

IN CŒNACULO

SILVERSTREAM PRIORY

Benedictine Monks of Perpetual Adoration

Situated amidst pasture land and forest in the eastern reaches of County Meath in Ireland, Silverstream Priory is an autonomous Benedictine monastery of diocesan right committed to ceaseless prayer before the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar in a spirit of reparation and intercession for priests.

FEB. 2018 — NO. 1 (15)



DEAR FRIENDS OF SILVERSTREAM PRIORY,



THE SEASON OF HOLY LENT, FOR Benedictines, is characterised above all by *joy*. Nowhere in the Holy Rule does Saint Benedict speak more of joy than in his 49th Chapter “On the Observance of Lent”. Saint Benedict presents Lent as a time in which the monk makes a fresh start, repairing the negligences of the past, and giving himself over again to prayer wrung from the depths of the heart and to a more generous allotment of time for holy reading. If over the course of time, a monk has in any way hardened himself against operations of God’s grace, during Lent he lays aside his defences and allows himself to be pierced by the two-edged sword of the Word of God.

God’s word to us is something alive, full of energy; it can penetrate deeper than any two-edged sword, reaching the very division between soul and spirit, between joints and

marrow, quick to distinguish every thought and design in our hearts. From him, no creature can be hidden; everything lies bare, everything is brought face to face with him, this God to whom we must give our account. (*Heb. 4:12–13*)

Even as the Word of God wounds, it brings healing. The Word of God is also like a fountain of water clear as crystal. Nothing so effectively cleanses the heart as regular and deep immersion in the pure water of the Word of God.

Saint Benedict mandates that, at the beginning of Lent, the abbot present each monk with a book in which he is to immerse himself daily for forty days. This more focused Lenten reading obliges a man to seek silence and to close his eyes and ears to the many things that so easily compete with “the One Thing Necessary” (Luke 10:42).

Saint Benedict also recommends abstinence: doing without things on which we may have become dependent, and foregoing, in some measure, even the enjoyment of good things. Abstinence is a reclaiming of interior freedom;

it opens up space and time in the daily round of one's life for all of those things that Saint Paul recommends to the Philippians:

All that rings true, all that commands reverence, and all that makes for right; all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is gracious in the telling; virtue and merit (Phil. 4:8).

Saint Benedict introduces a Eucharistic note into his Lenten observance by making of all that he proposes to his monks an offering to God in the joy of the Holy Spirit. He further says that we are to await Easter with the joy of spiritual desire. There is, in Saint Benedict's teachings on Lent, nothing that cannot be applied to the lives of Christians in the world.

Wishing you a Lent made bright by joy, all of us here at Silverstream Priory thank you for your friendship and faithful support. On Monday, March 19th, the Feast of Saint Joseph, I will, as an expression of our gratitude, offer Holy Mass for all our benefactors and for their intentions.—FATHER PRIOR



RECENT REFECTORY READING

☞ *Christian Monks on Chinese Soil: A History of Monastic Missions to China* (Matteo Nicolini-Zani, 2016)

☞ *Athos: The Holy Mountain* (S. Loch, 1957)

☞ *Saint Columban: His Life, Rule, & Legacy* (Terrence Kardong OSB)

☞ *The Christian Altar: In History & Today* (C.E. Pocknee, 1963)

☞ *The Face of God: The Rediscovery of the True Face of Jesus on the Holy Face of Manoppello* (Paul Badde, 2010)

☞ *The Waters of Siloë* (T. Merton, 1957)

☞ *Trembling on the Edge of Eternity: Monsignor Augustine Hoey: A Biographical Memoir* (Antony Pinchin & Graeme Jolly)

☞ *The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times* (Jean-Charles Nault, OSB)

☞ *Steward of Souls: A Portrait of Mother Margaret Hallahan* (by S.M.C.)

☞ *William Bernard Ullathorne: A Different Kind of Monk* (Judith Champ)

A Priest Retreatant Writes ...

I HOPE YOU WILL EXCUSE SUCH A BRIEF LETTER of thanks for an experience of monastic hospitality that was far from brief, except in the quite literal sense of the shortness of time I was able to stay. It was, rather, an experience of the welcome that was generous, deep and wide. I found my stay at Silverstream inspiring and spiritually reinvigorating. Please pass on my thanks to all the brethren. We live at a time that can be fairly characterised as a new dark age. Places such as Silverstream will become ever more important as centres where goodness is lived in simplicity and hospitality; where the Lord is worshipped in the beauty of holiness; and the truths of our Faith preserved and handed down in serious scholarship, writing and preaching. Those who for whatever reason are forced to live close to more polluted waters will increasingly need to find streams such as yours to refresh their spirits. I certainly hope to come again as soon as I can and to recommend you to others as a place of retreat. — THE VERY REV'D RICHARD DUFFIELD, PARISH PRIEST, YORK ORATORY IN FORMATION



These photos show the touching ceremony of the SUSCIPE, first appointed by our Holy Patriarch Benedict for the rite of monastic profession. The new monk asks to be taken into the arms of the Father & recognised as a true adopted son. "Take me to thyself, O Lord, that I may live: and let me not be disappointed in my hope!"



