

The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's
Volume IV, No. 1 — Winter 2009

PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRE NEWSLETTER

New Year—New Start

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

Welcome to 2009! Change is certainly in the air—globally, politically, economically, meteorologically, agriculturally, industrially, and with every other indicator you can possibly imagine—which means that we're also one step closer to the glorious return of Jesus Christ. Change is also in the air for Saint Brendan's.

In the last edition of **The Navigator** we took a deliberate look at what Oblate life would entail for members of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. We want to continue that discussion by addressing our shortfalls of the past year and our goals for the year to come; a sort of "State of the Fellowship" newsletter, if you will.

Sue takes us through a self-examination of where we've been and where we're going; no sugar-coating, just telling it the way it is. I've compiled the formal requirements for **Postulant** (a similar document will be generated for **Novice**, **Temporary Covenant Promise** and **Life Covenant Profession**). We're also including



a dual-purpose application which will help you to: (1) submit your annual renewal as a **Friend** of the Fellowship, or (2) to begin the process for those who wish to transition from **Friend** to **Oblate**. Finally, since **The Navigator** is sent to people both in and outside of the Fellowship, we are including our Annual Financial and Statistics Report only in the copies of those newsletters being sent to members of the Fellowship. You've been faithful to support us in so many ways; we want to make sure that we're equally accountable to you.

Everyone in the Fellowship needs to respond back to us with the enclosed form. No response, either

in your renewal as a **Friend** or your desire to proceed as an **Oblate**, will indicate to us that you wish to be released from membership. That, too, is okay. Our greatest prayer is that God draw to this ministry only those whom He is specifically wanting to expose, direct, and mature through this unique life of lay monasticism. It's not for everybody. But it is for some, and so we press on with the call to spiritual discipline, trusting in the grace of Christ to equip us even when we stumble. Will you continue to make this journey with us? ✕

IN THIS ISSUE OF "THE NAVIGATOR"

New Year—New Start	1
Saint Brendan's: Renewed and Revised	2
Postulant "How To"	4
Saint Brendan's Annual Financial and Statistics Report (for Fellowship members only)	5
Annual Renewal Commitment Form	7

SAINT BRENDAN'S: RENEWED AND REVISED

Sue Andraeas, Prioress

This will be a different kind of article. There will be no little story about Doyle. (He is fine.) No great theological analysis of Scripture. (Alan is fine too.) Instead, this edition will be more of a "State of the Fellowship Address:" an assessment of how we are doing – we meaning Fr. Alan and I, and we meaning all of us as a whole. I promise that you will not have to endure any scare tactics to motivate or discipline, nor will you see any begging for financial assistance. (Our finances are fine.)

But what you will see is an honest, in-your-face, hard hard look at:

- Who we are as a Fellowship of Friends and Oblates.
- Who we are called to be as Friends and Oblates who live out our calling in separate congregations and parishes.
- How we feel we have done and, more importantly,
- How we are being directed to proceed.

There are several reasons that we felt led to **really** look at what we are trying to accomplish:

1. Global financial instability and, more specifically, how it will impact our congregations. (This is more or less a prophetic vision that has been growing for several months now.)
2. Global political unrest.
3. National changes in politics and policies.
4. Dis-ease within the American Church (the dissolving and splintering of numerous communions and denominations, as well as congregations – even some near and dear to us).
5. The blurring of lines between religious and secular property that has led to legal disputes and foreclosures of churches, parishes, communions, and even personal property.
6. Increased awareness of the insecurity of our national (and global) food supply.
7. The dissolving of the last remaining Chapter from the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov (the parent monastic group from which Saint Brendan's emerged) as we seek to identify what our new 'structure' will look like. Thus we are left with no formal Saint Brendan's group that meets specifically for intercession and/or formation.

8. A greater national (and global) hostility toward Christian views, and a subtle but ever-increasing move (national and global) towards a unified governmental and financial World Order.

