

IN CŒNACULO

SILVERSTREAM PRIORY

Benedictine Monks of Perpetual Adoration

Under the patronage of Our Lady of the Cenacle (*in Cœnaculo*), the Benedictine Monks of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar at Silverstream devote themselves to the Sacred Liturgy, and to perpetual Eucharistic adoration in a spirit of reparation and intercession for the sanctification of priests.

LENT 2017 — NO. 1 (10)



DEAR FRIENDS OF SILVERSTREAM PRIORY,

YOU LAST HEARD FROM US IN AUGUST 2016. Long silences come easily to monks: silences of intense listening to the Word of God, silences of adoration, silences of wonder, and, yes, silences of growth. The silence of the past seven months has been rich in listening, in adoration, in wonder, and in growth. I am happy to say that we have, during this time of silence, at last completed Phase One of our projected works of renovation and construction.

We now have eleven new cells; they are simple, bright, and functional. Heartfelt thanks to the donors who came forward to sponsor four out of the eleven new monastic cells. At the donors' request, these cells were named for Saint Joseph, Saint Thérèse, Saint Peter-Julian Eymard, and Saint Faustina. His Lordship, Dr Michael Smith,

the Bishop of Meath visited Silverstream on All Saints Day, 1 November, to bless the new cells and their occupants. Seven cells remain without sponsors. The cost of a monastic cell (including plumbing, electricity, heating, and furnishings) is about €18,000 or €20,000.

All the available cells and choir stalls will soon be occupied. We must begin the next phase of construction and renovation as soon as possible. The old stone cattle shed will be transformed into an Oratory with at least twenty-four choir stalls for Holy Mass and the Divine Office. The new Oratory will also contain, in addition to the principal altar, several other altars for the early morning Masses of the priest-monks of the community and priest retreatants.

Meanwhile, there is a steady stream of young men knocking at the monastery door: *The stream of the river maketh the city of God joyful: the Most High hath sanctified his own tabernacle* (Psalm 45:5).

You can read about the vestition of Brother Ignatius, a native of Denmark, on pp. 8-9; and about the vestition of Brother Hildebrand, a young priest of the Archdiocese of St Louis, Missouri, on pp. 9-10. Br Hildebrand reflects on his clothing as a novice on p. 11, and Brother Cassian (our senior novice from “down under”) shares his ongoing discovery of Benedictine life on the last page. Joseph D. from Toledo, Ohio, having completed his initial three months of immersion in the monastic life, will return to Silverstream as a postulant on 18 March.



LEFT TO RIGHT: BR IGNATIUS MARIA, BR CASSIAN MARIA, DOM ELIJAH MARIA, FATHER SUBPRIOR (D. BENEDICT MARIA), FATHER PRIOR, BROTHER HILDEBRAND MARIA, DOM FINNIAN

Last October, Father Subprior travelled to Los Angeles to speak to the annual conference of the Society for Catholic Liturgy on the topic of what Benedictine monks can contribute to the New Evangelisation without leaving the cloister: namely, “the leading of souls along the *via pulchritudinis*”, the way of classical beauty in the celebration of the liturgy.

The paper was very well received, and we expect the text to be published in the next issue of *Antiphon: A Journal for Liturgical Renewal*. The audio of the talk as given in Los Angeles is available on our Soundcloud page ([SOUNDCLOUD.COM/CENACLEOSB](https://soundcloud.com/cenacleosb)). I reproduce here a few choice quotations:

If, as history shows us, monasticism was the spiritual engine of the “Old Evangelization” of Europe, then it stands to reason that a healthy, robust, renewed monasticism might once again become for the Church a source of inspiration and new vitality as she labors for the turning of believers and unbelievers alike to Christ, so that they, with St Ambrose, can say: “Face to face, thou hast made thyself known to me, O Christ; I have found thee in thy mysteries.”

Monks evangelize, not so much by outward works (which are secondary and external to

their vocation) but simply by being what they are: silent yet eloquent signposts for believers and unbelievers alike, pointing the way towards the life of the world to come.

There are already many excellent monasteries in which celebration of the sacred liturgy (whether in the *Usus Recentior* or in the *Usus Antiquior*) is exemplary and luminous. If Benedictines have not always lived up to their vocation in the universal Church, they do indeed possess the resources, a deep wellspring of holy Tradition, upon which to draw, and their own crucial role to play in the New Evangelization: that is, in the enchantment, by means of the splendor of Christian worship, of the baptized and unbaptized alike into the beautiful light of the Face of Jesus, “the fairest among the sons of men” (Ps. 44:2).

With the acquisition of our property, the significant works undertaken and completed, and the arrival of new men, 2016 was a year rich in blessings for Silverstream Priory. *Thy bounty it is that crowns the year; where thy feet have passed, the stream of plenty flows* (Psalm 64:12). Already 2017 promises to be a year of significant growth. I thank each of you, dear friends, for your participation in the life of Silverstream Priory and for your



THIS IS THE OLD STONE CATTLE SHED WHICH WE HOPE TO TRANSFORM INTO A NEW TEMPORARY MONASTIC CHURCH, NAMED (WHAT ELSE?) “BETHLEHEM” (HEBREW FOR “HOUSE OF BREAD”)

CHRONICLE

1 AUGUST — Visit of Dom Áron Kelemen OSB, director of the Collegium Musicum Jaurinense in Hungary, and an expert in Gregorian chant.

5 AUGUST — D. Finnian, D. Elijah, and Br Cassian go to Poland to walk on pilgrimage from Warsaw to Czestochowa.

6 AUGUST — Anniversary of the Solemn Profession of Father Subprior, D. Benedict.

12 AUGUST — Father Prior and Oblate Filip Lajszczak travel to Poland. Father Prior offers Holy Mass and preaches at the Church of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Józefów. After Holy Mass, Dr Marek Przepiorka, an Oblate of the Abbey of Triors, welcomes the group in his home for a traditional Polish breakfast.

