

# The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
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## A Book and Its Cover

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

*"In the same way,  
let your light shine before men,  
that they may see your good deeds  
and praise your Father in heaven."  
Matthew 5:16*

Someone once said that a saint is like a stained glass window – living his life in such a way that the radiance of Christ shines right through him. In this particular case you *can* tell a book by its cover. But is that something we need to consider for our own lives? After all, as contemporary Christians shouldn't we try to 'blend in' with our secular surroundings so that we can be better, non-threatening witnesses for Christ? I'm not so sure. Let me explain why.

My church communion, the United Anglican Church, held its quadrennial synod this past April in Manati, Puerto Rico. (Manati is home to the 'motherhouse' of our Caribbean and Latin American Franciscan mission, Hermanos Franciscanos de la Providencia, under the episcopal care of Bishop Jose Delgado.)

I've travelled to various church conferences for years, flying thousands of miles in the process. I've also made it a matter of personal conscience to wear my clerics whenever I travel. At first I could always count on seeing other clergy clearly identi-

fied by what they wore around their necks. Even more gratifying was seeing vowed religious—monks and nuns—wearing the habits of their orders as they would travel in pairs to various destinations. There was always the visible evidence of "God's People" at every airport or layover. And I could *always* count on finding a Bible tract left somewhere in an airport bathroom stall!

Over the years, however, these 'sightings' have become more and more rare until this trip when, unfortunately, I was the only person wearing clerics from Portland, ME, to San Juan, PR, coming and going (even at my layover airports in Charlotte and Philadelphia). I saw thousands of people in these airports and not a single clergy collar or monastic habit among them! Where did they go?!



More and more often, ordained clergy and the vowed religious are taking the liberty (and sometimes even encouraged) to enjoy casual travel so as not to create 'offense' among other travelers

or to draw undue attention to themselves. But that has never been my experience. In fact, it's usually quite the opposite. When I sit in my assigned row on an airplane I've seen Hustler magazines put away, I've heard inappropriate language cleaned up, I've seen trashy novels slipped back into carry-on luggage, and a whole host of equally altered actions.

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**"If you're wearing a yoke that truly and authentically links you to Christ, people will see it...and Him!"**

My clerics just don't produce changes in other passengers' moral behaviors, however. They also open the door for God's hand to work. For example, on this last trip I had to ask a question of an attendant at an airport information booth. The young lady – eastern, perhaps from India – asked if I was a priest. I said I was and she asked if I could pray for her. I asked what her need was. She told me and then thanked me as if she expected me to walk away (perhaps to add her request to my personal prayers later in the day...if I even cared to remember). Instead, I took her hand and began praying for her right on the spot. With tears in her eyes she squeezed my hands and wouldn't let go. Her thanks was profuse. As I walked away she turned to her fellow employee (who watched the whole episode unfold with huge, round eyes) and, with a big smile on her face, began to explain what just happened. The grace of Christ was in that moment of prayer...and as she 'witnessed' to her friend afterwards. She needed someone who looked like a Christian to pray for her. Was I the only one among the throng of travelers who passed by her information desk that day? How sad.

I returned to Portland four days later at 11:30 PM. It's almost a five hour drive from Portland to Dennysville, so I spent the night at a nearby Motel 6. I entered the lobby wearing my clerics and, again, the night clerk asked if I was a priest. Yes. "I just moved to the area from New Mexico. I haven't been to church in years but I'm looking for one around here. Where's yours?" "About another 250 miles northeast of here." Five minutes into the conversation, and after another request for prayer, I received a \$10.00 discount on my room rate plus a free WiFi password connection for my laptop!

Not everyone, of course, is in a position to wear a clergy collar or a monastic habit. But have we, as Christians in general, tried so hard to blend in with the rest of world that the very society within which we live can longer distinguish us between a child of God and a child of the world? In other words, is our generation bereft of stained glass



windows?

For centuries monastics were always identified by the habits of their religious houses or orders and, for men, by their distinctive hair cuts (i.e., tonsures). What should our clothing be today? What are the 'externals' that would let other people know we are the heirs of heaven? A prayer rope hanging from a belt loop? A prayer chaplet on our wrists? A cross or crucifix worn visibly around our necks? These are all good, especially when a growing number of believers are convinced that they need to sport as many tattoos, body piercings, stretched earlobes, spiked florescent hair styles, skintight and revealing articles of clothing, exposed boxer shorts, and a dizzying array of electronic consumer products as their unchurched, secular counterparts. But is there more? After all, a consecrated and spiritually disciplined life is more than simply what we wear.

Apart from putting on the "Whole Armor of God" (Ephesians 6:11-18), the Scriptures tell us that our Christian garments must also include compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5). Each one of these is its own word study – and I wish we had time and space to do that – but the condensed version is found in Jesus' own words when He tells us to "Take my yoke upon you..." (Matthew 11:29-30).

Friends, a yoke (and we see them in the old barns around here) is NOT an inconspicuous item! If you're wearing a yoke that truly and authentically links you to Christ, people will see it...and Him! When you wear it, His actions become yours. When He goes right you'll go right; when He goes left you'll go left; when He moves forward you'll move forward; and when He stops you'll stop. When He ministers to the need of someone around you, you'll be there; your hands will do the same

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## 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**

thing that His hands are doing and your mouth will speak the same words that His mouth is speaking. You can't wear a yoke and be or do otherwise. And isn't that exactly what He gave as His defense to the detractors that surrounded Him? Jesus said, "...even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father" (John 10:38). And even though we may not be miracle workers, these words are truly no different than what He said in Matthew 5:16, "In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."



