



SAINT BENEDICT ABBEY

252 Still River Rd. Box 67 Still River, MA 01467 (978) 456-3221 • www.abbey.org



PRAYER

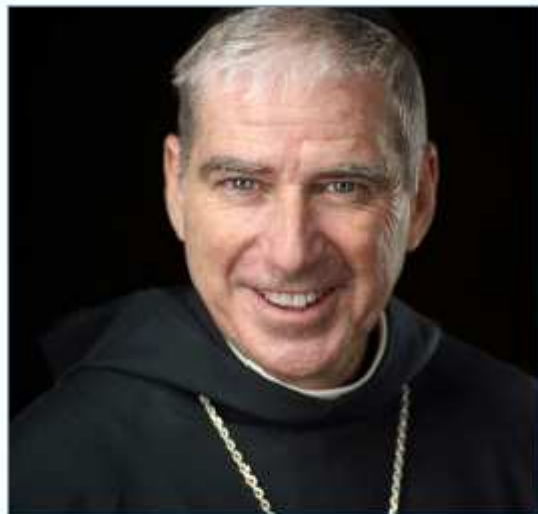
"The Palace He found was an old cattle stall with a broken-down roof and a windowless wall. And it looked so ashamed of its spider-worn wood, but it tried to be Heaven as well as it could."
– Fr. Leonard Feeney



WORK



HOSPITALITY



God has given us eternal life. And this life is in His Son. (1 JN 5:11)

Dear Friends and Family,

Years ago, when I had just joined the monastery, I read a "Christmas story" that had a profound impact on my life. It was in a book entitled, "The Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of Saint Therese of Lisieux." This 19th century Carmelite nun in France described an experience she had on Christmas with her family, an experience that helped me understand that the gifts that we give and receive are opportunities for us to give and receive the greatest of all gifts: Jesus.

Therese called her experience her "Christmas conversion". It was December 25, 1886. Therese, the "baby" of the family, was still indulged by her sisters despite her being 14 years old. They continued their custom at Christmas of leaving Therese's shoes by the fireplace so their father could fill them with gifts.

Therese and her sister, Celine, had returned from Midnight Mass, and as they climbed the main stairs to their rooms, they heard their father, looking at the shoes in the living room below, say "Well, fortunately, this will be the last year!" Therese was stunned, and Celine looked at her helplessly. Knowing Therese was overly sensitive, Celine waited for her sister to burst into tears.

But the torrent of tears never came. Instead, Therese tells us that something incredible happened. She

forced back her tears, ran down the stairs with her heart pounding and delighted over the gifts as if she'd never heard a word her father said. Having regained his own cheerfulness, her father was laughing while Celine believed it was all a dream. Therese writes, "I felt Charity enter my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others." In one act of love, she gave Jesus to her father and received Jesus as her own.

In stark contrast, this story made me think of how shockingly and shamefully I once behaved one Christmas morning when I was young. After a joy-filled morning with my father and mother and six brothers and sisters at Christmas Mass, family breakfast and two hours of gift-giving in the big living room, I looked around at the others, and then at the pile of gifts in front of me and said, "Hey, is this ALL I get?!" Everyone froze. They could not believe what they heard. The silence was deafening. Tears welled up in some, white-faced anger in others. I was ashamed. Then, through my own tears, I cried out, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean it. You all have given me so much. Thank you."

Next thing I felt was a big arm around me, and my older sister whisper, "Go and give Mom and Dad a hug." It was the longest and tightest hug I ever gave. My family gave me their forgiveness - and joy filled the room once again.

Jesus came to Therese and her father because of a simple act of selflessness. Jesus came to my family because of a simple act of forgiveness. Every Christmas, He's waiting to come to all of us and our loved ones - if only we ask Him by our actions.

This Christmas, the Monks of Saint Benedict Abbey have asked Jesus to come to you and your families. We pray that He will bring you His joy and peace. We also pray that you will consider assisting the Abbey by contributing to our Annual Christmas Fund. Every gift, large or small, helps.

Will you please consider a year-end gift to help us meet our everyday needs? I am hoping that we can count on you once again to support our mission of prayer and hospitality.

May you have a happy and holy Christmas, and abundant blessings in the New Year.

