

# The Navigator



The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
Vol. 2, Ed. 1 – February 2007

*This newsletter is a special one. Mother Sue has written the main article explaining how Saint Brendan's moved from vision to reality and why we believe this to be a genuine move of the Lord. Her article also explains how the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's is a family working together to fulfill this unique vision. It begins on page 2. To give her as much space as possible, my article is offered as a brief, devotional meditation.*

## Esteemed of the Lord

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

*"This is the one I esteem:..."*  
Isaiah 66:2

Isaiah is one of those tremendous books of the Bible that spans the full breadth of God's salvation history. In it we find the Lord's various condemnations to the nations which often included a chronological record of the peoples' national disobedience. At the same time, Isaiah's prophetic utterances regarding the Messiah push from the time of his captivity to almost a millennium into the future to the time of Christ. And his visions of the final consummation pierce deeply into the eschaton of divine victory.

The last chapter of the book, Isaiah 66, concludes with God's words of closing judgment and blessed hope. And it's in this final chapter where we catch a brief glimpse of the kind of person God is seeking to draw into those eternal glories of heaven:

*"This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).*

This verse struck me as being a kind of 'loadstone' toward which our lay monastic 'compasses' should point. What we are called to do in this particular Christian walk is not be given over to a life of grand displays of faith in front of our parishes or congregations. Nor is it a life that seeks to be the center of attention for our fellow brothers and sisters. It's often secret, hidden, quiet. It doesn't garner high praise or accolades. It doesn't fuel personal ambitions or hunger for public affirmation. And yet it's the kind of life, singled out by God, as a template for those He most highly desires to esteem.

This esteem, this being 'looked upon' by God, means a sustained and favorable divine contemplation. God looks upon us with the same favor as a lover who looks at his beloved; filling his eyes and heart with the joy of every detail; desiring to look at nothing else because, according to his eye, nothing else can compare.

What delights God's eye? Humbleness, contrition, and awe. God holds out the first two as the normal condition of one's spirit. The third is what He desires as the active response to His presence. Those who are humble and contrite (or poor and stricken) in spirit are very aware of their reliance on the Lord – not only as they recognize their own poverty of spirit, but as they lift up in prayer the poverty of others. They aren't afraid to shoulder the burden of prayer and are willing to walk with others as a prayerful friend and comfort in their hurts and tears. This condition of the spirit uniquely positions them to call upon God as their only Source and Defender. Those who tremble before the Word of the Lord are the ones who are moved, internally and externally, in penitent faithfulness before the decrees and majesty of God; acknowledging Him as the sovereign Author of Life and living in yielded submission to everything that proceeds from His mouth.

Much of contemporary faith puts "me" and "I" at the center of Christianity. However, as the final chapter of history draws to a close, God's greatest esteem will fall on those who've put Him at the center of their lives. Monastic spirituality and monastic discipline helps us to mortify the pride of self as we relinquish our lives back over to the lordship of Christ.

*Jesus, help us to surrender ourselves to the graces of humility, contrition, and awe that we may be lifted up to the Father's eye as a Bride suitable for Your love. Amen.*

Rejoice!  
Fr. Alan Andraeas

## The Vision for Saint Brendan's Mother Sue Andraeas

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders  
labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city,  
the watchmen stand guard in vain.*  
Psalm 127:1

### THE PLAN

Ok, folks. You've been kept in the dark long enough. I'm sure you've been waiting to find out what this thing is that you're connected to, or are considering being connected to. What's the deal with this farm in Maine? Why does it have to be so far away? Why is it so old? And what does it have to do with YOU? I think the best way to answer that question is to tell you how the vision unfolded for Fr. Alan and me. It has been in the works, so to speak, for about eight years now, and I think we are beginning to see the picture more clearly.

Fr. Alan and I were married in July, 1999. Although he was still a chaplain in the Navy, we were already sensing a call to 'something' after his retirement. We had both lived in Alaska for some time and loved the wild 'flavor' of life there. We knew families just outside of town that had no running water or electricity but who were more content and happy than our friends who 'had it all.' Everyone in these families, including children, helped to bring in water, chop wood for the cooking stove, take care of the livestock and pets, doing the chores that were necessary for, in their case, survival. They read books out loud and made music together for their evening entertainment. We were quite enamored by this simple, rustic, yet rich lifestyle and wanted to experience it for ourselves.