14 AUGUST — Father Prior, D. Finnian, D. Elijah, Br Cassian, and Filip Lajszczak visit the Abbey of Tyniec. Abbot Szymon Hiżycki, O.S.B. and community welcome us warmly.

15 AUGUST — Father Prior, D. Finnian, D. Elijah, and Br Cassian join the community of Tyniec in choir for Holy Mass and the Divine Office on the Feast of the Assumption. In the afternoon of the same day, the Silverstream monks visit the historic and magnificent Dominican Priory of St Hyacinth in Kraków. D. Elijah was happy to be welcomed in Kraków by his friend and co-student, Br Rafał Szymko, OP. In the evening, Abbot Szymon invites Father Prior to say a few words after supper to the community of Tyniec about life at Silverstream. Our visit ends with Compline and the traditional Polish homage to the Mother of God.

16 AUGUST — Making their way from Kraków to Warsaw, Father Prior, D. Finnian, D. Elijah, Br Cassian, and Oblate Filip Lajszczak stop at the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Ostra Brama in Skarżysko-Kamienna.

Mother Prioress Blandyna and her community welcome the Silverstream monks to the historic monastery of the Benedictines of Perpetual Adoration in Warsaw. The monastery was founded from France in 1688. Father Prior gives the nuns a conference on Mother Catherine-Mectilde de Bar.

The high point of the visit to Warsaw was a time of prayer in the sacred crypt of the monastery church. Thirty-four Benedictines, gathered around the Blessed Sacrament, and one thousand others perished in the crypt when the monastery was bombed in the night of August 31, 1944. Today, the Benedictines of Perpetual Adoration of Warsaw are a flourishing community.

21 AUGUST — Three priests and two seminarians of the Communauté de Saint-Martin (Meyzieu, France) arrive for their annual retreat. The community of Meyzieu and Silverstream have a covenant of mutual prayer and fraternal support.

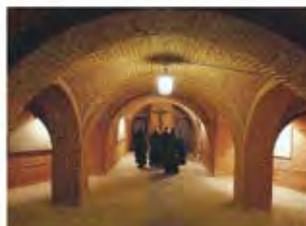
30 AUGUST — Our good friend John Bauer Ulric Kelly, who travelled from Springfield, Missouri, to help us in the earliest days of our move to Ireland, returns to Silverstream for a time of retreat.

3 SEPTEMBER — Fr Michael Houser of St Louis, Missouri, returns to Silverstream for several months of observership after which he asks to enter the novitiate.

18 SEPTEMBER — One of our Irish Priest-Oblates, Br John Fisher, makes his annual retreat with his monastic family.

22 SEPTEMBER — Mother Immaculata, OSB.ap, Prioress of Tegelen in the Netherlands, arrives for a week of retreat.

1 OCTOBER — D. Benedict speaks at the annual meeting of the Society of Catholic Liturgy held in Los Angeles, California, on the subject: *Preferring the Work of God: Benedictine Liturgical Ideals and the New Evangelisation*. While in California, he enjoys the wonderful hospitality of the Carmelite Sisters of the Most Sacred Heart in Alhambra, near L.A. D. Benedict also visits family in Colorado and New York, and looks in on Father Prior's parents in Connecticut.





Christ shows us what it is to be God in the way that he dies as a human being. If we don't see death (as I claimed that modern society doesn't), then we will not see the Face of God either. Our task today [is] to take back death, by allowing death to be seen, by honouring those dying with the full liturgy of death, and by ourselves bearing witness to a life that comes through death, a life that can no longer be touched by death, a life that comes by taking up the Cross.

FATHER JOHN BEHR

YOU CAN WATCH A SIMILAR SERIES OF TALKS BY FR BEHR AT:

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/JAZMvYzOj04](https://youtu.be/jAZMvYzOj04)

10 OCTOBER — Father Prior addresses the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore, Dr Alphonsus Cullinan, and his clergy, meeting in East Cork, on the topic: "The Priest at the Altar". On the return trip from East Cork, Father Prior and Oblate Filip call at the home of Fr Prior's relations, Michael and Brid Kirby, in Kilross, Co. Tipperary.

19 OCTOBER — Joseph D., an environmental scientist from Toledo, Ohio, arrives for his period of observership, after which he asks to return to enter the novitiate.

22 OCTOBER — The Very Rev'd Archpriest Dr John Behr, Dean of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York (sometime professor of D. Benedict), arrives at Silverstream and, over two days, gives us a magnificent series of conferences on death and life in Christ.

29 OCTOBER — Three Columban Missionary Fathers from Dalgan Park, Navan, visit the Priory.

D. Finnian and his brother Thomas triumphantly fell the great ash tree that impeded our view of the Irish Sea; the common room is flooded with light.

1 NOVEMBER — All Saints' Day, and visit of His Lordship, Dr Michael Smith, Bishop of Meath.

Also, the anniversary of the priestly ordination (by the same bishop) of Father Subprior, D. Benedict.

3-4 NOVEMBER — Father Prior and D. Finnian travel to Kent, England, where Father Prior speaks to the British Confraternity of Catholic Clergy meeting at Aylesford Priory and preaches at Holy Mass offered by the Right Rev'd Monsignor Keith Newton of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. On the way to Aylesford, Father Prior and D. Finnian call at historic Mallory Abbey (Anglican).

5 NOVEMBER — Father Subprior represents Silverstream at the Abbatial Blessing of Dom Brendan Coffey, OSB, the newly-elected abbot of Glenstal Abbey in Co. Limerick.