VIDIT JOANNES JESUM "John saw Jesus coming towards him"

A HOMILY ON THE OCCASION OF THE
SIMPLE PROFESSION OF DOM CASSIAN
MARIA, 13 JANUARY 2018

Brother Cassian Maria Aylward, 28, a native of Sydney, Australia, pronounced his first vows as a Benedictine monk at Silverstream Priory on Saturday, 13 January 2018, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The profession took place during Holy Mass in the Oratory of the Priory. Dom Mark Kirby, OSB, Conventual Prior, received, for a period of three years, Brother Cassian's vows of stability, conversion of manners, and obedience, as set forth in the Rule of Saint Benedict. Brother Cassian, the son of Diane and Paul Aylward, and the brother of Matthew and Luke Aylward, is the great-grandson of the noted Australian classicist, Catholic apologist, poet, and Papal Knight, Dr Frank J. H. Letters. Brother Cassian, a 2007 graduate of St Paul's Catholic College, Manly, holds a degree in education from Notre Dame University, Sydney. Before embracing the monastic life in 2016, Brother Cassian was an avid body-boarder in the Australian surf and taught primary school in Sydney. He currently serves as the monastery's guestmaster.

MY VERY DEAR SON, ALLOW ME to say to you again today what I said to you on the day of your clothing in the holy habit on 1 July 2016:

You have flown over oceans and over mountains, over islands and over continents to come to this place, to this day, and to this hour. You have not journeyed alone. You have pressed forward

step by step, surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses over your head (Heb. 12:1). You have journeyed, not in the company of the learned and the clever, nor with those whom the world judges wise, nor with those whom the world counts among the powerful, but in the company of those whom you are fond of calling *the littlest souls*.

Not by coincidence was this day, the Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, chosen for your profession. No sooner had I chosen today's feast for your profession than we received — Oh! the delicate attentions of Divine Providence! — the splendid painting of the Baptism of Our Lord that now hangs here in the Oratory.

Why did you leave your father and your mother, and your brothers, Matt and Luke, and your dear grandparents, and your all mates in Australia? Why did you leave the sunshine and sparkling waves of the beaches of Sydney for this darkling east coast of Ireland? Why did you forsake the opportunities offered you by the world to travel the globe, coming to this place, to this day, and to this hour?

You did it because, like John the Baptist in today's Gospel, you saw Jesus coming towards you. *Vidit Joannes Jesum venientem ad se*, "John saw Jesus coming towards him" (John 1:29). You, also, dear son, saw Jesus coming towards you. Everything in you stirred, and woke, and rose to go towards Him whom first you saw coming towards you, and the words of the psalmist came to flower on your own lips: *Paratum cor meum, Deus, paratum cor meum*,



“My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready” (Ps. 56:8).

To those who ask you, “But why a monk?” you can answer only this: *Vidi Jesum venientem ad me*: “I saw Jesus coming towards me”. There is no other explanation for the profession of the three vows of stability, conversion of manners, and obedience that you are about to make.

The grace of your profession is wondrously illumined by today’s Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. While the chants of the Mass and the lesson are those of January 6th — so that we not lose the thread that ties today’s feast to the illumination of the nations and the adoration of the Magi — the Collect, Gospel, Secret, and Postcommunion are proper to the Baptism of the Lord. This means that if we are to look anywhere for the special grace of today’s feast, it is in these elements of Holy Mass. The Collect made us ask “that we may be inwardly reformed by Him, whom we recognise to have been outwardly like unto ourselves”.

This, dear son, is not a grace for which most of us would, of ourselves, dare ask. It

is a risky thing to say to God, “reform me inwardly”. We recoil from change, especially when the change touches us personally. I am reminded of what none other than Satan said to God in the first chapter of the book of Job: *Stretch forth thy hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and see if he blesseth thee not to thy face* (Job 1:II).

You, dear son, are about to make profession of *CONVERSATIO MORUM*. This means that you will give God full and unlimited permission to make you the monk He would have you be. One doesn’t enter a monastery to be safe, and comfortable, and cosy. One enters to take the great risk, saying to God: “Change Thou me, as Thou wilt, when Thou wilt, and in the way Thou wilt, and to Thy divine reforming action, I shall add my little *Amen* of adoration and submission”.

