to answer these questions is both personal and life-changing, and it defines who we are in relationship to God. As Catholics we are the Church. And although most of us are not theologians, we are believers. We are born into the Catholic Faith through our Baptism and live our Faith through our love of one another, often expressed by our generosity or charity. This is what we are called to be and to live as children of God, not allowing our lives to be owned, to let “stuff” own us. We renounce evil; we renounce Satan; we believe in God, even knowing we cannot see God. We live by Faith - this wonderful grace which gives us the trust in the assuredness of an unending life.

What I most want to share with you is rediscovering the “Joy of Believing” which is called Faith. It is truly a gift from God. We are invited to the Table of the Lord to draw near to the Bread come down from Heaven at each Mass - the true Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. As a people of Faith we are invited to that Table to receive into our body Christ the Son of God. Through this Holy Communion we become the Living Temple, the very dwelling place of God.

Mary gave us the Word made flesh bringing God to life, but she through her Faith shows us how to say “Yes” to whatever God asks. Thy will be done.

Let us live our Faith and, in this Year of Faith, renew our Faith through our love for God and one another by acts of kindness, charity and love.



The Magnificat Day of Faith in the Crystal Cathedral, Garden City, CA.

Charitable Option

What Is a Living Trust?

Perhaps the best answer to this question is to offer this brief description ... A Living Trust is the most flexible financial document available.

You are the trustee.

- It is private.
- It can be changed at any time by you.
- It is revocable and amendable.
- You add or withdraw any or all assets.
- You are the beneficiary for life.
- Your designated successor manages your financial affairs according to your instructions if you become incapacitated.
- Your successor may act immediately without court approval.
- You avoid the potentially time-consuming and costly public Probate Court process, so long as you have actually transferred your assets to the trust during your lifetime.

Do I need a Will if I have a Living Trust?

Yes. A will is necessary to manage simple affairs so that your assets are not probated or contested.

Does a Will need to be reviewed and updated?

The answer is a common-sense response. Yes. Like most things, the will should be revised on a regular basis. Here is a list that should alert you to consider seeking your attorney’s advice and counsel.

- Several years since your last will
- Change in marital status
- Births, a new child or grandchild
- Deaths, a person named in your will
- Divorce
- Needs change

For more information about how to honor the monks of St. Gregory’s Abbey with a Living Trust or Will, contact **Robert J. Allen at (817) 371-9447.**

Monastic Experience Retreats

Abbey Vocation Director Fr. Boniface Copelin, O.S.B., hosted two “Monastic Experience Retreats” at the Abbey during the month of November.

Designed for single men between the ages of 20 and 45, the retreats provided those interested in learning more about the monastic life an opportunity to observe the life of the Abbey first-hand. Participants in the retreats attended conferences on vocational discernment and Benedictine life, and participated in the prayer, work and common life of the Abbey.

The next Monastic Experience Retreats will be held on the weekends of December 28-30, 2012 and March 22-24, 2013. Single men between the ages of 20 and 45 can inquire about participation by contacting Fr. Boniface by phone at (405) 878-5455, or by email: frboniface@stgregorys.edu.



Abbots and guests listen to a presentation during the 2012 Congress of Abbots.



Situated on the beautiful Aventine Hill in Rome, Sant'Anselmo is home to the Abbot Primate of the Benedictine Confederation, the Pontifical Athenaeum of Sant'Anselmo, and the Benedictine international house of studies in Rome.

Abbot Lawrence attends Congress of Abbots

Abbot Lawrence attended the international Congress of Abbots in September. The meeting, which takes place every four years, is held at the Primatial Abbey of Sant'Anselmo in Rome, which serves as home to the university and house of studies sponsored by the international Benedictine Confederation.

Some 250 abbots and other superiors of 380 Benedictine monasteries around the world were present for the meeting, along with approximately 100 other observers, speakers and guests. Among other topics, the abbots discussed the role of monastic

life in the “New Evangelization,” mutual support between Benedictine monasteries, the status of the Benedictine university and house of studies at Sant'Anselmo, and the opportunities to develop vocations to monastic life. Abbot Lawrence commented: “It is always a privilege and inspiration to be with representatives from nearly all the Benedictine communities of men in the world. The monastic life continues to be a treasure for the Church and for humanity.”

Br. George Completes Leadership Roles in Professional Organization

Br. George Hubl, O.S.B., recently completed his term as the President of the Metro Area Professional Photographers Association (MPPA). Prior to serving in this role, he served for a year as the Vice-President and President-Elect. The MPPA is an organization of professional photographers that promotes education in photography techniques, ethics and sound business practices, fosters fellowship among colleagues, and serves to make the public more aware of photographic services. As president, Br. George managed and coordinated all operations of MPPA, including monthly meetings, officers and ad-hoc committees.