6 NOVEMBER — Feast of All Saints of Ireland. His Eminence, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke, a great supporter of Silverstream, pays us a visit. He remarks on the tremendous advances that we have made since he first visited us.

7 NOVEMBER — Monsignor Arthur B. Calkins, stalwart friend of the Priory, arrives from New Orleans, Louisiana, for a week of retreat.

12 NOVEMBER — Community Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock in Co. Mayo, where Fr Prior celebrates Holy Mass at St Joseph's altar in the old church. They also have the unexpected blessing of meeting the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr Michael Neary, who was also visiting Knock.

13 NOVEMBER — Feast of All Saints of the Order of Saint Benedict, and the anniversary of the ordination to the diaconate of Father Subprior.

16 NOVEMBER — Feast of St Gertrude the Great. The community and close clerical friends of Silverstream celebrate Father Prior's 30th anniversary of ordination to the sacred priesthood. A festive buffet in the newly refurbished common room follows Solemn Vespers.

21 NOVEMBER — Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady in the Temple. Mikkel Gabriel Rahbek Pedersen, native of Denmark, now Brother Ignatius Maria, is clothed in the monastic habit and begins his eighteen months of novitiate under the patronage of Saint Ignatius of Antioch.

24 NOVEMBER — The monks, American and non-American alike, celebrate Thanksgiving Day with a festive meal. They are joined by longtime friend Fr John Hogan, OCDS, P.P. of Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath.

3 DECEMBER — Two patrols of the *Gasóga Na Heorpa Ireland* (Scouts of Europe) camp on the monastery grounds and attend Holy Mass in the Oratory of the monastery.

9 DECEMBER — Arrival of aspirant Joseph G. from Ann Arbor, Michigan, for a short visit before he returns to receive the holy habit.

12 DECEMBER — D. Finnian Joseph Maria King, native son of Meath, celebrates his name day, the feast of St Finnian of Clonard, "Teacher of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland" and patron saint of the Diocese.

21 DECEMBER — Arrival of another aspirant, Nathan H. of Cleveland, Ohio, for a short visit before returning to enter the novitiate.

25 DECEMBER — The monks celebrate the Nativity of the Lord with Mattins, Midnight Mass, and Lauds.

3 JANUARY — Father Prior visits his aged parents in Connecticut to celebrate his father's 90th birthday.

23 JANUARY — Father Andrzej Komorowski, FSSP, always a welcome guest, spends an evening at the monastery and joins the community for recreation.

24 JANUARY — Monsieur and Madame Sallé, the parents of Br Charles-Marie, OSB of the Abbey of Fontgombault, arrive in company of their daughter Jehanne, who has been working in Ireland. The Sallé family assist at the Conventual Mass and, after tea in the Gatehouse, sing a polyphonic "Je vous salue, Marie" (*Ave Maria*), to our great delight!

The monks host for tea five sisters, Apostles of the Sacred Heart, who have established a new apostolate in the Diocese of Waterford-Lismore.

8 FEBRUARY — Br Ignatius welcomes his mother, Annie, from Denmark.

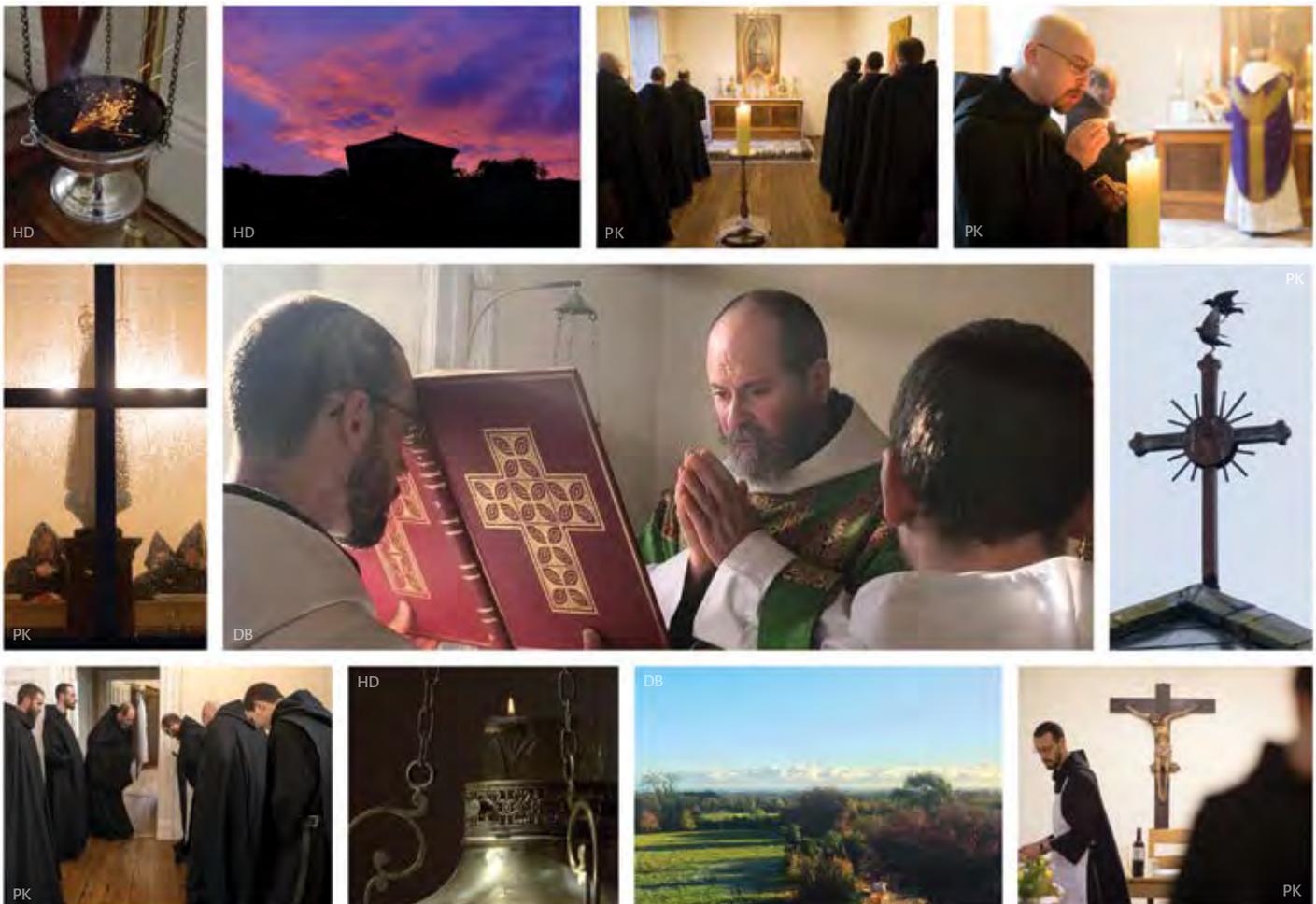
10 FEBRUARY — Permission is received from the Meath County Council to go forward with the construction of the new Oratory.