The Gospel shows us the effect of the reform that God would operate in us: the Father, by the deep and efficacious operations of the Holy Ghost, causes a cry of recognition to well up from the depths of the heart:

For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba Father. (*Rom. 8:14–15*)

For too many, the great baptismal grace that is divine adoption remains something notional, something vague and, as it were, something obscure in the back of one’s mind. This is why, in every age, God raises up saints, and doctors, and mystics to call us back to what makes Christianity different from every other religion, philosophy, ethical system, and mystical meandering on the planet: divine sonship by adoption.

We are, by grace, what Jesus is by nature, “that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren” (Romans 8:29). Sons in the Son. *Filii in Filio*. All the Fathers taught this. The Doctors scrutinised it and marveled at the divine condescension: a Father who, in infusing His own life into man, recognises Himself in man and allows man to recognise himself in God. What the Father says of His Firstborn, He repeats of each one born anew by grace: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). What the Eter-

nal Son says, facing the Father in an eternal ecstasy of love, every son by adoption repeats in turn: “Abba Father” (Rom. 8:14).

Mother Mectilde seized upon this in the 17th century and wrote about it in her letters. Saint Thérèse, Blessed Abbot Marmion, Blessed Ildephonsus Schuster, and a host of others great and small were raised up in modern times to say to souls:

YOU ARE NOT MERE SEEKERS AFTER WISDOM, YOU ARE NOT SLAVES IN SUBMISSION TO A REMOTE DIVINITY, YOU ARE NOT KEEPERS OF A MORAL ORDER; YOU ARE SONS IN THE SON.

As if this were not enough, the Secret of today’s Holy Mass tells that we are also sharers in the priesthood of the Son. The Secret calls Our Lord Jesus Christ “Himself the author of our sacrificial gifts”. *Ipse nostrorum auctor est munerum*. You, dear son, will stand before the altar today to place yourself upon it, to become a gift with the Gift, a lamb with the Lamb, a victim with the Victim. Saint Paul says, “What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

This is the great movement of the Mass: offer what you have received, and then receive what you have offered. Offer the Lamb of God, and receive the Lamb of God. Every day, from the rising of the sun to its setting, the words of Abraham to Isaac are wondrously fulfilled:

Isaac said to his father: My father. And he answered: What wilt thou, son? Behold, saith he, fire and wood: where is the lamb for the sacrifice? And Abraham said: God will provide himself a lamb for the sacrifice, my son. So they went on together. (Gen. 22:7–8)

And every day, from the rising of the sun to its setting, the words of Saint John the Baptist echo, again and again, across the face of the earth: “Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29).

The Postcommunion of today’s Holy Mass is a prayer not only for this day of your profession, dear son, but also for the rest of your monastic life. There will be days on which you will find yourself surrounded by obscuri-

ty and walking in uncertainty. Today’s Postcommunion puts one in mind of Blessed John Henry Newman’s “Lead, Kindly Light”:

We pray Thee, O Lord, to go before us at all times and in all places with Thy heavenly light, that we may discern with clear sight and receive with worthy affection the mystery of which Thou hast willed that we should partake.

Today, without excluding the heavenly light of the star that guided the Magi, the sacred liturgy would have us gaze upon the heavenly light that shone upon the Face of Christ as He emerged from the waters of the Jordan. It is the same light that radiates invisibly from the Face of Christ hidden in the Sacred Host. This is the light that even before coming to Silverstream, shone in your soul when you saw Jesus coming towards you.

In making your monastic profession today, dear son, know this: in the hours, and days, and months, and years that lie ahead of you, there will not be a single moment when Jesus is not coming towards you. *Vidit Joannes Jesum venientem ad se*. And should anyone, intrigued, or bewildered, or fascinated by the choice you have made, ask you why you became a monk, give them the only answer possible, the one answer intelligible even to the littlest souls: *Vidi Jesum venientem ad me*, “I saw Jesus coming towards me”. ✚



THE PRIORY CHRONICLE



Fr Prior celebrating the august Sacrifice of the Mass



D. Benedict in
Bl. Newman's
library



The brothers and guests set
out on their long Saturday walk.



Fr Prior blessing the
new monastery car

21-29 NOV. ✦ D. Benedict travels to Maryvale, near Birmingham, England, to visit the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a formerly Anglican religious community now in full communion with the Catholic Church as Benedictine nuns of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham (founded by Pope Benedict XVI in 2011), for whom he celebrates Holy Mass according to the Anglican Catholic form. While there, D. Benedict also visits the Birmingham Oratory, where he is privileged to pray in the rooms of Bl John Henry Cardinal Newman, and to visit his remarkable personal library (left).

24-28 NOV. ✦ Fabio C., from Padua, Italy, makes a retreat at Silverstream.

