

# The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
Volume V, No. 3 — Summer 2010

## What It's All About:

### The Vision and Ministry of Saint Brendan's

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

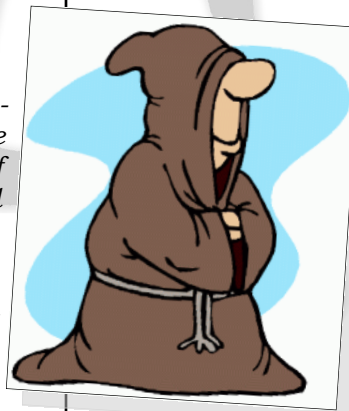
*"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"*  
Matthew 25:40

This has been a year of focusing and refocusing on our reason for being. Not for fear that Saint Brendan's has come to an end, but whether or not we are being faithful to the Holy Spirit's original call and our obedience to that call.

Our 'official' guidance comes from Saint Brendan's Articles of Incorporation with the State of Maine. Here we find our three-fold mission statement:

*To this end, the corporation shall:*

- 1. Serve as a monastic mission in the Benedictine and Celtic Christian traditions of the larger Church of Jesus Christ as a place of retreat, worship, religious instruction, and spiritual renewal/direction;*
- 2. Serve as a community of those individuals and/or families making solemn professions of religious, monastic obedience, both at Saint Brendan's or as Oblates-at-large;*
- 3. Serve the surrounding local communities of Washington County (e.g., Dennysville, Edmunds, Pembroke, Perry, Whiting, Lubec, etc.) as a benevolent extension of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Benedictine tradition.*



If our corporate documentation contains the official mission statement, then the Saint Brendan's website contains our vision statement. It says in part:

*Saint Brendan's is also keenly aware of the many recent global developments (e.g., in scientific advances, geo-politics, environmental instability, terrorism, economic failures, etc.) which are indicators of the soon return of Jesus Christ. As such, Saint Brendan's is striving to be a testing and training grounds for how to live when our society must, by necessity, return to the practices and disciplines of a "peasant" society; living without the readily available resources of electricity or utilities, grocery stores (or other means of large-scale food distribution), fuel and transportation, medical care, and our many other familiar conveniences. This is not an alarmist posture, but one of responsible Church accountability for its members and the people it is privileged to serve. As time and resources permit, we are learning how to do more the "old fashioned" way and are examining such issues as alternative energy, heirloom food production and storage, animal husbandry, herbal medicinals, and the like.*

These two documents become the right hand and  
*(Continued on page 2)*

## IN THIS ISSUE OF "THE NAVIGATOR"

What It's all About: The Vision and Ministry of Saint Brendan's	1
The Ground Floor	3
Monastic Muse	3
The Priory House: Something's Always Going On	5
The Final Word — St. Irenaeus	7

left hand of this ministry; the inhale and the exhale; the right step and left step as we journey toward the Heavenly Jerusalem and to our Lord who

consumerism and technology; learning that community is not the same thing as proximity (you might share a zero lot line with your neighbor but not live in community with him by sharing a common need and hope); developing a personal participation in the bounty of the earth (agriculture, aquaculture, and animal husbandry) apart from scientific manipulations, and learning how to share what we have with others – and using only what is needful – in order that we may all have enough.

**“...can the Church be expected to fulfill its mission to the world when it is just as dependent on the world as everybody else?”**

dwells there in ineffable light. However, as I mentioned in the previous newsletter, we want to make sure that you clearly understand the goals and vision of Saint Brendan’s so that you can undertake your part in this monastic ministry.

It all begins, particularly for our Oblates, with realizing that even though you are not ‘here’ you are nevertheless an extension of Saint Brendan’s – you are a monastery in miniature! What does that mean?

It certainly involves being faithful to the ‘higher’ pursuits of monastic spirituality (prayer, study, meditation, etc.), but it also includes the hands-on aspect of consecrated life – the Benedictine and Celtic elements of service, simplicity, and hospitality. The Holy Spirit drove this home for me today when our lectionary readings included the Gospel text where Jesus is addressing the sheep and the goats. Interestingly, both groups appear to be in a ‘spiritual’ relationship with Christ (the sheep and the goats equally acknowledge Him and address Him as Lord) but only the sheep are counted as a part of those who enter the kingdom. Why? Because their righteousness was fleshed out in their service to those around them (Matthew 24:31-46). This is not a call to debate the age-old difference between works and faith, but it is a reminder that intentional faith is found in both our hearts *and* our hands.

