

# The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
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## How Do We Sanctify God?

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

*"Let it be understood that those who are not found living as He taught are not Christians — even though they profess with their lips the teachings of Christ."  
Justin Martyr, c. 160.*

We had a family visiting us from Maryland for a retreat about two months ago. It was during their stay that the Old Testament daily lectionary readings included the story of Moses striking the rock at Meribah (Numbers 20:1-13). The account ends with a stinging rebuke from God which ultimately barred Moses and Aaron from ever entering the Promised Land. As the reader was finishing that text I was stabbed in my heart by a single word, so much so that I had to pause and comment on it during our celebration of the Eucharist. See if it strikes you the same way: **"And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 'Because you did not believe in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them'"** (Numbers 20:12).

Did you catch what God said? **"You did not... sanctify me."** Sanctify — that word grabbed me and wouldn't let go. I know Moses goofed up in this account. We all goof up. Yet I couldn't figure out how our slips and goofs and mistakes could have such an impact on God who is always holy and perfect. He can't be made more holy than He already is nor can His holiness be taken away or dimin-

ished. God's holiness is absolute. Holiness is both His character and His nature. So what did God mean by saying that Moses failed to sanctify Him?

We're all familiar with the story of Meribah, but let's have a quick refresher just in case. The Jews had been traveling throughout the wilderness for a number of years, stuck between Egypt and the Promised Land as God tested and purified them before allowing them to cross the Jordan River. Very early in this journey, actually just weeks after crossing the Red Sea in their escape from Egypt, there was a panic about how they were going to find enough water for themselves and all their livestock. And as you can imagine, supplying enough water for the needs of perhaps a quarter million people with animals in the desert is no easy thing. They cried to Moses, Moses cried to God, and God directed Moses toward a particular rock where He told him to take his staff and strike it. Moses was obedient and water gushed out like a river, providing more than enough water for the Children of Israel (Exodus 17:1-7). It was a fantastic miracle.

Well here it is, some years later, and a similar situation is facing them once again. The people are furious with Moses. They're complaining about their thirst. Moses' sister, Miriam, has just died. And he's exhausted by all their whining and murmuring. Moses cries out to God and God directs Moses toward a particular rock where He tells him to 'speak to' the rock. Frustrated and ex-

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asperated with all the people, Moses takes his staff and hits the rock just like he did years before. After all, if it worked once it'll work again. The only problem was that he disobeyed God in the process. The result was the same, but at what cost? God rebuked him, and as punishment God told Moses that he would never enter the Promised Land. In other words, his disobedience came with a crushing penalty. With that background, let's see what this phrase is all about.

I suppose it would've been just as easy for God to say something to Moses like, 'Because you did not obey Me,...' or 'Because you did not trust Me,...' But He didn't say that. Instead, God said, "...**you**



**did not sanctify Me**" – at least that's what He said in the Revised Standard Version, the version we use for our lectionary readings in Holy Trinity Chapel. So my first question was, *Is this just a poor rendering of the Hebrew into English, or do the other English versions say something similar?*

When we were finished celebrating the Eucharist I went straight to my other Bibles only to find that each one said pretty much the same thing – "**sanctify me**" (KJV), "**hallow me**" (NKJV), "**honor me as holy**" (NIV), "**treat me as holy**" (NASB), "**uphold me as holy**" (ESV), "**trust me enough to demonstrate my holiness**" (NLT) – each version showing us that Moses somehow failed to attribute holiness to God because of a disobedience or sin or failure committed on his part. But again, how could Moses' actions have such a powerful impact on God?

Taken at face value, it seems abundantly clear that the Lord is somehow sanctified by our exercise of godly trust and obedience, especially in our public lives by honoring His laws, obeying His commands, and giving rightful place to His authority in every

**"It's not a far stretch to say that what our neighbors and friends know about God, they know by watching us."**

setting in which we find ourselves. Moses learned this the hard way.

For some of us, trusting and obeying God with our public lives is much harder than when we're at home and the disciplines of faith are hidden and easy. For others, it's our private lives that often fail because that's when no one is watching. It can go both ways. In Moses' case, however, we're shown how important it is to stand in total faithfulness to God especially when others are watching to see what we're going to do.

This is where the rubber meets the road because it's in those public settings when our faith faces the greatest degree of scrutiny. For example, if we are with friends at a restaurant who know that we say grace over our meals at home, will we, to avoid drawing attention to ourselves, choose not to pray over the food that's delivered to our table? Or if we're caught up into a shameful conversation in the employee lunchroom, will peer pressure draw us into that conversation even when such words are not a part of our normal vocabulary or character in private? Or will we, to save face when forced into difficult set of circumstances, do what Scripture has forbade us to do (or not do what Scripture has commanded us to do), especially if we hope it will spare us from deep embarrassment?