26 NOV. ✦ Last Sunday after Pentecost. After None, the Holy Rosary is prayed before the exposed Blessed Sacrament, in union with prayer being offered around Ireland for the protection of unborn human life.

29 NOV. ✦ Brett M. from Saskatchewan arrives at Silverstream to experience our life for two weeks. ✦ Before Compline, the community begins the Novena in preparation for the Immaculate Conception.

30 NOV.—3 DEC. ✦ Sean P. from Iowa makes a vocational visit to Silverstream.

1 DEC. ✦ Seth Borders, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, arrives at Silverstream to begin his postulancy.

2 DEC. ✦ Ricardo G., of Cádiz, Spain, completes his three-month period of vocational enquiry at Silverstream. We bid him a fond farewell and look forward to his return as a postulant in the spring.

2-7 DEC. ✦ Fr Justin Freeman, a Mercedarian priest from the United States, makes a retreat at Silverstream. During the same week, Fr Jim Doyle (Wexford) and Fr Gerard Deighan (Dublin) are also with us for retreats.

3 DEC. ✦ First Sunday of Advent; the new liturgical year begins with the familiar Introit, *Ad te levavi animam meam*, and, after Vespers, the chanting of the *Rorate Cæli*.

5-9 DEC. ✦ Rick Y., a native of Pennsylvania studying at Oxford, visits Silverstream.

8 DEC. ✦ Solemnity of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. As if to honour Our Lady's spotless purity, we awake to find the ground white with snow, a rarity in Ireland. ✦ We are blessed with the visit of two Romanian Greek Catholic priests, Fr Cristian Chisvasi and Fr John Chisarau. After Holy Mass and dinner, they join us at recreation and share with us their experience of priestly life in Romania and their love of the Blessed Sacrament.

9-13 DEC. ✦ Vince M., from London, makes a retreat at Silverstream.

12 DEC. ✦ Feast of St Finnian of Clonard (†539), Teacher of the Apostles of Ireland, and patron of the Diocese of Meath; onomastico of D. Finnian.

13 DEC. ✦ Sr Olga and Br Dmitri, oblates of the Belarusan Orthodox monastery of St Elizabeth in Minsk, Bela-

rus, visit Silverstream and supply us with beautiful icons for the Gatehouse.

15 DEC. ❖ Fr Thomas Crean, OP, arrives at Silverstream for a retreat, and remains with us for the Christmas celebrations.

16 DEC. ❖ External preparations for Christmas begin with the placing of a 10-foot Christmas tree in the community room of the monastery.

17 DEC. ❖ We begin at Vespers the solemn singing of the Great “O” Antiphons. Stefano T. arrives at Silverstream for several days of retreat.

20 DEC. ❖ Ember Wednesday of Advent. In Chapter, the Gospel *Missus est* (of the Annunciation) is solemnly chanted by D. Benedict, followed by a homily from Fr Prior. ❖ Later in the day, Fr Michael Nevin of Dublin joins us for Holy Mass and dinner.

24 DEC. ❖ Vigil of Christmas. In the morning, the announcement of Christmas from the Roman Martyrology is solemnly chanted in Chapter by Br Hildebrand. At night, after two hours of Matins, the first Mass of Christmas is celebrated by Fr Prior, followed by Lauds, a procession to the crèche, and a festive celebration in the community room. Each of the brothers receives as a Christmas gift copies of *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St John Climacus (†649), and the *Antirrhetikos* of Evagrius of Pontus (†399).

25 DEC. ❖ Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord. D. Benedict celebrates the Mass *in aurora* in the quiet of the early morning, while Fr Prior celebrates the sung Mass *in die*, with the Gospel of St John sung in a festive Benedictine tone. In the afternoon, the community adores the newborn Christ with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by the singing of *Adeste fideles* and *Puer natus*, before Vespers and Benediction.

27 DEC. ❖ Feast of St John the Evangelist. Before Conventual Mass, Mr Robert Nugent is received as a novice oblate, receiving St Basil the Great as his patron. Wine is blessed in honour of the Apostle, and the Blessed Sacrament is solemnly exposed from Holy Mass until Compline, allowing us to enter more deeply into the Beloved Disciple’s intimacy with Our Lord.

30 DEC. ❖ Father Subprior, Dom Benedict, misses a step in the main staircase and falls, breaking his leg. Taken to hospital by ambulance, D. Benedict returns to the monastery three days later, with a large metal pin and screws in his leg, and the prospect of sixteen weeks of recovery.

29 DEC.—2 JAN. ❖ Three seminarians from the Pontifical North American College in Rome make a visit to Silverstream during their Christmas holidays.

29 DEC.—4 JAN. ❖ Fr Clark Philipp, a recently-ordained priest of the Archdiocese of St Louis, makes a retreat at Silverstream. Before departing, he gives each of the monks his priestly blessing.