In Jesus and Mary,

Abbot Xavier Connelly, O.S.B.

Mission Advancement



When I accepted the position as the Abbey's first Development Director nearly a year ago, I felt that I was truly embarking on God's mission for the first time in my life. He had called me to use the talents He had given me to help the Abbey with its mission.

The Mission Advancement Office has been busy connecting with Abbey friends and raising awareness of the Abbey's mission and programs. The Vocation Awareness program is off to a good start with new materials and participation by the monks engaging with young men about a vocation to monastic life. The monks will be attending several college vocation programs in the spring.

The Abbey's website, www.abbey.org, has several new additions, including a Mission Advancement page describing the Abbey's needs and offering a variety of ways to support its programs. The electronic donation page enables donors to make secure one-time or re-occurring gifts. Stay tune for more updates to the website and Facebook in 2016.

The Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts assisted the Abbey with establishing an Endowment Fund to develop investment opportunities for the Abbey's future. This fund will enable donors to create a lasting personal legacy that will benefit the Abbey for many years to come.

We'd like to thank the following for their generosity during 2015:

- Josephine Foundation \$3,000 for our music program.
- St. Martin de Porres Trust of Linn, Oregon \$1,000 grant for Mission Advancement.
- Berdan Support Fund of Mendenhall, PA \$5,000 grant for the Monks' Education Fund.
- StillPoint Carmelite Spirituality Community,

\$10,000 gift toward Mission Advancement.

- Knights of Columbus, Massachusetts State Board \$5,000 for Vocation Awareness.
- All individuals who have donated to the Abbey.

Finally, we are grateful to Michael Collins for donating his time and resources, and that of his company, Metromedia Enterprises, Inc. to produce our newsletters. His generosity has enabled the Abbey to keep you more informed.

There are many ways you can continue to assist the Abbey:

- Mission Advancement
- Vocation Awareness Program
- Capital Improvement Projects
- Education of our Monks
- Care for our Elderly and Sick Monks
- Endowment Fund
- Planned and Estate Giving

We greatly appreciate your continued support of Mission Advancement – increasing vocations for future generations of prayer and hospitality for you and your family.

Thank you for your warm welcome. I look forward to continue to work with you to assist Saint Benedict Abbey with its mission in the coming New Year.

God Bless and Merry Christmas,

Eileen Maher Kronauer
Development Director
Mission Advancement Office

The enclosed donation envelope offers several giving options. Please make your check payable to **Saint Benedict Abbey**.

You may also make a secure donation through the Abbey's website: www.abbey.org.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Mission Advancement Office:

978-456-3221 x 139, mission@abbey.org or Abbot Xavier at abbotxavier@gmail.com.

Thank you for your generosity.

Vocation Awareness



This summer, the Abbey hosted its annual Father Son retreats in July and August. The August retreat was attended by more than 30 fathers and sons, the largest group ever. The event attracted families from all over New England and as far away as Virginia and Ohio. Many thanks to all who joined us for a weekend of monastic life: pray, work, hospitality, sharing, listening, and of course, lots of fun.

"Thank you so much for a truly phenomenal weekend. I enjoyed a chance to grow closer to Our Lord through the meditation and prayer that the monks practice at the Abbey." Retreat participant

We hope more fathers and sons can join the monks next summer for one of our Fathers Son retreats. To learn more about our Vocation Awareness Program, please visit our website www.Abbey.org. You may also contact Fr. Anthony at vocation@abbey.org or call 978-811-3694.

On Saturday, October 17, Fr. Andrew-Carl Wisdom, O.P. from the Central Province of the Order of Preachers, provided us with a morning and afternoon of motivational conferences on Vocations Promotion, under the encouraging title "The Bounty of the Lord."

Vocations are out there, he assured us; but it is up to us to help young men hear the Lord calling them, calling them to our way of life, the life of Saint Benedict Abbey. And we would effectively do so by presenting, not just what we have, but who we are, as our most attractive asset.

After each of these conferences, we broke into two groups to discuss the points of Fr. Andrew's presentation, then came together to share suggestions as to how we might apply his principles to our own vocations program.