11 FEBRUARY — The community celebrate the vestition of Rev'd Dr Michael J. Houser, priest of the Archdiocese of St Louis, henceforth known as Br Hildebrand Maria.

Several priest retreatants visit us during this period, from Aachen (Germany), Green Bay (Wisconsin, USA), Detroit (Michigan, USA), and the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham (England); as well as several Dominicans, including fellow students of D. Elijah at St Saviour's Priory in Dublin. Several other young men, from as close as N. Ireland and as far away as Poland and Australia, arrive to observe our life. ✦

ADOREMUS in AETERNUM

The beautiful photographs featured in this issue were taken by Pawel Kula (photo credit: **PK**), Peter Hayden (**HD**), and our own D. Benedict (**DB**). Special thanks to Messrs. Kula & Hayden!



REVIEW: “IN SINU JESU”

By Pater Edmund Waldstein, O.Cist.

A FEW WEEKS AGO A FRIEND OF MINE SENT me a book by an anonymous Benedictine monk which had just been published: *In Sinu Jesu*. I have been reading it slowly in the adoration chapel of the seminary here in Heiligenkreuz, and although I haven't finished yet, it has already made a deep impression on me.

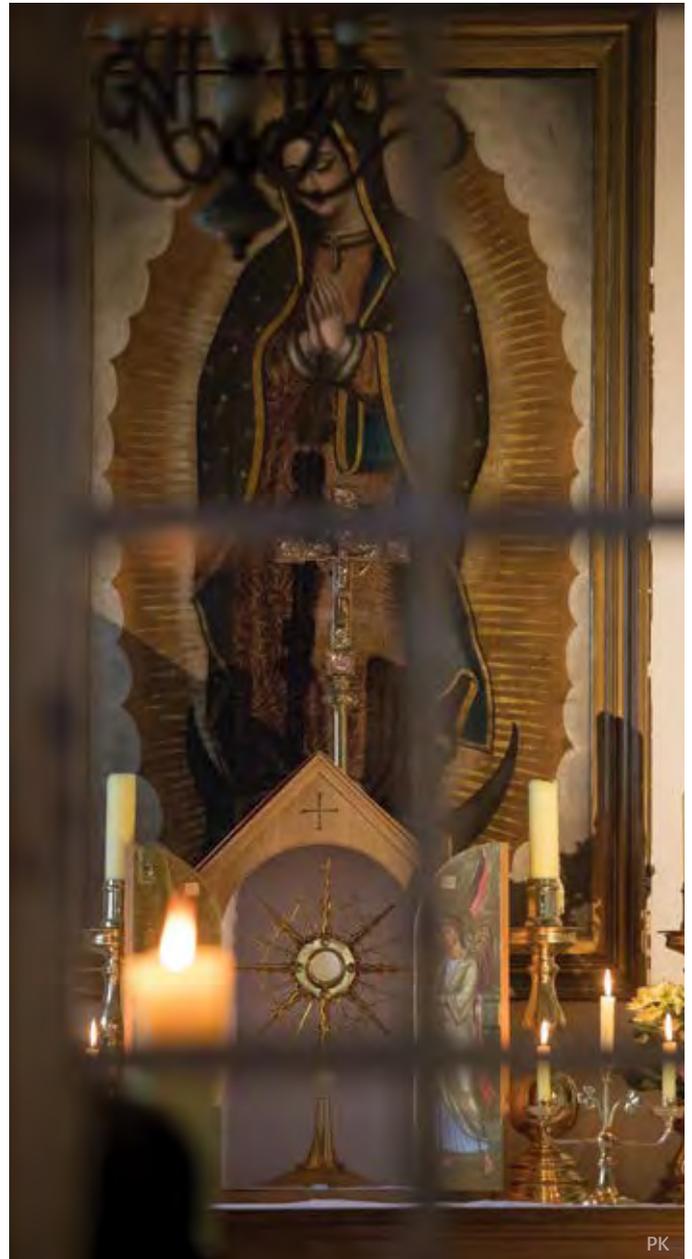
It is the sort of book that one wants to read in chapel; and this makes it difficult to write about. It is a book about the *intimacies* of prayer, a book that should be read in silence. It is a journal that the author kept at adoration, and consists largely of words “given” to Him by our Lord and our Lady. These words are mostly about prayer, and adoration, and sacrifice, about friendship with Jesus, and about the renewal of the priesthood.