31 DEC. ❖ In the morning, the community celebrates the *Capitulum Pacis*, in which pardon is asked for the faults of the past year. The Blessed Sacrament is solemnly exposed from Holy Mass until Midnight. Shortly before Midnight, the *Te Deum* is sung in thanksgiving for the



Christopher S. performs
for the community & guests



Dom Cassian gives
copies of his profession
card to Little Sisters of
the Poor from Dublin.



The Velzeboer family with
Fr Prior and the Prioress of
Tegelen, M. Immaculata

Father David
Abernethy, CO



blessings of 2017. The new year begins with the singing of the *Veni Creator Spiritus* and Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the Marian invocation *Monstra te esse Matrem* ("Show thyself a Mother").

1 JAN. ✦ New Year's Day, Octave Day of Christmas, and Feast of the Circumcision of the Lord. At Holy Mass, Fr Prior preaches about the importance of devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, which was given Him on this day. The professed members of the community renew their vows during Holy Mass.

2-3 JAN. ✦ Two students from St Joseph's Seminary College in Covington, Louisiana, make a visit to Silverstream at the start of a cycling tour of Ireland.

3-5 JAN. ✦ Br Damien Novak, CFR, and Ciall H., seminarian for the Priestly Fraternity of St Peter, make retreats at Silverstream.

5 JAN. ✦ Vigil of the Epiphany. After First Vespers of the feast, the community goes in procession to the Chapter Room for the solemn blessing of Epiphany water, which will be used throughout the year.

6 JAN. ✦ Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. After the Gospel at Holy Mass, the Announcement of the Moveable Feasts for 2018 is solemnly chanted. Following the Mass, Fr Prior blesses chalk for the monks and faithful to use in writing the traditional Epiphany inscription above their doors.

6-12 JAN. ✦ Br Cassian spends a week in retreat in preparation for his simple profession. On the evening of 12 January, in the presence of the community gathered in Chapter, he formally presents his petition to be admitted to simple vows.

10-17 JAN. ✦ Michael T., a student at Harvard University, makes a vocational visit to Silverstream.

10-19 JAN. ✦ Ricardo G., while preparing to begin his postulancy later in the spring, spends a week at Silverstream to attend Br Cassian's profession and take part in the community retreat.

11 JAN. ✦ Christopher S., from Vancouver, arrives at Silverstream to spend several months as an enquirer.

12-18 JAN. ✦ Dom Ildephonse Swithinbank, OSB, from the Monastère Saint-Benoît in La Garde-Freinet, France, spends a week with the community.

13 JAN. ✦ Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. The Oratory is full beyond capacity for Holy Mass, during which Br Cassian Maria Aylward pronounces his triennial vows of stability, conversion of manners, and obedience. Afterwards, numerous local clergy, religious, and friends of the monastery join the community for a festive celebration, during which Christopher S. delights us with his banjo playing.

14-19 JAN. ✦ Fr David Abernethy, CO, Provost of the Pittsburgh Oratory, preaches the annual retreat to the community of Silverstream. Over the course of a dozen conferences on St John Climacus' *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, he helps us to enter into the wisdom of the Desert Fathers, and to draw renewed inspiration for living our monastic vocation with fervour. The retreat concludes on Friday evening with a devotional renewal of vows, Benediction

of the Blessed Sacrament, and the singing of the *Laudes Regiæ*.

17-22 JAN. ❖ Mother M. Immaculata, Prioress of the Benedictines of Perpetual Adoration in Tegelen, Netherlands, makes a retreat at Silverstream. An oblate of Tegelen, Bernice Velzeboer, and her family, visit and bring for our veneration a beautiful icon of the Holy Face of Manoppello.

20-23 JAN. ❖ Piotr Kaznowski, once an enquirer with the community at Silverstream, visits us together with his wife and two children.

22 JAN. ❖ Fr Michael Duffy, OFM Cap, spends the afternoon at Silverstream. Father Mark H., from England, arrives at Silverstream for a time of retreat.

24 JAN. ❖ Fr Manuel, O Carm, superior of the Carmelite Fathers in Kildare, visits Silverstream for Holy Mass. In the afternoon, Father Eunan McDonnell, SDB, provincial of the Salesians, stops in for a visit.

24-29 JAN. ❖ Seminarian John H. from England visits Silverstream.

25 JAN. ❖ At the request of many of our priest-friends, a monthly day of recollection for priests is inaugurated at Silverstream. The priests attend lunch, adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a conference by Fr Prior, Vespers, and Benediction.

27 JAN. ❖ Feast of St John Chrysostom, Bishop, Confessor, and Doctor of the Church (*usus antiquior*); onomastico of Br Chrysostom. At First Vespers for Septuagesima Sunday, we sing farewell to the Alleluia, which will not be heard again until Easter.