After our first year together, spent in North Carolina, and after requesting that the Navy send us somewhere cold, we transferred to Puerto Rico. These three years were a time of testing and refining – personally and as a family, mentally and spiritually. It was also a time when the Holy Spirit refined the vision for our future. Once again, we saw families who were living without the 'necessities' of cable television, high speed internet connections, and cell phones. Yes, those things exist in Puerto Rico. But in the mountains, you can still find people who have managed to live joyful, rich, satisfying lives without all the distractions of modern life. Alan and I began to research how to live without all the modern conveniences-turned-necessities, and how to make our future property less dependent upon outside resources.

When we returned to the States for our final 18 months in the Navy, we began looking for a farm where we could

put our dream into practice. The Lord was also showing us that this would not be a place just for the two of us, but that others would join us. We needed property that:

- Had a good water supply
- Included a big house (for us and others) that might need some reconstruction or remodeling, but was structurally sound
- Had a barn for animals and a woodworking shop
- Had pastures and fields for animals, a place to add a chapel and perhaps little 'huts' for visitors/students (we later learned they are called *poustinias*)
- Could not be 'built up;' would never have neighbors on all four sides of the property, or be turned into suburbia
- Was in a community that would tolerate our unusual plan – both in zoning and in practice
- Had space for a large garden, and was suitable for solar power or wind generators
- Was affordable (cheap!)

That's a tough order to fill. Through numerous little nudgings, the Lord steered us toward Maine. It was similar to Alaska in population and culture. With that came the 'idea' to be far to the east – to be in a position to be among the first interceding for our nation in the morning.

We contacted a realtor in Maine. He laughed at us! He told us it couldn't be done. We didn't have

enough money. We were being too picky. God doesn't tell people to buy land anyway. Within less than two months, he had found this farm! He said we were spending too much time praying and not enough time bargaining. We were putting too much emphasis on the opinions of a bishop who was not in real estate. We were not offering enough. We were not being aggressive enough. After MANY months of near misses and struggles with financing, the farm was sold to us – for quite a bit less than the land is worth, and for no money

**"We thought we were doing something radical. Instead, we were 'reinventing' the monastery!"**

### HOW TO CONTACT US

**Father Alan L. Andraeas, Prior  
Mother Susan G. Andraeas, Prioress**

**The Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
38 Cemetary Road  
Dennysville, ME 04628-4326**

**207-726-5129**

**[saintbrendans@verizon.net](mailto:saintbrendans@verizon.net)  
[www.saintbrendans-cec.org](http://www.saintbrendans-cec.org)**

down. Our realtor was totally shocked. (We tried not to be!)

We still had one year in the military before we could move to Maine. Our plan continued to evolve. We needed a specific schedule for our daily worship so we could organize work and play between times of prayer and devotion. We wanted our work here to benefit others in the community; we wanted to provide our community with an awareness of how Christ is in the center of all they do by making our times of prayer and worship available to them as well. We wanted this to be a place of education – and practice – in spiritual disciplines which would produce both fruit of the spirit and fruit of the earth to be shared – bread, eggs, berries, Christian friendship. We thought we were doing something radical. Instead, we were ‘reinventing’ the monastery!

The Lord led us to the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov, to Fr. Richard Luke and Mother Diane, to help us learn about domestic monastic life. Again, we thought this was radically different and unique. Eventually, as we became Superior and Prioress, this domestic monastic life became an inescapable part of our original dream. The Life in Jesus Community served as a model for how to expand from a Society to a Community, and, from these two sources, the Holy Spirit perfected our vision, provided information and encouragement, and surrounded us with a group of believers who were also seeking a deeper, more intentional devotional life – that’s YOU!

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROPERTY

The Saint Brendan’s farm was built in 1804. It was the 100-acre (give or take) farm of Zenas Wilder, a blacksmith and veteran of the Revolutionary War. (He paid \$92.00 for the property! We have a copy of the original deed issued in 1835. Prior to that, there wasn’t anybody issuing formal deeds.) The Wilder family maintained ownership of the property until 2003 – two years prior to our purchasing these 10 acres of the remaining property. During the Civil War, Dennyville was one of the stops along the Underground

Railroad, and both slaves and Indians could find food, shelter and protection here on their way to Canada. It is rumored that the Wilder farm was one such place of shelter, and the little ‘hiding place’ behind the original fireplace would support the rumor. During WWII, an Army watchtower was erected beside the barn, manned mostly by Dennyville women, to watch for enemy planes that would enter our country’s skies from Europe. (The jet stream makes our sky a major thoroughfare for air travel across the Atlantic.) As you can see, this land has a history of provision, protection, and watchfulness. We could not have found a more perfect site for Saint Brendan’s!