Br. George will continue serve in a leadership capacity of MPPA as he now becomes the Immediate Past President and will serve on the organization’s Board of Directors for one year.



Artist Returns to St. Gregory’s

Accomplished visual artist Stephen Gyermek was welcomed back to St. Gregory’s for an extended visit during the end of October. Mr. Gyermek is a fourth generation artist from Hungary. He fled the communist occupation of Hungary in 1948. In 1957, he and his late wife, Els, came to St. Gregory’s from Europe, and taught Art History, Drawing and Spanish. He also served the first director / curator of the Abbey’s famed museum of art and artifacts after the death of its founder, Fr. Gregory Gerrer, O.S.B..



An Oblate of St. Gregory’s Abbey, Mr. Gyermek left a great legacy of artworks at St. Gregory’s, and in various churches in Oklahoma. Perhaps most notable of his works are the beautiful



stained-glass windows that adorn the monastic dining room. He also created the monumental stained-glass windows, mosaics and the Stations of the Cross at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Ada, OK. Prints of several of his woodcuts hang in the monastery and provide inspiration to monks and visitors alike.

During his visit, Mr. Gyermek, shared many memories with the monks and friends from around Oklahoma, as well as spent several hours visiting with the staff of the Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art discussing the history and stories behind many of the objects in the museum collection. He also visited with the faculty and students of the St. Gregory's University Visual Arts Department.

Mr. Gyermek left St. Gregory's to continue his education at the University of Oklahoma and to join the faculty of the university museum. He and his wife relocated to Stockton, CA, in 1965, and became director of the Haggin Museum and a professor at Delta College. Now retired, he continues to reside in Stockton. His lifetime of work was celebrated in 2011 with a retrospective exhibition at the Grand Theatre Center for the Arts in Stockton, CA.

Fr. Paul Organizes Seminar For Public at St. Gregory's University

In collaboration with St. Gregory's University, Fr. Paul Zahler, O.S.B., Ph.D., recently organized and presented a public seminar entitled: "Creating the Developmental Experience for Babies the First 365 Days of Life." The free seminar was held on November 15 at the university's Shawnee campus. The seminar provided an innovative look at human development aimed at giving pediatricians, professionals, parents, childcare workers and other caregiver's guidelines for allowing a baby to experience development through his or her natural movement.



Dr. Ryan VanMatre, Dr. Marianne Hermsen-van Wanrooy and Fr. Paul Zahler, O.S.B.

Using demonstrations and participation, the seminar featured presentations by the celebrated author of *Baby Moves*, Marianne Hermsen-van Wanrooy from Nelson, New Zealand, and by Fr. Paul, founder and director of the National Institute on Developmental Delays and author of *Experience Quotient and Human Development*. Also featured was Dr. Ryan VanMatre, who operates a chiropractic practices specializing in therapy with children. He also serves as the chiropractor for the Indiana Colts NFL team.

Publisher of the *Lumen Christi Missal* Speaks to Monks

Mr. Adam Bartlett, publisher and editor of the *Lumen Christi Missal*, visited St. Gregory's Abbey on November 15-16. The monastic community recently began to use the *Lumen Christi*

Missal, in its daily celebration of the Eucharist. Mr. Bartlett met with the monks to discuss the goals, design and publication of the *Missal*.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Bartlett taught the monks the propers for the Mass for Christ the King Sunday, as well as one of the Mass settings included in the *Missal*.

The *Lumen Christi Missal* is designed to be a comprehensive liturgical resource for congregational use in accord with the new translation of the *Roman Missal*. It contains musical settings in chant notation for the proper liturgical texts for Sundays, feasts and solemnities, as well as settings in English and Latin for the ordinary parts of the Mass. It also has ample supplemental material such as the Order of the Mass, devotional prayers, and various rituals.

Mr. Bartlett also met with the Abbot and members of the Liturgy Committee to consult with us regarding the revision of our Divine Office and the eventual printing of new books for use at the Abbey.



Br. Simeon Spitz, O.S.B., to Profess Solemn Vows



It is with joy that Abbot Lawrence and the Monks announce that Brother Simeon Spitz, O.S.B., will profess Solemn Vows as a monk of St. Gregory's Abbey during the celebration of the Eucharist on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, January 6, 2013. The Mass will begin at 3:00 p.m. in the Abbey Church. The public is invited to attend.

Br. Simeon became a novice of St. Gregory's on January 5, 2009, and made his profession of temporary vows as a monk on January 6, 2010. He is currently pursuing graduate studies in theology at St. Vincent Seminary in Latrobe, PA. Profession of Solemn Vows represents a lifetime commitment to live and to serve as a monk of our monastery. Please keep Br. Simeon and our community in your prayers as we prepare for this wonderful event!