Saint Brendan’s takes this one step further by emphasizing our labor through a simplicity that seeks to regain the virtues of ‘peasant life’ from a Christian perspective. This includes remembering how to do things by hand; reducing our dependence on

As social systems totter on the brink of failure, as technology delivers more promises than solutions, as the environment rebels against our greed and poor stewardship, as our food industry caters to our voracious cravings rather than our nutritional needs, as our financial institutions and trade markets rape the population of personal solvency, and as our culture conspires to eliminate a Christian worldview from its ethos we are certain that a life more devoted to God and less reliant on the world is the only life a mindful, intentional Christian can live. This life, surrendered to God and to the image of Christ in one another, is what Saint Brendan’s seeks to cultivate. And to that end, our labor here “on the farm” is a living experiment in this kind of Christian simplicity. We want to see if we have the capacity to minister to those around us when society (and the world) inevitably fails us.



Think about it: can the Church be expected to fulfill its mission to the world when it is just as dependent on the world as everybody else? Will we be able to clothe, feed, heal, teach, and deliver in a catastrophic environment if we’ve become complacent about spiritual warfare, or ignorant of the medicinal value of the

*(Continued on page 3)*

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'weeds' that grow in our own back yards, or pay landscapers to manicure acres of pristine grass rather than learning how to grow vegetables, or continue to refer the pressing needs of our congregants to social agencies – the very needs that Scripture commanded us fulfill in the name of Christ? We want Saint Brendan's to be a ministry where we not only grow in Christian maturity and monastic spirituality but also a ministry where we learn and practice how to become true assets to our communities. We want to be able to fulfill the challenge of faith found in James 2:16, **"If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing**



**about his physical needs, what good is it."**

We're not looking to build a group of like-minded 'granola heads' or tree huggers; there are other alternative communities where you can accomplish that. Rather, our hope and prayer is that you will begin to make those changes – large or small, spiritual and tangible, for yourself and for the benefit of those around you, for the sake and glory of Christ – that will transform you into a member of a community that seeks the heart of Jesus by serving the needs of Christ within each other while simultaneously growing in spiritual maturity and monastic discipline. That's Benedictine and Celtic spirituality. That's where Saint Brendan's is headed. ✠

## The Ground Floor

M. Sue Andraeas, Prioress

*"And Joshua said unto the people,  
 'Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord  
 will do wonders among you.'"  
 Joshua 3:5, KV*

In the last newsletter I wrote about the foundation – the foundation of our house (and the repairs necessary to make sure future renovations are built on solid ground) and the spiritual foundation that the Lord is building under the Fellowship of Saint Brendan's (in our documents and in our collective and individual lives). Monastic groups that have existed for centuries have the advantage of past experiences of success and failure upon which to base their decisions for the present. July 10<sup>th</sup> of this year was only the fifth anniversary of our Fellowship. We are still infants, monastically speaking! As you see from Fr. Alan's article, however, the foundation is laid in the two-fold documents of our Articles of Incorporation and website vision statement. So where do we go next?

As Alan and I prayed Morning Prayer today, we were both inspired by the lectionary readings and decided to use them as a springboard for this newsletter. He read the Gospel and that is what the Spirit used to speak to him. I read the story of Joshua preparing the Israelites to leave the desert and enter the Promised Land – and that's what the Spirit used to guide this article. (I already knew the direction my thoughts were taking, but I didn't know how best to describe it to you. I'm glad God did!)

This is a familiar story. After 40 years of traipsing around the desert the Israelites are finally at a place – spiritually as well as geographically – to move into the place the Lord had promised would be theirs. Remember, now, that these folks were not the ones who left Egypt. They were a whole new generation who knew nothing of living in Goshen. They were 'welfare recipients', so to speak. They only knew the homelessness of transitory life in the desert, of God leading them from place to place by fire and cloud. They had no natural source of food, only the manna that fell

## MONASTIC MUSE

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

**"Abstinence from sins is not sufficient for perfection,  
 unless a person also assumes the work of righteousness—  
 activity in doing good."**

— Clement of Alexandria (c. 195 AD)



gather their spiritual wits about them because what they are about to experience is going to require that they be close to God – if they want to come out of it alive. Why? The answer is found in the previous verse: **“for ye have not passed this way heretofore”** (Joshua 3:4b, KJV).