One theme that struck me particularly was the theme of loneliness, and the flight from loneliness into the trap of distraction, and the necessity of withdrawing from distraction in order to feel the pain of loneliness so that that pain can be healed by Communion with God. Consider the following passage:

I want you to tell priests of the desires of My Heart. I will give you many opportunities to do this. Make known to them these things that I have made known to you. So many of My priests have never really heard and understood the invitation to an exclusive and all-fulfilling friendship with Me. And so, they feel alone in life. They are driven to seek out in other places and in creatures unworthy of the undivided love of their consecrated hearts, the fullness of happiness and hope and peace that only I can give them. So many go forward in bitterness and disappointment. They seek to fill the emptiness within with vain pursuits, with lust, with possessions, with food and drink. They have Me, very often, near to them in the Sacrament of My love, and they leave Me there alone... (p. 27)

The theme is of course a traditional one, because it has to do with the condition of fallen man as such. Exiled from friendship with God through original sin, mankind wanders through the *regio dissimilitudinis* [land of unlikeness]¹, and tries to

1. The phrase comes from St Augustine's *Confessions* (VII, 10) wherein he describes his spiritual state before his conversion as a wandering far from God in a “land of unlikeness”.—ED.



numb the pain through *importunitas mentis* [uneasiness of mind], *inquietudo corporis* [bodily restlessness], *instabilitas (vel loci vel propositi)* [instability of place or purpose], *verbositas* [wordiness], and *curiositas* [idle curiosity].

In Sinu Jesu treats the problem particularly as it presents itself in the priestly life. The author is both a monk and a priest, and he shows how fitting it is for all priests to live at least some elements of monastic life. These elements are aimed at leading the soul into the “desert,” as it were, where it is free of diversions and distractions, and becomes able to feel the pain of the loneliness of sin, in order then to receive the healing consolation of Christ. In the Western Rite, all priests are at least required to live a celibate life, and *In Sinu Jesu* is in part a wonderful reflection on the beautiful and prophetic witness of celibacy. And

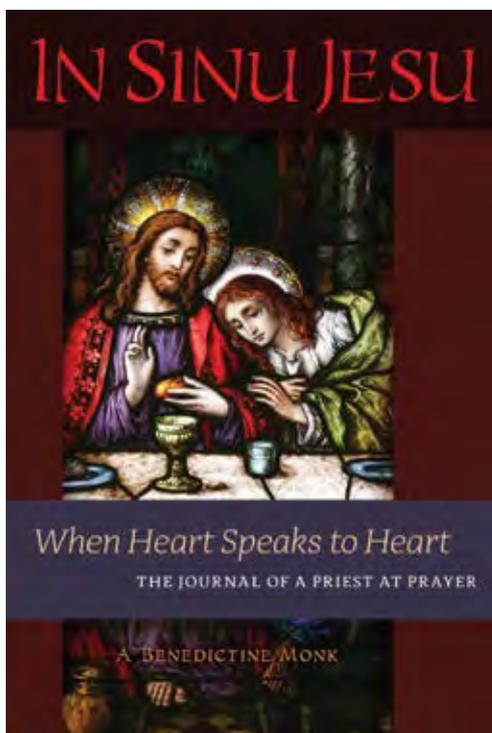
yet priests engaged in the *cura animarum* [care of souls], especially in a modern world that is so intent on diversion (and so skilled in producing it) can so easily fall into diversion's trap and in "seek in other places" the consolation that can only really be found in Christ.

One of the most moving things about *In Sinu Jesu* is the constant repeated message that in this earthly pilgrimage true consolation can be found easily in the Adoration of Christ in the *Viaticum*, the way-bread of our journey, in which we already have a foretaste of the union with God that we hope for in Heaven:

[Our Lord:] I am He who understands every man's loneliness, especially the loneliness of My priests. I want to share their loneliness so that they will not be alone with themselves, but alone with Me. There I shall speak to their hearts as I am speaking to you. I am ablaze to be for each one of My priests the Friend whom they seek, the Friend with whom they can share everything, the Friend to whom they can tell everything, the Friend who will weep over their sins without, for a moment, ceasing to love them. (p. 14)

The revival of Eucharistic Adoration among the Catholic movements of our time is one of the more unexpected "signs of the times". If one looks for signs of life in the Catholic Church in Western Europe, one finds them almost always in movements and groups who put a good deal of emphasis on Eucharistic Adoration. A development that became very visible at World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne. Who would have expected this development? The Liturgical Movement in the 20th century considered Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament outside of Mass to be a dangerous habit, which might lead hearts away from the Sacrifice of the Mass itself. But *In Sinu Jesu* shows how, properly understood, the Adoration of the Eucharistic presence leads into and deepens the participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice:

Many priests do not have a real and practical faith in My Eucharistic presence. Do they not know that the Eucharist encloses within itself all the merits of My Passion? Let them recover the



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faith of their childhood. Let them come to find Me there where I am waiting for them and I, for My part, shall work miracles of grace and holiness in them. (p. 14)

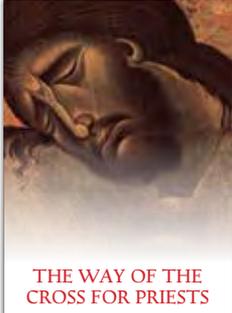
In adoration, and from it, as from an ever-flowing fountain, you will receive the love that makes suffering precious and makes you like Me in the hour of My Sacrifice on the altar of the Cross. The more you adore Me, the better equipped you will be to accept suffering and to live it in union with My Passion... (p. 146)

In a way, *In Sinu Jesu* reads like a commentary on Pope Benedict XVI's sermon at the closing Mass of World Youth Day 2005. Not a speculative commentary, but an experiential

illustration. I'm convinced that any reader who is willing to enter into the spirit of this book will be inspired with a new desire for union with God in prayer. I cannot recommend it too highly. ✦

Pater Edmund is a Cistercian priest-monk of the Abbey of Heiligenkreuz in Austria. The article is abridged and slightly adapted from the original, which can be read at his blog, SANCRUCENSIS.WORDPRESS.COM (1 Jan. 2017).