Save the Dates:

Abbot's Table Banquet and Auction – May 17, 2013
 2nd Annual Abbey Golf Tournament – June 24, 2013
 Retreat with Abbot Lawrence – July 5-7, 2013
 Retreat with Fr. Charles B. – July 26-28, 2013

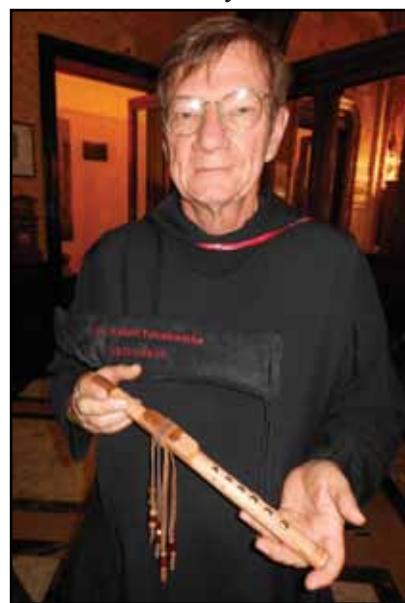
Call the monastery for more information: 405-878-5490.

Abbot Lawrence and Brother Isidore Make Pilgrimage

Abbot Lawrence and Brother Isidore Harden, O.S.B., were privileged to travel to Rome for the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha on October 21. They were part of the pilgrimage delegation organized by the Bureau of Black and Indian Missions of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Well over 150,000 persons from around the globe were present for the Mass presided over by Pope Benedict XVI in St. Peter's Square. St. Kateri, the first Native American to be canonized as a saint, was one of seven saints canonized as part of the Year of Faith, including another American, St. Marianne Cope, who dedicated much of her life in ministry in Hawaii to those afflicted with leprosy.

During a special Mass of Thanksgiving in St. Peter's Basilica on the day after the canonization, Br. Isidore presented a hand-made Native American flute as a gift of gratitude to Pope Benedict XVI from the monks of St. Gregory's.

The original monks of what is now St. Gregory's Abbey came to Indian Territory in 1875 and became the first permanent



Br. Isidore holds a hand-made Native American flute commissioned by St. Gregory's Abbey as a gift for His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, in gratitude for the canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha.



Br. Isidore and Abbot Lawrence attend the Rite and Mass of Canonization of St. Kateri Tekakwitha and six other saints on October 21, 2012.

presence of Catholic clergy and religious in what is today Oklahoma. In addition to their monastery, they also established several schools for Native American and African American children and over forty parishes. Abbot Lawrence stated: "It was important for our community to be represented at the canonization of St. Kateri, not only because of our historic ministry among Native American peoples, but also because of our ongoing ministry alongside Native American people of several tribes and nations. We should also remember that St. Kateri is a saint not only for Native Americans, but for all people. Her deep love Jesus, her devotion to the Church, her selfless

and loving service of others, and her faithful witness even in the midst of difficulty and persecution makes her a model for all Christians." The monks plan to hold a special liturgy and "honor dance" or pow-wow to celebrate St. Kateri on her feast day, July 14, 2013.

Along with the opportunity to participate in the canonization of St. Kateri, Abbot Lawrence and Br. Isidore were also able to make an additional pilgrimage both to Subiaco and the Sacro Speco, or "Holy Cave," where St. Benedict first withdrew into solitude and founded his first monasteries, and to the Abbey of Montecassino, where St. Benedict wrote his Rule and is entombed alongside his twin sister, St. Scholastica. There able to attend Vespers with the monks of Montecassino and celebrate Mass at the tomb of Sts. Benedict and Scholastica. There they prayed for their fellow monks, and for all those who are touched by and support the community of St. Gregory's Abbey.

Three Make Final Oblation At St. Gregory's Abbey

During Solemn Vespers on Sunday, October 7, 2012, Abbot Lawrence and the monastic community received the Act of



Full Oblation of Oblate James Moore, Oblate Deborah Branigan and Oblate Teresa Stoops. In making the Act of Full Oblation, these new Oblates have become formally affiliated with St. Gregory's Abbey, and have promised

to integrate into their lives to the best of their ability the ideals of the Gospel as embodied in the spirituality of St. Benedict.

On the same day, Abbot Lawrence blessed five new "Oblate Novices." These novices will study the *Rule of St. Benedict* and explore ways in which they can incorporate the principles of Benedictine spirituality into their everyday lives.

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

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

Christmas Schedule

Office of Readings for Christmas: 10:00 p.m.
Christmas Mass at Midnight: 10:30 p.m.
Mass on Christmas Morning: 10:00 a.m.
Solemn Vespers for Christmas: 5:00 p.m.