The examples are numerous; you can probably personalize them – I know I can – because we've all been there; that moment of decision under the gaze of others who know our Christian stand but

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who also want to see if we'll truly live in submission to what we believe. That's when our words and actions will either sanctify or fail to sanctify God in the presence of others who are deciding what it means to be a Christian. Our conduct will make that decision for them. Even more, our onlookers will decide whether or not God is worth following in their own lives. It's not a far stretch to say that what our neighbors and friends know about God, they know by watching us. Do they see that God is holy? That God is to be honored? That God is to be revered? That God is to be obeyed? Thus we sanctify or fail to sanctify God.

This is probably what happened at the waters of Meribah. It's not that God somehow became less holy or diminished as a result of Moses' striking the rock but that the people witnessed a precedent of how to treat the holiness of the Lord with contempt (cf., Malachi 1:6). In fact, this was God's explanation of the event when He told Moses that

Joshua would be his successor into the Promised Land, **"...for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you [Moses and Aaron] disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes"** (Numbers 27:14). God said the same thing again in Deuteronomy 32:51, **"...you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites."**

The life of a monastic (truly, for any Christian) is one of obedience, submission, humility, holiness, service – all of those things which sanctify and glorify God. No matter where we find ourselves, in private or public, God expects to be sanctified in our lives, through our lives, and because of our lives, leaving no doubt in the minds of those who watch us the nature of our relationship to the Lord. Oh, that people may see who God truly is when they see us living in devotion and obedience to the Lord. Or as a phrase from the old praise song says, "In our lives, Lord, be glorified." ✕

## **Parables from the Priory House: Dealing with Doyle**

Mother Sue Andraeas, Prioress

***"Yet a time is coming and has now come  
when the true worshipers will worship  
the Father in spirit and truth,  
for they are the kind of worshipers  
the Father seeks."***

John 4:23

Remember these parables? They used to appear in every newsletter, back in the beginning. Well, here's another one for this newsletter, compliments of Doyle. Doyle is a new shaggy resident at Saint Brendan's. He's a two-year old donkey. That is to say, he's been around for two years. But his body and especially his mind are not that of a two-year old. You see, Doyle was born on a farm where donkeys were not in short supply, but food and love were. His first home was a half-acre dirt corral which he shared with thirty-nine other donkeys. Once he was weaned, he got almost nothing to eat; he was too old to nurse but too young to fight the bigger donkeys for the scant pile of hay they were given each day. So he starved. And got very sick. He had worms. His untrimmed hooves caused his legs to bend, deforming his bones as they grew. Fungus was destroying his ankles and mites were

eating his skin. He was one sad little guy. And all of this maltreatment also delayed his development. He is more like a yearling than a two-year old.

Then, the whole herd of donkeys was rescued! The smallest of them, Doyle among them, were rounded up and given to 'horse people' all over the county. Doyle ended up at the home of a kind farrier who had another donkey, Chula, and a very big draft horse. This farrier (someone who cares for and shoes horses' hooves) also knew how to care for all of Doyle's medical problems. He treated the worms and other intestinal problems Doyle had, the mites and fungus, and began the painstaking process of getting his sore, overgrown hooves back to normal. But for all of the medical and corrective care Doyle received, he was not given much affection or love. He wasn't even given a name.

We were in the process of looking for a donkey six months after Doyle was rescued from the abusive farm. We really wanted the other donkey, Chula but wound up with both of them. Chula was beautifully trained. Doyle was a mess! He didn't want to be led by a rope but only wanted to follow Chula. He fought for all the hay. He kicked and bit us repeatedly. He was more than we bargained for, and

**"But if we are to minister to a wounded world,  
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first be healed ourselves?"**

our lack of experience with donkeys put us in danger. BUT – the greatest danger came as the result of our misunderstanding of some good advice we were given. We were told that Doyle does not remember his abusive home, so don't treat him like an abused donkey. It was meant to remind us not to coddle him or let him get away with bad behavior, but we took it to mean that we should forget all about his past. I was trying to train him as though he were just untrained rather than untrained AND mistreated. He may not remember his days of starvation, worms, and mites. But he had developed habits that needed to be lovingly trained out of him. He had come to believe the lie that all people will mistreat him and forget to care for him. Well, *some* people may treat him that way – but not us!! Still, our training must take into account all of the lies Doyle has come to believe about people, or our good intentions will just cause more trouble for him – and for us.