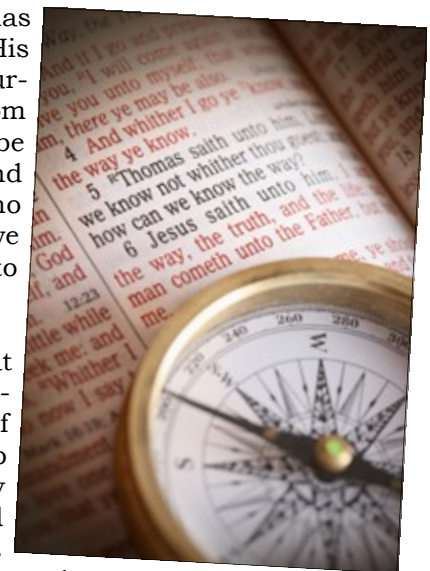
nearly every day – never too little and never too much. The generation that had seen the miraculous signs performed in Egypt was gone. These folks at the Jordan were not the ones who saw the Red Sea part for their escape and then come crashing down to drown all their enemies. They were only babes the night of the big bonfire that ‘produced’ the golden calf while Moses was meeting with God. Those were the experiences of their parents’ day. And while their parents had been instructed to speak of these things all the time and to never forget them (Deuteronomy 6), they... forgot. Now Joshua stands with this bunch of vagabonds at the Jordan River, ready to embark on a new adventure, one with less transition and more constancy and permanence. They are heading into unknown land, entering into combat with foes they do not know, inhabiting cities they cannot name. From now on they will always wake up in the same place and beside the same people with their same irritating habits day after day. (A life with lots of variety, transitions, and short-term dealings with people is often easier than one where there is constant repetition. Perhaps that’s because a life of ‘constant sameness’ requires discipline and an inner strength to resist giving in to the boredom of tedium and the annoyance of familiarity... Hmmm – sounds like a monastic training!)

Joshua’s command for the people was that they *sanctify* themselves. The Hebrew word used is *quadash*, a primitive word meaning to make clean, to set apart, purify, sanctify, to be whole. In other words, Joshua was telling his folks to pull themselves together, remember who they are, where they came from, and to Whom they belong; and to

**“Monasticism is, at its roots, an intentional process of sanctification so that we are ready to follow God where He leads us – especially into the unknown.”**

If you pay even the slightest bit of attention to the news, if you have even the remotest understanding of national and international events, you know that we are, metaphorically speaking, standing at the edge of the Jordan once again. The world has never seen an international financial ‘situation’ like the one existing today. There have never been storms, potential solar disturbances, and other ‘natural disasters’ like the one ones our world is experiencing today. Political instability, the deterioration of rights for American Christians, massive environmental issues – all new territory for us! And what is the solution? God calls us – as He has always called His people – to set ourselves apart from worldliness; to be pure and whole; and to remember who we are, where we came from, and to Whom we belong.

Monasticism is, at its roots, an intentional process of sanctification so that we are ready to follow God where He leads us – especially into the unknown. There were loads of blessings hidden in that mysterious never-before-experienced Promised Land. There were enemies to vanquish, but they were enemies that God would take care of if He was trusted and consulted. He will do the same for us. He may not make these political, environmental, and financial ‘enemies’ disappear, but He *will* protect and provide for those who sanctify themselves and follow Him.



The Israelites were told not to fear the future; just follow the Ark of the Covenant and all would be well. We are told the same. Don’t fear. Follow our ‘living Ark’ – our Savior, Jesus Christ. The Ground Floor for us is this: nothing more; nothing less. ✕

## The Priory House: Something's Always Going On!



We welcomed four new kid goats to our herd this Spring. Pictured here is Izzy (Isabella), the first to be born.



The roof on the north side of the Priory House needed desperate attention. This crew of three, young Christian men was sent over as a gift from the church we serve. We purchased the materials, the church reimbursed the crew's time. We were blessed; what a fantastic job!



It's that time of year again! Over the past two weeks we put up over 350 bales of hay into the barn. Only 300 more to go and we'll be set until next June. Mother Sue is atop the hay bales stacked in front of the barn door, ready to be moved up into the loft.



Father Alan is running new water supply lines, drain lines, baseboard heating lines, and 220 volt (stove) electrical line as a part of the kitchen remodeling project.



As a part of Saint Brendan's outreach to the community and our desire to introduce people to 'peasant life', we were privileged to have the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes from the local grade school visit the farm for a fieldtrip. In this picture the children are being visited by the baby goats. Of course, it was a big hit when they watched the goats being bottle-fed. The children were also introduced to the donkeys, alpacas, chickens, turkeys, and honey bees. Based on their reaction, this will probably become an annual event!



This day was long in coming — shearing day for the alpacas! A wonderful Christian lady and her neighbor drove nearly four hours to get here and help us with the shearing. This is Shadrach on the floor; Mother Sue holds his head while Ricki removes the fiber. What's next? A spinning wheel!