We have been praying and fasting, asking the Lord to show us three things: In light of all of this, **Why does Saint Brendan's exist? Why does it exist NOW? What does God require of us?**

While an answer to the first two questions has been slow in coming (but it is coming – in bits and pieces), the last question was answered in 3 parts:

1. Intentional faith – a constant look toward a Heavenly Kingdom, even while the earthly kingdoms around us shake. This heavenly focus then allows us to be the 'calm in the storm' for those who have been trained to keep their eyes focused on Jesus.
2. Intentional devotion – a concerted effort to become aware that Christ is with us always and that it is up to us to abide in Him as He abides in us.
3. Intentional relationships with each other that flow from our relationship (abiding in) with Jesus.

Alan and I have not been very good at any of these lately. Between family issues, legal issues, and a major 'stepping up' of ministry at our church – not to mention the extra load of farm work now that there's livestock to feed (and water to carry in frigid weather) and the work we do with the local schools – we've adopted a 'status quo' mentality where our leadership of Saint Brendan's is concerned. In other words, our contribution toward Saint Brendan's – spiritual direction for our Oblates – has taken a back seat. We are sorry. We have let everyone's membership lapse because we have not taken the time to send out notices for renewal. We are sorry.

We need to be more accountable on three levels: with God most importantly, with you secondly, and

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@pwless.net
www.saintbrendans-online.org**

with making sure that we are truly a ministry so that there is no question about our not-for-profit status and our ability to receive and acknowledge your tax-deductible donations. (There is an increasing chokehold on such things as the government scrutinizes any faith-based organization, and we want to be above board. We have become aware of too many situations where tax laws, or the abuse of tax laws, has brought a devastating blow to both individuals and congregations. We want to avoid such battles as best we can!)

THE INITIAL REMEDY

Alan and I have prayerfully decided upon a few intentions to keep us more accountable. We wish to make them known to you so that YOU can help us be better leaders!

1. Each edition of The Navigator takes 3 full work days to publish – for both of us. It requires writing, editing, incorporating art and photos, layout, publishing, proofing, printing, assembly, labeling, and mailing. Each issue costs about \$75.00 to publish. To do this on a monthly basis is impractical without help. **WE INTEND** to publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis. **WE ASK YOU** for input as to what kind of articles you would like to see and what kind of information, pictures, and teaching would assist you in your spiritual formation.

2. The transition to Oblate life in Saint Brendan's for the former members of the Society of St. Seraphim needs to be a balance between their former stage of formation within the Society (i.e. Postulant, Novice, Life Vow) and an assessment of their current formation (i.e. prayer life, devotional life, ministry and outreach). **WE INTEND** to solidify a means of evaluation that will incorporate a reading list, study guides, questions to assess formation (intentional life of prayer and devotion). **WE ASK YOU** to continue letting us know what books/authors have been beneficial to you. **WE INTEND** to 'grandfather in' former members of the Society at the level they had attained at that time. **WE ASK YOU** to complete the readings (or demonstrate an understanding of the material they contain if you have already read them) so that there is no imbalance or gap in your formation. **WE INTEND** to accept any former Life Vow member of the Society of St. Seraphim, WHO HAS ALSO made at least one retreat to Saint Brendan's, allowing him or her to make provisional (1-3 years) promises over the phone. (The length will be de-

termined on an individual basis.) **WE ASK YOU** to understand that our goal is NOT to inflate our 'numbers' but to do what is necessary for you to continue your intentional walk of faith without compromising or negating any of your previous formation.

3. None of us are vocational monastics or habited religious – not one of us! To assume that we have the same calling as monks and nuns not only de-values the sacrificial life of those who have answered such a high calling but it also leads to a lofty image of ourselves that we need to avoid. **WE INTEND** to prayerfully scrutinize any terms that may lead to confusion by any of our number or by anyone looking at us 'from the outside.' These would include such terms as *Abbot, Prior, Prioress, Mother, Priory House, Covenant Life Profession* and others. **WE ASK YOU** to pray with us for alternate terms as well as to retain those terms that truly DO fit our calling and lifestyle!