Abbey Hospitality

RETREATS HELD AT THE ABBEY

Sept 4-6: Fr. Benedict Grant, F.P.O. and Br. Felix Waldren, F.P.O., led a retreat for the St. Francis/St. Clare Third Order Franciscan group, attended by 20 people.

Sept 7-11: Eileen George led a retreat, "Meet the Father Ministry", for 23 Catholic bishops and priests.



Sept 25-27: Fr. Peter Giroux, F.P.O., led a retreat for the Entrega Third Order Franciscans in which 24 people attended.

Oct 1-4: Eileen George, assisted by Fr. James Caldarella, led a retreat, "Meet the Father Ministry", for 53 lay people

Oct 10: Jerry Thomas led a retreat for 35 members of the Carmelite Spirituality Community from all over the country.

Oct 23-24: 22 members of the Catholic Men of New England met for a retreat led by Fr. Michael Sheehan, F.P.O., and Fr. Sean Hurley, F.P.O.

Oct 31-Nov 2: Several students from The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts, Merrimack, NH spent the weekend at the Abbey.

Nov 6-8: The Littleton Crafters (21 ladies) gathered at the Abbey for a weekend retreat.

Nov 13-15: 35 students from Assumption College, Worcester, MA hosted their annual "Horizon" retreat.

Dec 4-6: 75 members of St. Benedict Parish of Somerville, MA joined together for their retreat.

Plan a Retreat: Visit our website for details about our Hospitality Program. Contact: Fr. Augustine Senz, O.S.B. at abbeyretreats@aol.com, 978-877-6939.



WE GIVE THANKS FOR OUR FRIENDS

Paul and Elaine Shibley celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary this summer with a Mass and dinner at the Abbey. In honor of the Shibley's many years of marriage, their children donated a bench to the Abbey which has been placed near the pear tree.



Original Gregorian Chant Parchment

Through the generosity of Msgr. Leon M. Neu, Diocese of Buffalo, and long-time friend of the Abbey, and his nephew, Phil Hasselback, we recently received a magnificent parchment from a monastic choir book c. 1650, with Gregorian chant on both sides.

This 30x22 framed parchment now hangs in the room next to the Chapel where the monks gather each evening in silent prayer before processing into Vespers.

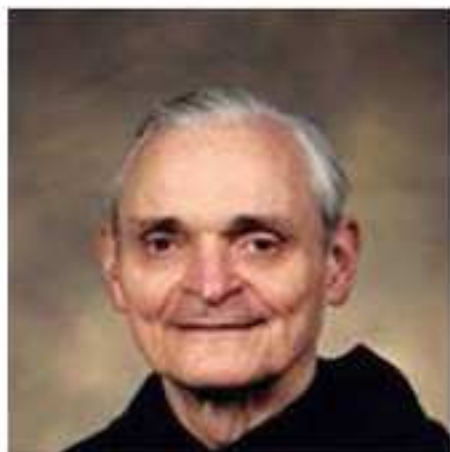
Abbey Hospitality



**WE GREATLY APPRECIATE ALL THOSE
WHO CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS TO
ABBAY'S NEWSLETTER**

Recent & Upcoming Events

Br. Gregory Conant, O.S.B. who passed away July 23, 2015 after a long illness, is remembered for his dedication to Saint Benedict and his service in the



United States Army from WW II to the Korean War. After returning from WW II, he became associated with the Saint Benedict Center in Cambridge, MA while a student at Harvard University.

He later became a member of the

Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. In 1982 Br. Gregory professed vows as a Benedictine monk and was a member of the Saint Benedict Abbey community until his death. May he rest in peace.

Monks' Retreat with Fr. Nicholas Ingham, O.P.

Even those who have separated themselves from the world need to separate themselves now and then from their daily routine.



From September 13-19, we monks did just that, putting our usual activities on hold for a week of prayerful reflection during our annual retreat.

Fr. Nicholas Ingham, O.P., Associate Professor of Philosophy at Providence College, our retreat

master, inspired us to do so with two conferences a day, a series of thoughtful meditations on that Book of Scripture that is central to our daily prayer, the Book of Psalms.

Fr. Nicholas offered to us his insights both on how to pray the psalms, and on how to live the psalms that we pray.