29 JAN. ❖ Desmond M., from Northern Ireland, arrives at Silverstream to spend several months as an enquirer.

30-31 JAN. ❖ Fr Aidan McCann (Archdiocese of Armagh) makes a brief visit to Silverstream.

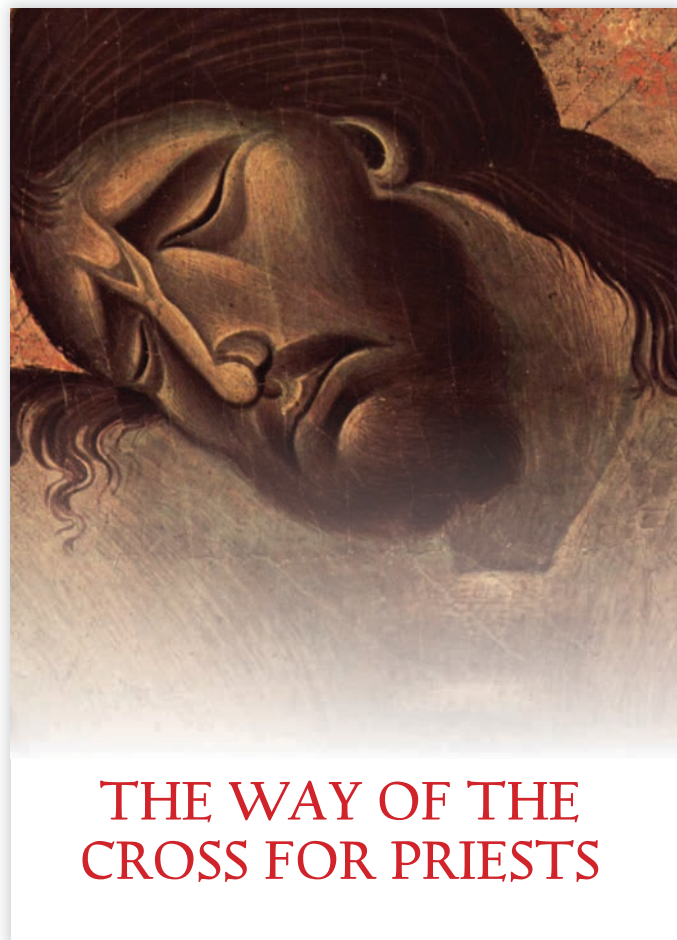
30 JAN.—4 FEB. ❖ Three seminarian-deacons from the Pontifical North American College make a pre-ordination retreat at Silverstream, with several conferences by Fr Prior. They are joined by a student priest from the PNAC, and by Br Jesse Maingot, a Dominican of the Irish Province, who makes his retreat in preparation for ordination to the diaconate. His confrère, Br Kevin Leavy, OP, joins us on 4 Feb. for Vespers, supper, recreation, and Compline.

2 FEB. ❖ Feast of the Purification of Our Lady. The Christmas season comes to a solemn conclusion as many guests join us for the blessing of candles and outdoor procession prior to Holy Mass and Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

3 FEB. ❖ Feast of Ss Ansgar and Blaise, and anniversary of the death of Mother Yvonne-Aimée de Jésus of Malestroit (1951). Prior to Holy Mass, Postulant Seth Borders is clothed in the holy habit in the presence of the community and numerous guests. He is entrusted to the patronage of the Angelic Doctor, receiving the name Brother Thomas Aquinas Maria. †

❖❖❖ Current Offerings from ❖❖❖

THE CENACLE PRESS



THE WAY OF THE CROSS FOR PRIESTS

A traditionally-inspired order for the Way of the Cross that can be prayed by anyone, clergy or layman, for the sanctification of priests. Foreword by Dom Mark Daniel Kirby OSB, with an imprimatur from the Bishop of Meath. 22-page booklet.

A LITANY FOR THE HOLY FATHER

A devotional Litany in intercession for the Roman Pontiff, composed by a monk of Silverstream, invoking each beatified and canonised Pope. Imprimatur by the Bishop of Meath. Available in quantities of 10, 25, 50, & 100.