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LET US PRAY.

O

LORD JESUS CHRIST, Lamb without blemish or spot, Who accepted the judgment of a human tribunal, and by Your humble surrender to a sentence of condemnation, opened to sinners the tribunal of Your inexhaustible mercy; look graciously upon Your priests, that as faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, they may draw sinners into the embrace of the Father, Who not sparing You, gave You up for us all. With Whom You live and reign in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.

(FROM THE FIRST STATION)

Introducing Two New Novices
**BROTHERS IGNATIUS
 AND HILDEBRAND**

On 21st November 2016, the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, **MIKKEL RAHBK PEDERSEN**, a native of Denmark, was received as a novice of Silverstream Priory & clothed in the monastic habit. Mikkel's monastic name is **BROTHER IGNATIUS MARIA**; his new heavenly patron is St Ignatius of Antioch. Father Prior delivered the following sermon (abridged) in Chapter on the occasion:

MY DEAR SON, MIKKEL-GABRIEL, MORE than four years ago, shortly after our arrival here at Silverstream, a young American and his girlfriend visited us and, with great warmth and enthusiasm, spoke to us of a Danish man who, in their estimation, had all the makings of a monk. "There is", they said, "but one little problem". "What," asked I, "is that"? "He", said they, "is not baptized". Admittedly, a problem. I was intrigued by this unbaptized Dane who was, according to the report, *monachus naturaliter* [natural monk].

Grace builds on nature. Divine Providence was at work mysteriously and mightily. And, so, the *monachus naturaliter*, assisted by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), was, on 30 March 2013, Holy Saturday, washed clean of sin; made a true son of God; flooded with divine grace; joined to the Body of Christ, the Church; clothed in a white robe; sealed with the gift of the Holy Ghost; and nourished with the life-giving mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. St Ignatius of Antioch says, "The Christian is not the result of persuasion, but of power". In your story, dear Mikkel, those who know you see compelling evidence of the power of God and of the work of divine grace.

It is most unusual that the witnesses of a man's clothing in the white robe of Baptism should also



be the witnesses of his clothing in the monastic habit. On that Holy Saturday, three years ago in St Kevin's, Harrington Street, Fr Deighan and Fr Nevin were present, as were D. Elijah, D. Finnian, D. Benedict, and I. Today, you will be clothed in the habit of a son of Saint Benedict. The baptismal clothing, of course, made this second one possible; and this second clothing is, I think, the outward manifestation of a divine plan for your life that, wondrously, is just beginning to unfold.

The ancient gesture of foot-washing, consecrated by Our Lord Himself in the Cenacle on the night before He suffered, becomes here, today, the expression of a welcoming home. The significance of the gesture is especially poignant, given your own spiritual odyssey and your relentless quest for the Truth. You, Mikkel, might make the words of Saint Ignatius of Antioch your own: "There is within me a water that liveth and speaketh, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father". All the while you were searching for God, the Father was searching for you, using every occasion to meet your gaze, lying in wait for you at every turn.

Halts by me that footfall:
 Is my gloom, after all,
 Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly?
 'Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
 I am He Whom thou seekest!
 Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me'.

(Francis Thompson, *The Hound of Heaven*)

You have journeyed long and far, dear Mikkel, but you have not journeyed alone. The Blessed Virgin Mary has accompanied you every step of the way, and at Silverstream you are in a house that is all hers. Your presence here today, on the feast of her Presentation in the Temple, is, I think, the effect of a particular intervention of the Mother of God, for on August 5th last, you gave yourself into her keeping in a special way, saying, in the words of St Maximilian Kolbe, "Do what you will with me, with all the faculties of my soul and



my body, with my whole life, with my death and my eternity ... for all graces come to us from the Sacred Heart of Jesus only through your hands”.

There have been other saints in your life as well and, undoubtedly, there will be more. I am thinking of St Anskar, the Apostle of the Danes, who, being himself a son of Saint Benedict, is surely looking upon you today with delight. The holy Angels are here today, with Saint Michael at their head. You are beginning your noviceship here today, not only in the company of your heavenly friends and intercessors, but also in a company of men who love you as a son and a brother. The words of St Ignatius of Antioch speak to the daily Benedictine experience of life together:

Toil together one with another, struggle together, run together, suffer together, lie down together, rise up together, as God's stewards and assessors and ministers. Please the Captain in whose army ye serve, from whom also ye will receive your pay. Let none of you be found a deserter. Let your baptism abide with you as you shield; your faith as your helmet; your love as your spear; your patience as your body armour. Let your works be your deposits, that ye may receive your assets due to you. Be ye therefore long-suffering one with another in gentleness, as God is with you. May I have joy of you always. (IGNATIUS TO POLYCARP, VI)

I know of no better commentary on Chapter 72 of the Holy Rule than these words of St Ignatius of Antioch. While today may seem to you, dear Mikkel, like a point of arrival—and it is that—it is also a point of departure and, in the eyes of the world, a kind of disappearance. St Ignatius speaks of his martyrdom as a disappearance; in this too the monastic life is like martyrdom.

For if I be truly found [a Christian], I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal (*Epistle to the Romans, III*).