Father Peter concelebrates Mass with Pope Francis

I (Fr. Peter) was honored to represent the Abbey in New York City on September 26, 2015, offering Mass along with maybe 1,000 other priests at Madison Square



Garden with the Holy Father, Pope Francis. Atty. Peter Johnson invited me to join his family for the event. We were joined by Atty. James Gill and his grandson.

Even though we were in a box high above the altar, we felt very connected because Peter's daughter, Veronica, and Jim Gill were asked to bring up the gifts of water and wine to be used at the papal Mass. Then, thanks to Deacon Stan Galazin, I received a ticket to be a concelebrating priest. I was able to visit with the Johnson family for a few hours before Mass then find my way down to the seats for concelebrating priests.

The concelebrating priests all sat behind the papal altar and were handed cards to join the Holy Father who prayed the Canon of the Mass in Latin. I should not have been surprised, but I was delighted to run across Sr. Mary Catherine Perry, O.P., my own cousins, Jacqueline Nolan Haley and Joe Nolan who attended with his daughter Olivia, Fr. Kazimierz Kowalski, Fr. Roger Landry, and many other priests who have visited the Abbey.

On October 21st, Kevin Doran, 77, father of Fr. James and brother-in-law to the late Abbot Gabriel died at his home in Hornell, New York. Kevin was a long-time friend



of the Abbey, and as an Oblate of the Abbey, he prayed the office at home when he was not able to join the monks. Before he died he requested that his friends not assume he was in Heaven, but rather pray that he be released from Purgatory, and offer Masses for the repose of his soul.

Recent & Upcoming Events



Saint Maria Goretti Relic

The novitiate's viewing of a documentary on the life and sanctity of Saint Maria Goretti was the catalyst that led Fr. Marc, Br. Joachim, and Br. Jerome on a trip to Boston's Holy Cross Cathedral on October 5, where the major relics of the saint were on display for veneration. Saint Maria Goretti, martyred at the age of eleven for refusing the advances of a local farmhand, Alessandro Serenelli, is held up as a model of purity and, because she expressly forgave her murderer before she died, of forgiveness. Our three pilgrims all spoke of the extraordinary graces they experienced from praying before her relics. The tour of Saint Maria Goretti relics, which was made possible by Sir Patrick Allen of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, will be traveling around the country. God bless Sir Patrick for his good work.



Prayer and Action for the Church in the Middle East

On November 6th and 7th, Abbot Xavier participated in the Annual Promotion Ceremony and Solemn Mass of Investiture of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre, Northeastern Lieutenancy, celebrated at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Portland, Maine.

The mission of the Order is to strengthen the Christian life of its members and to support the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Now, more than ever before, this Cradle of Our Catholic Faith is in danger of losing its Christian identity. Abbot Xavier, who is a member (as was Abbot Gabriel before him), had the opportunity to learn of the truly heroic works of the Order on behalf of the Church in this war-torn part of the world.

Immaculate Conception Novena

Immaculate Conception Church in nearby Lancaster, MA celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Among the events, the Church has hosted was a novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary, which included a talk each day on a different aspect of Our Lady's role in salvation. On the 3rd of October our Fr. Marc provided one of the talks, entitled *Mary as co-Redemptrix*.

Mary Therese Rose Crilly Fund

Mary Therese Rose Crilly, the daughter of Fr. Marc's brother Jack and his wife Lisa, was born with Joubert Syndrome, a rare brain malformation characterized by the absence of the cerebellar vermis - an area of the brain that controls balance and coordination - and a malformed brain stem.

The joy that Mary Therese Rose brought to her family's life during her brief stay on earth sparked in them a desire to begin a foundation in her name, one to provide services for handicapped children that insurance does not cover.

On October 18, Fr. Marc attended the thirteenth annual dinner for the fund, always a festive event, an evening of entertainment (some of which is provided by the children themselves) and inspirational presentations. For more information on the services that the fund provides, visit: www.marythereserose.org.

Celebration of Consecrated Life

On 7 November, Br. Joachim, Br. Matthew, and Fr. James attended a Celebration of Consecrated Life at Assumption College in Worcester, MA. The event was sponsored by the Diocese of Worcester and hosted by the Assumptionists.