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CENACLEOSB.ORG/PRODUCTS

SONS OF THE FOR THE Host

A HOMILY ON THE OCCASION OF THE
CLOTHING IN THE HOLY HABIT OF BROTHER
THOMAS AQUINAS MARIA BORDERS

Seth Borders, a 27 year old computer engineer from Ypsilanti, Michigan, was clothed in the Benedictine habit on Saturday, February 3rd at Silverstream Priory, becoming Brother Thomas Aquinas Maria. The son of Stephen and Ann Borders, Brother Thomas Aquinas is the youngest of six children. He graduated in 2012 from Kettering University with a degree in Computer Engineering. As a novice at Silverstream Priory, Brother Thomas Aquinas will learn to live the Rule of Saint Benedict in 21st century Ireland. A lover of music and enthusiast of Gregorian Chant, the new novice happily sings in the monastic choir, spending five to six hours a day in prayer. At other times Brother Thomas Aquinas can be found working on the land, serving in the monastery kitchen, or applying his technological skills to the monastery's website and podcasts.

MY DEAR SON, SOME TIME ago, in a conversation about your vocation, you told me that you were drawn here to Silverstream Priory by adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Last Tuesday, as I sang the poignant Gospel of the Votive Mass of Our Father Saint Benedict, I peered, for a moment, above the Book of the Gospel held open in front of me, and saw you there, and with you each of the brothers who surround you in choir. And the words of Our Lord took on an astonishing immediacy:

And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting. And many that are first, shall be last: and the last shall be first. (Matthew 19:29–30)

People, upon hearing of your decision to enter Silverstream Priory, surely wondered what could have compelled you to leave your home in Michigan, your beloved family, your friends, and your work?

You did not come to Silverstream Priory because you wanted to live in Ireland. Nor was it the Rule of Saint Benedict that drew you here; you had not yet discovered the Holy Rule and, in fact, knew little of Benedictine life. It was not the richness of the liturgical life; you might have found that elsewhere. Were you perhaps attracted here by the brethren? We are, I think, it is a true, a congenial lot; we are blessed with



a warm family spirit and marked by a special grace of fraternal charity, but these things, too, you might have found elsewhere. You did not come to Silverstream seduced by breathtaking landscapes and splendid architecture. You did not come here in search of any material advantage; here at Silverstream everything is poor, humble, and either in need of repair or waiting to be built.

Yours, dear Seth, is a patently Eucharistic vocation. I see in you a deep and providential affinity to Abbot Celestino Maria Colombo's desire to generate *figli dell'Ostia all'Ostia*, "sons of the Host for the Host". There is, in your journey, dear son, a magnetic attraction to the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. You came to this monastery because the Host had become your lodestone.

In praying over what I would say to you today, the words of the prophet Jeremias rose in my heart:

And they shall come, and shall give praise in mount Sion: and they shall flow together to the good things of the Lord, for the corn, and wine, and oil, and the increase of cattle and herds, and their soul shall be as a watered garden, and they shall be hungry no more. (Jer. 31:13)

You, dear Seth, are not unlike the man of the parable who, having found a treasure hidden in a field, hid it again, and then, for the joy it gave him, went home to sell all that he had and buy that field. Again, you are like the

trader looking for rare pearls: having found one pearl of great cost, he sold all that he had in order to possess it for himself (Matt. 13:44-45). Your treasure is the Most Blessed Sacrament. The priceless pearl for which you are giving up all else is the Host.

Your monastic vocation, Seth, is a matter of your heart needing to be where your treasure is. Do you recall what we sang on the day you were welcomed as a postulant? “Better is one day in thy courts above thousands! Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, O Lord” (Ps. 83).

Remain faithful, dear son, to this initial attraction of yours, to the divine lodestone that by day and by night, be you waking or sleeping, pulls your heart to itself. The perfect monk is, in some way, the man who lives at every moment in readiness for Holy Communion. This Saint Benedict showed us in the hour of his death when, having received the adorable Body and Blood of Christ, he stood with uplifted hands before the altar and so passed into the possession of “things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no human heart conceived, the welcome God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

The perfect monk, according to our father Saint Benedict, is the man who, having set his heart where his treasure is, prefers nothing to the love of Christ. This is no abstract love, nor is it remote, nor invisible, nor intangible. “It is” — even as Moses says concerning the word of the Lord — “not above your reach, it is not beyond your compass. ... It is not a secret laid up in heaven, that you must needs find someone to scale heaven and bring it down to you” (Deut. 30:11-12).

The treasure is as near as the tabernacle a few steps away in the Oratory. It is lifted up for your eyes to see; it rests, fragile and light, upon your tongue; it is an indescribable sweetness against the palate of your soul. It is the abiding real presence of God: hidden that you might seek and find Him; silent that you might find rest in His company; solitary that you might console Him, and poor that you might give Him something out of the poverty that is yours.

In receiving the holy habit, Seth, you are taking your place in a long procession of monks who, undaunted by the hard and rugged paths set before them, said with the psalmist: “I will go in to the altar of God: to God who giveth joy to my youth” (Ps. 42:4). There was not among them, nor will you find here among us a single man who did not cross the threshold of the cloister as one unclean coming to the fountain

of mercy, as one blind coming to the radiance of eternal light, as one poor and needy coming to the Lord of heaven and earth (*Oratio S. Thomae Aquinatis Ante Missam*).