So the parable is this: Here we are, in the first years of formation as a monastic fellowship. We are all coming into it from different places, different family histories, church backgrounds, and relationships. In the past, we have all been mistreated, neglected, hurt – whether maliciously or by accident – and all of us have jumped to wrong conclusions – consciously or unconsciously – about ourselves, others, and even about God. The hurt wasn't our fault. Like Doyle, we are not to blame for our being hurt in the past; coming to false conclusions because of the physical, emotional or spiritual pain we endured. While what happened to us

**A SPECIAL VISIT** On July 11, 2008, Saint Brendan's was privileged to host a team from "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" - young Christians from across the USA who spend their summers working to remodel and rehabilitate the homes of economically distressed families. This team was helping to paint the home of one our neighbors. We invited them up to visit Saint Brendan's, see the animals, and share in our celebration of the Eucharist. What a wonderful time of bridge-building, fulfilling the prayer of Christ that they "all may be one" (John 17). Pictured here from left to right is Nicole M. (New York, Dutch Reformed), Team Leader, Monica M. (New York, Dutch Reformed), Mike M. (New Jersey, Roman Catholic), Evelyn R. (Pennsylvania, Presbyterian), Taylor D. (Connecticut, Lutheran Church in America), and Patrick M. (Massachusetts, Roman Catholic).



is not our fault, the way we have coped, the 'protective habits' we've developed, ARE our doing and must be undone. We still need to 'forget' the lies we have convinced ourselves to believe by allowing God to lovingly train them out of us. We can't serve Him AND our own protective strongholds. As a monastic Fellowship, we need to be compassionate when dealing with others, understanding that we have all been hurt, and then help each other let go of the woundedness we have suffered from others.

There are now four formerly unwanted or mishandled critters living at Saint Brendan's – six if you count Fr. Alan and me. As God reveals His vision and purpose for the Fellowship, it is clear that spiritual healing and restoration are part of the plan. It isn't easy. But if we are to minister to a wounded world, shouldn't we, as agents of God's healing salve, first be healed ourselves?

Doyle still has good days and bad days. He still fights for hay, but not as much. He still kicks, but not as often. And there are glimmers of hope. We are learning how to help him recover. He looks excited to see us and he seems to want to do the right thing. (To be more exact... he wants the reward for doing the right thing. ☺) We still have our good days and bad days too. I'm sure the same is true for you. But God is in the process of retraining us all – if we let Him. He will deal with each of us compassionately, taking our past hurts into consideration – not so that we cling to them but so that we can overcome them and serve Him better! In order to worship Him in spirit in truth, we need to route out the lies hidden in the pain and replace them with God's loving truth. Are you ready? Doyle is. And so are we.



## Lifetime Covenant Profession Oblate Life Begins for the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's

On July 1st, 2008, Oblate life officially began for the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's as Father Alan and Mother Sue made their Lifetime Covenant Professions as the Prior and Prioress of Saint Brendan's.

Kneeling before the altar in Holy Trinity Chapel, the profession was made in the presence of Fr. John Worgul of the Life in Jesus Community who acted as a witness for Bp. Phil Zampino. The Lifetime Covenant Profession ceremony included this declaration:

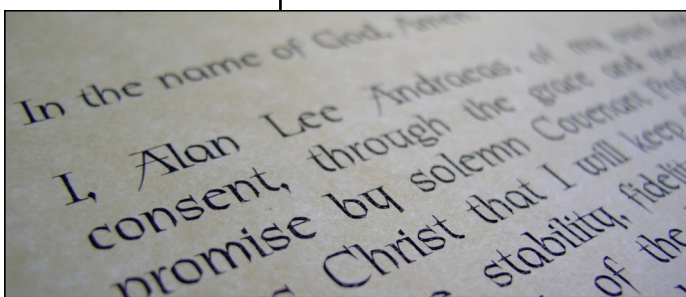
***I, (Alan Lee Andraeas / Susan Gale Andraeas), of my own free will and consent, through the grace and mercy of God, do promise by solemn Covenant Profession to our Lord Jesus Christ that I will keep the monastic charge of obedience, stability, fidelity, and joy according to the Rule of Life of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. And as (co-founder / co-founderess) of this monastic mission, do also vow to our Lord Jesus Christ that I will, through His grace and anointing, faithfully discharge the call of (Father Prior / Mother Prioress) until properly relieved of this mantle according to His will and good pleasure.***

It was a solemn ceremony conducted as part of the celebration of the Eucharist with the professions signed and placed on the altar. The other witnesses of the ceremony included the rest of the Worgul family; Kathy, Abigail, and Jeremy.

What does this now mean for the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's? It means that we can move to the next

phase of our Fellowship: receiving applications for the process of oblation. Yes! We're at a place to officially begin the reception of Oblates!!