We also ask that you:

- Consider what God is calling YOU to be and to do as far as your relationship with Saint Brendan's is concerned. Keep in mind that "Friend" is not a sub-standard level. HOWEVER if you are called to a life of lay monasticism, this does not provide enough accountability. You must prayerfully consider the move to Oblate life.
- Seek God's will for your contribution of labor through prayer and service – both to Saint Brendan's and to your local parish or congregation. Assist us in assembling a means to begin local grassroots groups of individuals (Friends, Oblates and others) to experiment with how a Saint Brendan's group might function in your area. It could be intercessory prayer, Bible Study, book reviews (using the study guides as a platform for group discussion), community outreach and mission – or any combination of these. What would such a group be called in your local area? *Order of Saint Brendan's? The Navigators? Green Martyrs?* Could there be an application for youth or younger children, exposing the next generation to intentional life of discipleship?

The media is constantly telling us that our political, corporate and economic world is about to change. The Bible tells us that these changes are not going to make it easy to be a Christian. These changes - which must come in order to pave the way for the emergence of the antichrist – will test, strengthen

and purify God's people. And we NEED to be tested, strengthened and purified! We feel that Saint Brendan's is one of the small tools God will use to accomplish this task. We do not have any grandiose schemes for national exposure or gigantic outreach. (We don't have time for that!) We just want to be faithful with what God has given us: a vision for providing food – physical and spiritual – for those around us; for training the saints whom God has placed in our number (that's YOU); and developing a means for secular monastic life that calls for obedience, fidelity, and simplicity – all lived out in JOY.

Rejoice!
Sue Andraeas

POSTULANT “HOW TO”

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

Last month's newsletter provided a good overview of what **Oblate** life was all about. Now we want to get more specific. Below is a working outline of the requirements, obligations, and objectives for those entering as a **Postulant** in the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. Since this is the natural starting place for most of the Friends of Saint Brendan's, we're only publishing this level in the current newsletter. For a good idea of what will be required at the **Novice** and **Promise/Profession** levels, please refer to the “**Goals and Expectations**” chart published in **The Navigator**, Volume II, No. 3 — Summer 2007, or ask us to send you one. Any other questions, please don't hesitate to contact us.

REQUIREMENTS FOR APPLICATION AND ACCEPTANCE:

- Time spent as a FRIEND of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's
- Demonstration of interest in a life of Oblation through:
 - communication/correspondence
 - financial support (i.e., application/renewal fees)
 - testing and trying initial elements of lay monasticism
- Completion of Application for Postulant to include:
 - essay questions
 - clergy support/approval
 - application fee
 - Prayer/discernment of Prior/Prioress

MATERIALS PRESENTED TO POSTULANT UPON ACCEPTANCE:

- *The Breviary*
- *Rule of Life*

- Required reading list and study guides (to work through at your own pace)

OBLIGATIONS OF POSTULANT:

- Initial practice of lay monasticism through:
 - use of The Breviary (e.g., Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer)
 - development of intentional prayer life
 - structured pattern of Scripture reading
- Study of the Rule of Life
- Reading of three assigned texts (two texts will have study guides that must be completed and returned; one text will require writing and returning a two-page book review)
- Communication with Priory House by phone once a quarter (must have communicated with the Priory House at least four times prior to consideration for advancement)
- Service to local congregation and community
- Support of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's (e.g., annual Oblate Renewal Fee, special gifts, hands-on help during visits, etc.) and of one's local congregation

OBJECTIVES FOR THE POSTULANT:

- To be teachable (i.e., receive advice from a Spiritual Director)
- To develop a relationship with the Prior and Prioress
- To be an offering to one's local congregation
- To be a servant to one's local community
- To begin an understanding and practice of monastic spirituality through:
 - cultivating awareness of being in the constant presence of Christ
 - study
 - praying Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer (other elements of the Daily Offices can be prayed, but this is a minimum)
 - initial practice of the spiritual disciplines
 - Service to one's local congregation and community