The garden comes to life as we try our hand at permaculture. Pictured here is nasturtiums, Swiss chard, wild poppies, cilantro, and Jerusalem artichokes — a combination of perennials and annuals maintained without tilling or chemicals. Not seen here are the usual tomatoes, potatoes, corn, cabbage, beans, peas, cucumbers, squash, melons, onions, garlic, asparagus, etc.



The kitchen renovation included wiring, plumbing, and custom cabinetry. We're doing as much as possible ourselves. In fact, the first few cabinets were built by members of the fellowship, Clay and Dennis, during a visit several years ago. Thanks to their willingness to teach Fr. Alan, he was able to build the remaining cabinets and cupboards based on their design. A new gas range now replace the electric one pictured here.



We've added turkeys to our 'sustainability' plan. When fully grown, this particular breed will "dress out" (i.e., cleaned and ready for the oven) at between 35-50 lbs. Oh my!

What about all that goat milk? Mother Sue tried her hand at making (and braiding) fresh mozzarella cheese! (And, yes, this picture is in here sideways.)

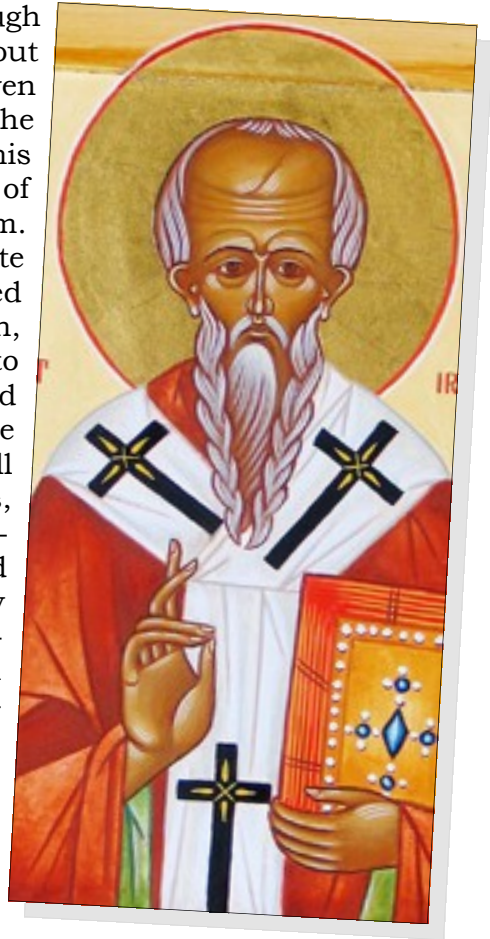


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**The Final Word:  
Saint Irenaeus (c. 180 AD)**

The Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, has received from the Apostles and their disciples this faith: We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them. And in one Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who became incarnate for our salvation. And in the Holy Spirit, who proclaimed through the prophets...the birth from a virgin, and the passion, and the resurrection from the dead, and the ascension into heaven in the flesh of the beloved Christ Jesus, our Lord. And we believe in His manifestation from heaven in the glory of the Father to gather all things into one, and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race — in order that to Christ Jesus, our Lord, God, Savior, and King, according to the will of the invisible Father, “every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess” Him. And we believe that He will execute just judgment towards all, so that He may send spiritual evils and the angels who transgressed and became apostates—together with the ungodly, and unrighteous, and wicked, and profane among men — into everlasting fire. And we believe that He will, in the exercise of His grace, confer immortality on the righteous, the holy, those who have kept His commandments, and those who have persevered in His love — some from the beginning and others from the time of their repentance. We believe He will surround them with everlasting glory.

*[St. Irenaeus wrote this ‘creed’ 145 years before the Nicene Creed and 210 years prior to St. Ambrose’s use of the term “Apostles’ Creed” in a document he wrote to Pope Siricius describing what the Church believed.]*



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**The Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan’s**

We’re so grateful for our Friends and Oblates,...and the many unofficial ‘friends’ who don’t appear on this list (our mailing list is much longer than this!). Please pray for one another. And be sure to let others know about Saint Brendan’s.

**FRIENDS:**

Dcn. Tom Abbott, FL  
George Bundock & Susan Ober, CT  
Zachary Carman, NY  
Leona Downer, MA  
Dick & Sue Fake, PA  
Barry Folland, ME  
Betty Glazener, TN  
Bill & Barbara Guenther, FL  
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Izelcheryesse Megahan, MA  
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