During the Year of Consecrated Life, which will conclude on February 2, 2016, the Church is fostering an awareness and appreciation of the many contributions that members of religious orders make to society through their lives of teaching, taking care of the poor and the sick, and prayer and contemplation.



Monastic Balance



During the summer, Fr. Anthony, Fr. Marc, Br. Joachim, and Br. Jerome returned to the former St. Benedict Center in Cambridge, MA to stand on the very spot where Fr. Leonard Feeney and Br. Gabriel Gibbs stood in 1947.



Brothers Jerome and Matthew hang storm windows, preparing for winter.

Br. Joachim hard at work!



Fr. Augustine wears many hats at the Abbey – Sacristan Priest, Guest Master, Chief Mechanic, and lends a hand in the kitchen as needed

Br. Matthew preparing for Mass.

Monastic Balance



On a beautiful late summer day, the Abbey monks and guests, Joe McCarthy and Ron Daignault, summited Mt. Moosilauke.



Mike Collins making sure the bridge is safe.



Fr. Anthony enjoying the view.



Br. Jerome and his father, Ron Daignault, reach the top of Mt. Moosilauke.



Fr. Peter, oversees the cooking while Br. Matthew turns a few more hot dogs, and Fr. Anthony (in the background) flips burgers.



Br. Joachim and Fr. Anthony with friends.

Christmas Week Liturgy Schedule

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR LITURGY DURING
ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS WEEK**



Friday, December 11
Lady of Guadalupe

- 7:45 PM – Rosary, Guadalupe Chapel
(weather permitting)

Saturday, December 12

Feast of Lady of Guadalupe

- 12:45 PM – Mass – Guadalupe Chapel

Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24th

- 6PM – Vespers with Christmas Martyrology
No Compline
- 10 PM – Office of Vigils
- 11:30-11:55 PM– Sacrament of Confession
- 12:00 AM – Midnight 1st Mass of Christmas
(followed by Gaudeamus)

Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th

- 7 AM – Mass
- 8 AM – 2nd Mass of Christmas with Lauds
- 12:00 PM – 3rd Mass of Christmas
- 6 PM – Vespers
- 9 PM – Compline

Saturday, December 26th

- 7 AM – Mass – Abbey Chapel
- 8 AM – Lauds
- 8 AM – Mass – Guest House Chapel
- 9 AM – Community Mass – Abbey Chapel
- 12:30 PM – Sext
- 2 PM – Rosary
- 6 PM – Vespers
- 9 PM – Compline

Sunday - Wednesday, December 27th - 30th

- Regular Schedule

New Year's Eve, Thursday, December 31st

- Regular Schedule through Vespers
- 6 PM – Vespers No Compline
- 10 PM – Office of Vigils
- 11:40 PM – Begin walk to Guadalupe Chapel
- 12:00 AM – Rosary – Guadalupe Chapel
(weather permitting) + Abbey Chapel

New Year's Day, Friday, January 1, 2016

- 7 AM – Mass
- 8 AM – Lauds
- 11 AM – Community Mass
- 6 PM – Vespers
- 9 PM – Compline

Saturday, January 2, 2016

- 7 AM – Mass – Abbey Chapel
- 8 AM – Lauds
- 8 AM – Mass – Guest House Chapel
- 9 AM – Community Mass – Abbey Chapel
- 12:30 PM – Sext
- 2 PM – Rosary
- 6 PM – Vespers
- 9 PM – Compline

Sunday, January 3, 2016

- Regular Sunday Schedule

For more information or to speak to a Monk,
please contact the Abbey at 978-456-3221,
or email: abbey@abbey.org.



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YOU ARE INVITED TO "LEAVE A LEGACY"

Please consider supporting Saint Benedict Abbey by making a Planned Gift through your will, bequests, life insurance, retirement plans, and other estate plans. Gift planning is an opportunity for you to meet your charitable goals through your estate while helping to ensure that the Abbey can meet opportunities and challenges in the future.

Abbot Xavier welcomes the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how your gift can benefit you and the Abbey now and in the future. Please contact Abbot Xavier at abbotxavier@gmail.com or 978-456-3221 for more information.



We wish you a very holy Christmas and blessed New Year.