Saint Brendan's Annual Financial and Statistics Report

EXPENSES – 2008

Tithes paid to Bishop	1,126.00
Mandatory Travel Expenses	772.10
State of ME Corporation Registration	150.00
Holy Trinity Chapel Expense	228.37
Ministry Vehicle: Registration/Insurance	553.30
Ministry Vehicle: Repair	568.47
Ministry Vehicle: gas*	194.61
Administration: Postage	114.96
Administration: Printing Breviary/Rule	372.97
Administration: Copier/Printer supplies	78.40
Animals: purchase	633.60
Animals: supplies	502.04
Animals: vet	156.09
Animals: feed/hay	1,791.48
Property: Building Supplies	253.90
Property: Storage Buildings	1,981.52
Property: lumber	1,075.00
Property: Driveway Resurfacing	75.00
Library	240.37
Frumpy Monk: supplies and shipping	401.78
Misc. Hospitality	98.24
Misc.	280.00
Charitable giving**	300.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	11,948.20
2008 Retreatant Days***	100

- * for transporting retreatants
 ** not including eggs, produce, food, clothing, meals, and retreatant expenses.
 *** **I have taken the number of retreatants who have visited, and multiplied that total by the number of days they were here. (Example: a family of 3 here for 2 days would equal '6')**

INCOME - 2008

Tithes received (3 contributors)	4,650.00
Non-designated gifts	7,598.50
Chapel Construction Fund	250.00
Breviary Donation	35.00
Chicken Fund Donation	74.00
Egg Sales	340.00
Prayer Rope Sales*	160.00
Bank Dividends	20.59
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS	13,128.09

* \$358.00 still outstanding (all proceeds from prayer rope sales are designated for the Chapel Fund)

PLEASE NOTE:

You will notice from the list of expenses that several things are missing. For example:
 mortgage/escrow
 utilities
 property insurance/taxes
 salaries
 benefits/medical insurance

That is because Saint Brendan's covers none of those expenses. Nor do we draw any stipend or financial benefit for operating the ministry. Instead, we cover the cost of at least half of all building materials, supplies, animal feeds and hay, animal vet bills, garden supplies, and most of the gas, food, and other supplies used when retreatants are here. This is not to boast nor is it to coax you for additional funds. We mention this in order to demonstrate how God has blessed Saint Brendan's in such a way that its Friends and Oblates have not had to carry the cost of maintaining the Retreat Center or its outreach ministry. However, because of this, we ask that you continue to be (or begin to be) diligent in your prayers for the support, strength, and able hands we need in order to continue God's work in this place. Also, please DO ask Him if He wishes you to directly contribute financially or otherwise.
THANK YOU!

MONASTIC FELLOWSHIP OF SAINT BRENDAN'S Annual Renewal Commitment Form

PLEASE RETURN NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 28, 2009

This is your Annual Renewal Commitment to the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's.
Please complete/update your contact information. PLEASE PRINT.

First Name: _____ M.I. _____ Last Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home/Cell Phone: _____ Email: _____

Marital Status: Single () Married () Divorced () Widowed () Other () _____

If married, does your spouse fully support your desire to continue in fellowship with Saint Brendan's?
Yes () No ()

If no, please briefly describe the circumstances: _____

Name of your local church or fellowship: _____

Is your church an independent congregation? Yes () No ()

If no, with what denomination or communion is your congregation affiliated? _____

() I wish to renew my commitment as a FRIEND of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. My obligations are voluntary. However, I will share what I learn about lay monasticism with others in my local congregation and support the work of my church through a life of prayer, service, and intentional holiness. **Enclosed is my annual renewal fee of \$15.00 made payable to "Saint Brendan's."**

() I am a former OBLATE of the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov and would like to be received as an OBLATE of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. My former level in the Society was () Postulant, () Novice, () Life Vow. Please contact me concerning my placement as an OBLATE in the Fellowship. **I will send no application fee at this time; however, it will be required as a part of the Oblate Application when I receive it.**

() I was not a former member of the Society of St. Seraphim of Sarov. I wish to be received as an OBLATE of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. Please send me the application for POSTULANT. **I will send no application fee at this time; however, it will be required as a part of the Oblate Application when I receive it.**

() Please remove me from the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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

For more information, contact us by phone at 207-726-5129 or e-mail at saintbrendans@pwless.net

The Navigator

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