I shall clothe you, then, dear son, in the habit of those who choose to disappear. I ask for you, today, the singularly Eucharistic grace of hiddenness, a participation in the hiddenness of the Host, of the *latens Deitas* [hidden Deity]. Persevere, then, in seeking *the things that are above; where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with him in glory* (Col. 3:1-4). ✱



THE REVEREND MICHAEL JOSEPH HOUSER of St Louis, Missouri, was received as a novice of Silverstream and clothed in the monastic habit on 11 February 2017, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. Father Houser's monastic name is **BROTHER HILDEBRAND MARIA**; his new patron is Pope St Gregory VII (Hildebrand). Father Prior delivered the following sermon (abridged) in Chapter:

MY DEAR SON, FATHER MICHAEL, THE LITURGICAL providence of God rises for us each day even before the first glimmers of the sun on the eastern horizon. And so it was this morning. *Before you call upon Me*, says the Word, *I will say unto you, Behold, I am here* (Holy Rule, Prologue). In the stillness of this feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, the Word of God waited for you to bring to the *Opus Dei* your ear, and your heart, and your voice: *Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come: My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, shew me thy face, let thy voice sound in my ears* (Cant. 2:13-14). What are these words if not the very sentiments of the Heart of Jesus who, looking upon a certain rich young man, *loved him, and said to him: ... Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor ... and come, follow me* (Mark 10:21)?

You are not the first rich young man — not even the first priest — upon whom Jesus has looked with a penetrating gaze, and loved. Msgr. Knox translates the passage this way: *Then Jesus fastened his eyes on him, and conceived a love for him* (Mark 10:21). I think of the young Dublin priest, Joseph Aloysius Marmion, whose memory His Eminence, Raymond Leo Cardinal Burke saw fit to honour in 2012 in the church of Sant' Agata dei Goti, where the future Dom Columba Marmion was ordained a priest on June 16th, 1881. *Jesus fastened his eyes on him, and conceived a love for him*. And so, Fr Marmion left his priestly ministry in Dublin, his teaching at Clonliffe seminary, his preaching, and his care of souls, to seek in the cloister, under the Rule of St Benedict, the gaze that first sought him. *My heart hath said to thee: My face hath sought thee: thy Face, O Lord, will I still seek* (Ps. 26:8).

Even as a little boy, dear Fr Michael, you sensed that Jesus had fastened his gaze upon you. You were magnetised by the Most Blessed Sacrament. Little Michael Joseph Houser was strangely and wonderfully aware of the eyes that were fastened upon him: the eyes of One concealed and yet revealed in the Sacred Host. The gaze of the Lamb has never left you, Fr Michael, not even for a minute. And you, through the changes and challenges of your life in different circumstances and places, have always sought to meet the gaze of the Lamb.

You are well aware that when a priest comes to the monastery, he consents to the loss of many things, even of things excellent and cherished. *I count all things to be but loss for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ* (Phil. 3:8). Not only does the priest novice consent, as would any other novice, to the loss of freedom, of personal ownership, and of self-determination at many levels; the priest novice consents also to the loss of a certain standing in the hierarchical ranks. He becomes a little brother and takes his place as the last one of all in his new monastic family.

You could, dear Fr Michael, have entered a well-established abbey with lofty vaults and vast gleaming cloisters, there to enjoy the security of a well ordered liturgical life, a polished choir, and a finely honed conventual discipline. But you have instead come here to Silverstream, to a lowly monastery-in-the-making, obviously poor in many ways and, yet, by God's mercy, rich in charity, and utterly reliant upon the grace of Christ. *And of his fulness we all have received, and grace for grace* (John 1:16).

I have a peculiar theory about men and monasteries. I think that the Providence of God, ruling all things mightily and sweetly, goes so far as to bring a particular monastery into existence because there are men for whom the monastic life would be impossible anywhere else. At some level, when a man chooses a monastery or, rather, when God presents a monastery with a new brother, the new brother, and the abbot, and the community recognise this

and consent to it. When a man asks to receive the holy habit in a particular monastery, he is making an immense act of faith in the Providence of God:

Thou hast brought me, O Jesus, to this place, to this abbot and to this community, at this point in time and not a day sooner, because Thou hast fastened Thy eyes upon me and loved me from my mother's womb ... Of my soul thou hast full knowledge, and this mortal frame had no mysteries for thee, who didst contrive it in secret, devise its pattern, there in the dark recesses of the earth. All my acts thy eyes have seen, all are set down already in thy record; my days were numbered before ever they came to be. (cf. Ps. 138).



SHORTLY BEFORE HIS CLOTHING, FATHER HOUSER TURNED IN HIS BIRETTA AND SECULAR PRIEST'S AMICE TO RECEIVE A NEW HOODED MONASTIC AMICE.

The changes taking place today — clothing in the holy habit and the conferral of a new name — are but the outward signs of your consent to something recognised *through a glass in a dark manner* (I Cor. 13:12), and already desired: *things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived, the welcome God has prepared for those who love him* (I Cor. 2:9). If, at any time, you should falter or grow faint in *the hard and rugged paths by which we walk towards God* (Rule, ch. 58), despair not of the mercy of God; *it is new every morning* (Lam. 3:23).

When Bernadette was interrogated about seeing the Immaculate Mother of God, she answered with the most disarming simplicity, *Je regardais tant que je pouvais*, which I should like to translate, “I looked and looked as much as I could”. You too, dear son, look and look at Mary as much as you can. Every time you look at Mary, you will discover, perhaps to your surprise, that Mary has been looking at you with an indescribable purity and tenderness. Never does the Immaculate Mother of God look upon a monk without, at the same time, communicating to his soul, almost imperceptibly, a fresh infusion of sweetness and of hope. This intimate exchange with Mary is one of the secrets of the purest monastic joy, *and this joy no man shall take from you* (John 16:22). *Forsake her not, and she shall keep thee: love her, and she shall preserve thee* (Prov. 4:6), together with our Father St Benedict and all the saints, *unto the day of Christ Jesus* (Phil. 1:6). ✦

ON MY CLOTHING IN THE HOLY HABIT

Br. Hildebrand Maria Houser OSB

Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo!

“The mercies of the Lord I will sing forever!”