### THE NEXT STEP

Now what? The vision has evolved into a tangible, obtainable plan. The right land has been acquired. We’ve been gathered together. What do we do next? Well... Fr. Alan and I have been praying about this since July, beginning to build the administrative foundation from which the rest of the work will be accomplished. This is what has been done so far. We would greatly appreciate your comments and input. After all, this is YOUR farm too – and we truly feel that way. So far:

- We have placed Saint Brendan’s (and ourselves, obviously) under the apostolic cover of Bp. Zampino and the Communion of Corpus Christi (rather than the CEC). As the Abbot of the Life in Jesus Community, he can speak both spiritually and experientially into the work we are doing here. Saint Brendan’s can now be an ecumenical work,

### Ancient Quote of the Month...

In every newsletter I would like to add a quote from one of the ancient prayers or writings of our Church. Let me introduce you this month to St. Ephraem Syrus (306-373 AD); sometimes referred to as Ephrem the Syrian. He spent most of his life fighting against the heretics of Christianity — Marcion, Bardesanes, Mani, the Arians, the Anomoeans, and others. A friend to such notables as St. Basil, he was best known for his theological works (often written in verse) and for his austerity, asceticism, and sanctity of life. Here’s what he said about prayer:

“Prayer is a guard of prudence,  
control of wrath, restraint of pride,  
cleansing of malice, destruction of envy,  
righting of impiety. Prayer is strength of  
bodies, prosperity of a household, good order  
of a city, might of a kingdom, trophy of war,  
and assurance of peace.”

bridging the gap between Protestants and Roman Catholics.

- Fr. Alan has begun writing the Constitution and Bylaws for the Saint Brendan's Monastic Retreat Community. These will provide all of us with clear parameters of operation. They are for you as much as for us! Fr. Alan will also develop a standardized Rule for Saint Brendan's. This rule will outline a pattern of interior, exterior, and corporate aspects of discipline that our members will strive to follow. Unlike 'shepherding,' however, these will not be specific actions that you *must do* but guiding principals to help you develop the life of stability, obedience, fidelity, and joyfulness that God is calling you to live.

- We have been working on a Saint Brendan's Breviary through which we 'schedule' our day. It includes more Scripture than other Daily Offices we've seen. It will also include prayers from varied Christian traditions, making it a more ecumenical resource. (If you would like a draft, we'll be glad to send you one so long as you use it and offer ideas/suggestions that would be helpful for you. We will probably not implement all the ideas, but the Holy Spirit can speak more clearly if we have options.)

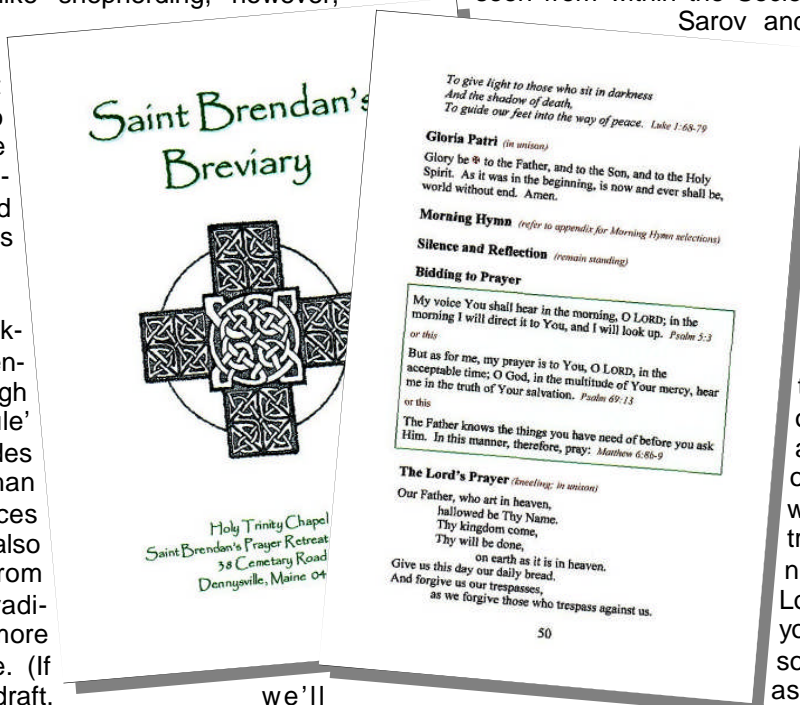
- In order to be more recognizable to our community, as well as provide you with information for others, we have drafted a brochure briefly explaining Saint Brendan's to others. (You should have received one with your last newsletter.) Along those same 'advertising-recognition' lines, an artist in TN, has been commissioned to design a Saint Brendan's logo that can be used on correspondence, be made into jewelry for our members, etc.. This is being done at no expense to us (thanks to a friend of Canon Coleman and Dcn. Hall!)