If you have come to this monastery, dear son, it is because the hidden God, the *Deus absconditus* of the Prophet (Isaias 45:15) and the *latens Deitas* of the Angelic Doctor has drawn you to Himself.

Serve Him, then, in your brothers, especially in those brought low by infirmity. Seek Him in reading and study. Find Him in prayer. Hasten to Him at the sound of the bell. Cling to Him in adoration. Sing to him and sing with Him until, by your humble efforts and by the grace of the Holy Ghost, He begins to sing in you and through you. Work for Him, knowing that no thing is mean or little in His sight, and that all the vessels and goods of His house are as the consecrated vessels of the altar.

Finally, dear son, give yourself to the Blessed Virgin Mary, not only today, not once, but ceaselessly. Our Lady has the gift of putting together all the fragmented bits we give her. She receives what is broken and makes it whole. Under her protection, your new life in the habit of Saint Benedict can become what God has already given you to desire: an unbroken act of adoration in the radiance of Him whom you have seen, whom you have loved, in whom you have believed, and upon whom you have set your heart. ✚



GLORIA PATRI
& FILIO &
SPIRITUI SANCTO

*Glory be to the Father
& to the Son, & to
the Holy Ghost*

GRATIAS AGAMUS
DOMINO DEO NOSTRO

*Let us give thanks
Unto our Lord God*

PER * IPSUM
Through Him
ET CUM * IPSO
And with Him
ET IN * IPSO
And in Him

REQUIEM AETERNAM
Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord,
DONA EIS DOMINE ☩
And let light perpetual shine upon them
LUX PERPETUA LUCEAT EIS

NEW CARD DESIGNS

Benedictine Eucharistic Guild

FOR WELL OVER A THOUSAND years, Christians have turned to monasteries seeking the solace that comes from knowing that the monks will take them into their prayer and present their needs to God. The ordinary Christian of the Middle Ages saw the monk as a man wholly dedicated to prayer on behalf of all and for all.

The ploughman plowing his field, the mother nursing her child, and the tradesman labouring long hours took comfort in knowing that, by day and by night, monks were going about a ceaseless round of prayer. Christian layfolk understood that the generous support of monasteries benefitted everyone, for they believed in the Communion of the Saints, that is, in the exchange of the spiritual goods obtained by prayer for the living and the dead.

The Benedictine Eucharistic Guild was established in response to an ever-increasing number of requests for intercessory prayer and remembrance in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. From the very beginning of life at Silverstream Priory, people have come to entrust to our prayer their cares, their needs, and their sufferings, so that we, in turn, might entrust them to God.

The members of the Guild and their needs are brought to the altar in two special Masses weekly: one offered for the living members, and other of-

fered for the departed. The monks of Silverstream enter into a contractual relationship with the members of the Guild: they agree to remember them weekly in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass offered especially for their intentions, as well as in the daily celebration of the Divine Office, in Eucharistic Adoration, and in their other prayers. To this end, the names of the living and deceased members of the Guild are carefully kept by the monks.

An enrollment card, in one of four beautiful designs (each with a quote from the Sacred Liturgy in Latin and English), is available from the monastery whenever a person, living or deceased, is enrolled in the Guild. (We are happy to make a small supply of cards available to those who desire to make use of them.)

Enrolling someone into the Guild is simple. Just send us the names of those you would like to be remembered and submit your donation by mail or online (suggested donation: €10 each name).

For more information, visit us online at CENACLEOSB.ORG/GUILD, or write us via regular mail:

BENEDICTINE EUCHARISTIC GUILD
SILVERSTREAM PRIORY • STAMULLEN
CO. MEATH • K32 T189 • IRELAND

Those living nearby in Ireland are welcome to come by the Gatehouse Bookstore at the Priory and fill out an enrollment card.



ON Thursday, 15 February, the Most Rev'd Dr Michael Smith, Bishop of Meath, inaugurated the construction of a new monastic church, dedicated to Our Lady of Bethlehem, at Silverstream Priory. Bishop Smith was first to turn the sod, followed by Father Prior, Mrs Ann Corcoran of Dublin, Dom Elijah, and architect Adrian Buckley. Also in attendance were numerous clergy from neighbouring dioceses, and friends of Silverstream from Italy, France, Belgium, Austria, Czech Republic, and Canada. Sudden snow flurries did not keep the monks from filling the air with the uplifting sound of Gregorian Chants. Silverstream's youthful and growing Benedictine community looks to the completion of the new church early in 2019. A reception followed in the monastery's entrance hall. More coverage of this event and photos will follow in the next issue of IN CENACULO. ✚