THE BRIEF BUT MOVING CEREMONY TOOK place before Conventual Mass on the morning of 11 February, the Feast of the Appearance of the Immaculate Mother of God at Lourdes. It began with my lying prostrate on the floor asking for “the mercy of God, and a place in this school of the Lord's service.” There was a brief reading from Ecclesiasticus, chapter 2 (*My son, if thy mind is to enter the Lord's service ...*), and Father Prior gave the exhortation (the text of which is reproduced in this newsletter). I then stated my intention to “do battle under the Rule of Saint Benedict”, and the clothing began.

First Father Prior washed my feet — this was particularly moving to me, since the last time I had this rite performed on me was when Archbishop Burke did it in my first year as a seminarian. Then he re-

moved my cassock and collar, and clothed me in the Benedictine tunic and scapular, with the hood up.

After blessing me, he lowered the hood and announced: “Thou art given for thy special patron in the monastic life [DRUMROLL ...] Pope St Gregory VII, and entrusted likewise to the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Henceforth thou wilt be known as Brother Hildebrand Maria.” We all rose and sang the *Memorare*, and proceeded to the chapel for Terce followed by sung Mass in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Some of you may be asking, “Why St. Gregory VII, and what does Hildebrand have to do with it?” Well, Hildebrand was the original name of the great 11th-century Benedictine reforming abbot who was elected Pope Gregory VII, and implemented what was arguably the most successful reform of the clergy in Church history, paving the way for the great centuries of Medieval Christendom. In the process, Hildebrand/Gregory engaged in an epic struggle for the freedom of the Church which pitted him against the powerful of this world, and resulted in his eventual exile. Father Prior indicated a few reasons why, in prayerful reflection, he thought this a fitting name. First, because it is a great saint of the Benedictine order. Also, because he sees in me a little of the zeal for the Church that characterized



Hildebrand's life. And not least, because of my close association with Rome — and particularly my close bond with Cardinal Burke, who bears numerous resemblances to Hildebrand (Gregory VII).

It is hard to describe everything that has gone through my heart in the last 24 hours. I have at times felt rather strongly the difficulties of dying to the old man, but there is an immense peace that comes from knowing that henceforth, in a more public and explicit manner than ever before, I belong entirely to Our Lord and His Mother, who have given themselves so completely to me. I can understand why in monasteries of women the vestition is treated as a “wedding ceremony”, because the whole thing really does feel like a marriage of the soul with God — something which every Christian is called to every time we partake in the Wedding Feast of the Lamb. ✦

A NOVICE DISCOVERS PERPETUAL ADORATION

Br. Cassian Maria Aylward, OSB

IN RECENT YEARS, I HAVE HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE of reading some profound and edifying writings from the Church's saints and theologians. Certainly, time devoted to this sacred obligation to *attend unto reading* (I Tim. 4:13) is time well-spent; however — let me borrow the words of St Thérèse — “when I read books in which perfection is put before us with the goal obstructed by a thousand obstacles, my poor little head is quickly fatigued.” This is where St Thérèse (†1897), St Elizabeth of the Trinity (†1906), Dom Pius de Hemptinne (†1907), Sr Benigna Consolata (†1916), Sr. Consolata Betrone (†1946) and a host of other holy souls step in.

As I began to read the lives of these humble “little souls,” and to ask for their intercession, I came to discover that God has raised up, in recent times, a vast number of childlike souls (cf. Mt. 18:3), who, like “little Thérèse,” reveal and put within the reach of all, what Dom Pius de Hemptinne refers to as the “ineffable simplicity of holiness.” “Let us seek after love,” he writes; “he who possesses *that*, possesses all, and for ever.”

“Love,” said St Thérèse, “is repaid by love alone.” “Love even as you are loved,” said Our Lord to Marcelline Pauper (†1708); “love is paid by love; the whole thing is to be faithful.” So far, so good. But what is love? And how does this all relate to perpetual Adoration? Let me consult a master of the spiritual life, Bl. Abbot Columba Marmion: “The Will of God,” he writes, “*is not distinct from Himself*; it is God intimating to us His wishes; it is as Holy, as Powerful, as Adorable, as Immutable as God Himself.”

In other words, when we do the Will of God, He communicates Himself to us; He pours into our souls His Divine Life, the life of grace, which makes us *partakers of the divine nature* (II Pet. 1:4). In fact, we can go further still and say that every movement towards God, however slight, is a communication of the Divine Life, of charity: *God first hath loved us* (I Jn. 4:19); *Without Me*, says Jesus, *you can do nothing* (Jn. 15:5). To believe that God, *the Alpha and the Omega* (Apoc. 22:13), is the Beginning and End of all Goodness, is the beginning of adoration.

“God alone,” writes Louis Bouyer, “is capable, properly speaking, of giving — He to Whom all things belong.” It follows, then, that we will only ever love and adore God to the extent that He fills us with and take us to Himself. Yes, this will involve certain sufferings and trials — but how much sweeter and easier will these crosses appear to us if we receive Jesus often in the Adorable Eucharist! *Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (Mt. 11:28).

“Do you not actually possess all things,” writes Peter de Blois, “if you have Him who possesses all?” “What more can you desire,” said Our Lord to Mother Deleloë, “than to have within you the true source of all good, My Divine Heart?” *Seek ye the Lord, and be strengthened: seek His Face evermore* (Ps. 104:4). That is Adoration. ✦



Dear Friends in Christ

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Our family is growing! We are in desperate need of (1) A NEW ORATORY, (2) NEW CELLS for the constant stream of new vocations, and (3) THE EXPANSION OF OUR GUESTHOUSE to accommodate the growing number of priests coming to us for quiet, prayer, and spiritual rejuvenation. Can you help us?

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UT IN OMNIBUS
GLORIFICETUR DEUS!

That in all things God may be glorified!