We have also been working in a way to make membership feasible for more people. Members will still progress through the typical monastic 'levels' of postulant, novice and professed, but it will be possible to remain a postulant for life – or, as we have termed it, a 'Friend' of Saint

Brendan's.' As a Friend, members will have access to newsletters, teachings, exposure to a lay monastic/disciplined Christian lifestyle and so on, BUT will not make any long-term commitments. Novices will promise to practice a more intentional, disciplined lifestyle, with the purpose of testing a deeper calling to lay monasticism.

Professed – or Oblates – will make either long-term or lifetime commitments to a way of life that involves devotion, prayer... all the facets of spirituality you've seen from within the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov and other lay monastic

groups. The biggest difference between the Professed of Saint Brendan's and the Professed of the Society is this: in the Society, you were not required to make any kind of contribution to the Society beyond the purchase of your own Society cross. As a professed member of Saint Brendan's, you will be expected to contribute to the community in whatever way the Lord leads. Some of you have already done so! Some have served as theological consul-



terts in the monastic history and practice. Some have contributed to the library. Some have built or painted walls, or provided materials and plans for remodeling projects. Some have given money and/or materials. Some have provided timely encouragement and admonishment, offered advice in web design, or tied prayer ropes. Most importantly, you provide the necessary prayer cover and intercession that this ministry requires! If we are to be a community - and one that is not determined by close geographic proximity – then the 'tie that binds' must come from mutual work that produces mutual blessing. And, as is almost always the case, blessing requires commitment, responsibility, sacrifice, and sometimes suffering. (If you're not sure what I mean, think about the 'blessing' of children. Parenthood does not guarantee 'happily ever after' but it does guarantee all those things listed above!) It's not only about what you can *get*, but about what you can *contribute* to the common good. What we envision for the future is a way to provide materials, studies, etc. to help you introduce an intentional life of prayer and devotion in your own community.

The vision has come a long, long way, hasn't it? I'm not sure we have the full picture yet, or if we, in our lifetime, ever will. But it's a good vision, and one that continues to be confirmed as we build and grow. As we complete the Constitution and Rule, we'll be asking for your input, and we'd like you to seriously consider our request to contribute feedback. In the near future, as these documents are fleshed out and finalized, we'll be asking once again if you still feel called to stand with us in this work. One final note: In the first weeks of our life here, we were given two vague impressions by the Holy Spirit. The first was to 'purge,' which wasn't difficult to understand since the property was filled with brush piles, garbage, and dirt! The second was a sense that those who come here will stand naked before the Lord, for testing and refreshing. We are learning that not all the purging is physical, nor is all the testing and refreshing

spiritual. We have been through the crucible this summer, as have many of you. After a period of personal purging and emotional nakedness, we are seeing the continuation of the blessings that began here in 2005. We can't want to see what happens next!

*May the favor of the Lord our God rest upon us; establish the work of our hands for us  
-- yes, establish the work of our hands.  
Psalm 90:17*

Rejoice!  
Mother Sue

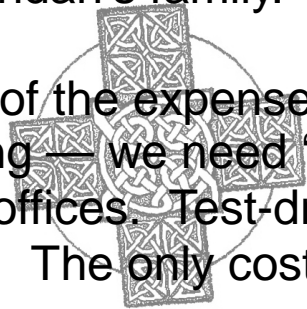
# Saint Brendan's Breviary

## WANTED: Breviary Test-Prayers

We're making the current (draft) version of the Saint Brendan's Breviary available to the Friends and Oblates of our Saint Brendan's family.

Because of the expense involved — at this point it's 130 pages long — we need 'serious' reviewers. Check it out. Pray the offices. Test-drive it. And then let us know what you think. The only cost to you is your input toward the final version.

Contact us by phone or e-mail and let us know that you'd like a copy.



Holy Trinity Chapel  
Prayer, Retreat Community  
Dennysville, Maine 04628

*To give light to those who sit in darkness  
And the shadow of death,  
To guide our feet into the way of peace.*

*Glory be to the Father, who has made  
for us a Kingdom without end, Amen.*

**Morning Hymn** (refer to appendix for Morning Hymn selections)

**Silence and Reflection** (remain standing)

**Bidding to Prayer**

*My wings are clipped in the morning  
and I will rise to You, and I will look up  
or this  
acceptable time; O God, in the multitude of Your mercies  
me in the truth of Your faith in Jesus Christ.*

**The Lord's Prayer** (kneeling; in unison)

*Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be Thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven,  
give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.*

# The Navigator

Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
38 Cemetery Road  
Dennysville, ME 04628