Why wait so long? Because for us to be proper spiritual directors we first had to be professed members of Saint Brendan's. We also needed to make sure that a provisional



**Rule of Life** was completed as well as the final draft of **The Breviary**. With those critical steps now accomplished, it's time to open door to the various levels

of Oblate membership—Postulant, Novice, and Covenant Promise/Profession.

Over the next several weeks we will be developing the application process for Postulant for those who feel called of the Lord to push higher and deeper into the disciplines of monastic spirituality. Please be patient with us as this is also an extremely busy time on the farm. If we finish up the process prior to the next newsletter, perhaps we can send the application information by e-mail to all of our current Friends. Otherwise, look for full details in the next edition of **The Navigator**. ✕

Rejoice!  
Fr. Alan

### MONASTIC MUSE

**muse** \ˈmyüz\ 1: *vb* to turn something over in the mind meditatively 2: to think reflectively 3: *n* a state of deep thought...

***“In holy Scripture, discipline is frequently and everywhere prescribed. The whole foundation of religion and of faith springs from obedience.”***

— St. Cyprian (c. 250 AD)

## Retreatants at the Priory House!

What a blessing when the Worgul Family showed up for an extended retreat in July. Fr. John and Kathy are professed members of the Life in Jesus Community in Maryland. Fr. John is also the chancellor of Holy Trinity Seminary at Life in Jesus. Joining them were their children, Abigail and Jeremy.

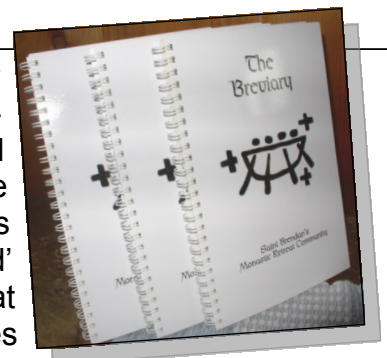


**Middle Left:** The Worgul's find the perfect place to pick up some Maine 'Lobstah.' **Middle Center:** Jeremy helps Kathy make breakfast bread. **Top Right:** The Worgul's pose for a family picture on the new steps up to the barn loft that the men helped build. **Bottom Left:** Abigail gets her chance to handle Brigit, one of our dairy goats. **Bottom Right:** Jeremy helps Fr. Alan lay out and cut one of the stringers for new steps in the barn.



## Saint Brendan's Monastic Retreat Community — The Breviary

We just received our order from the printers. *The Breviary* has now been professionally published! This edition has a number of small corrections to the earlier version as well as several larger edits and changes. There will probably be some minor tweaks still to come (we've already found a couple of items that need attention, but, hey, it's 160 pages long!). In the meantime, this is now the official 'authorized' version for praying the Daily Offices. We're making these available at \$10.00 a copy for Friends who would like one. This price also includes postage! For those of you who will be making application as an Oblate, when your application is received and approved *The Breviary* and *The Rule* will be included as a part of your acceptance package. Even if you're not ready to move ahead as an Oblate but would still like to have this copy of *The Breviary*, don't hesitate to request one.



**OTHER QUICK NEWS...** The latest study guide for Richard Foster's "*Celebration of Discipline*" is just about ready for distribution to those who would like it. We're also nearing completion on a study guide for Dallas Willard's "*The Spirit of the Disciplines*." New books we're reviewing for potential study guides include Brother Benet Tvedten's "*How to Be a Monastic and Not Leave Your Day Job*," Dennis Okholm's "*Monk Habits for Everyday People*," and Adele Ahlberg's "*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*." Stay tuned!



# Saint Brendan's Has Donkeys!

In our last issue of the newsletter we introduced you to Saint Brendan's dairy goats: Annie, Brigid, and Chester. It didn't take too long, however, before God opened the door for us to take ownership of two beautiful donkeys, Chula and Doyle. Chula is 10 years old and is already trained to pull and drive. She even comes with a donkey cart (it can seat 2-3 people) so that we can take our dairy, eggs, and vegetables into town. The cart even comes with skids so that we can use it during the winter. Doyle is only 2 years old and was part of an abused donkey rescue. He'll soon be learning the basics as well. They'll both be helping us to cultivate and enlarge our garden and field, haul trees out of the woods, pull our cart through town, and make lots and lots of fertilizer!



**Top Right:** We brought the donkeys home in a borrowed horse trailer—thank you, Shari! **Middle Left:** One of our dogs, Elei, is trying to figure out who this new 'dog' is. **Middle Right:** M. Sue leads Doyle into his new stall in the barn. **Bottom Left:** Fr. Alan begins simple driving lessons with Chula (he's the one being taught!). **Bottom Middle:** Doyle decides that hugs from M. Sue are okay. **Bottom Right:** M. Sue gives a retreatant, Jeremy W., a ride on Chula.

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