Although it might be regrettable that clergy and other vowed religious have stopped wearing identi-

fiable clothing in public, the true failure is that the Church as a whole has stopped shining. The stained glass windows have grown dingy and many have had rocks thrown through them. The world doesn't know who we are any more and yet, as I recently experienced on my trip, they're desperately looking.

As a fellowship of Friends and Oblates, I pray we can begin to look at the things we do as opportunities to shine for Christ. I once heard an old Pentecostal preacher say, "You might be the only Bible that some people ever read." Do they see the yoke of Christ around your neck with Jesus standing next to you? Do they see your compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience? Do they see you wearing "garments of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10)? That is our high calling as lay monastics; an unmistakable way of life that lets the light of Christ shine through. ✕

## The End Is NOT the End

M. Sue Andraeas, Prioress

*"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."*

*2 Peter 3:10-13 (NIV)*

Jesus promised His disciples that, one day, heaven and earth will pass away (Mark 13:31). The prophets of the Old Testament had already explained this future time in some detail. Daniel's recorded vision (chapter 7) made him 'deeply troubled' in his thoughts. I've had a taste of those troubled thoughts lately, not just because Mr. Camping said Jesus is coming back, or because there have been fires and droughts, or economic and political strife on nearly every continent. But because, for all the warnings of the earth's final demise, we Christians are still, for the most part, not preparing for that day.

I'm not talking about fallout shelters or Y2K-like preparations, or trying to reduce your carbon foot-

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## 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...

*"You [God] have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.... Who will You send into my heart to inebriate it, so that I will forget my evil ways and embrace You, my only good?"*

— St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (c. 430 AD)

print. I'm talking about the preparation that Peter wrote about in his letter quoted above. Jesus is going to 'steal' His way back into history, like a thief, just like He did the first time. (Who would have expected that God would be born in a nowhere place like Bethlehem in a barn? Who would expect Jesus to return now just when baseball season is really picking up and the big summer sales are just about to begin?) Time marches on and no reappearance for over 2,000 years so... what are the chances of Him returning NOW? But Jesus said that heaven and earth will disappear and only His word – His Logos – will not pass away.

Look around you. All that you can see, hear, smell, taste, and feel is in the process of self-destructing. Not a very cheery thought. Biologists tell us that already more species of animals have become extinct than exist today. Our nation has recently experienced extreme floods, droughts, fires, pestilence and oil spills – nearly all simultaneously! Food shortages are already being reported across the globe. (Our own nation is mostly in denial since there is so much processed non-food still on our grocery store shelves, but have you been watching the price of wheat and fresh produce? The price of non-government subsidized food has skyrocketed.) The sun is acting 'funny' according to folks who study those things. And a comet is returning; Elenin's trajectory will bring it into our solar system in a way that will most likely alter our magnetic poles yet again. Read the plagues in John's Revelation and you will see bowls of wrath poured out – and the people still cursed God. Isn't the same true today?

Has our own nation's problems brought repentance? A cry for mercy? Even in the Church? Or... do we continue to believe that our woes are caused by global warming – a problem caused by big industry and people who drive too much? If we could just find a cure for cancer and a car that runs on something other than petroleum, all our problems would be solved, right? Wrong. Heaven and earth are destined to pass away – violently. Jesus called

these violent steps toward destruction 'sorrows' (KJV) or 'birth pains' (NIV) in Matthew 24:8.

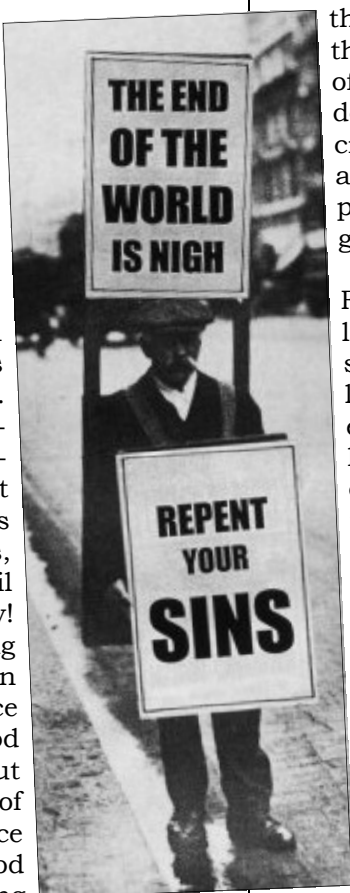
So Peter asks, "Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?" That's a good question! Notice he didn't say that we shouldn't pay attention to these things. We aren't supposed to be like the rest of the world, thinking that this is all a coincidence or something that scientists or politicians can remedy. It is not a coincidence and nobody can fix it. So, what kind of people ought we to be? Peter offers a few suggestions.

First of all, he shockingly says that we are to look forward to it! Why? I think Paul answers that question: because tribulation leads to patience, and patience to experience, and experience to hope – and hope keeps us from shame (Romans 5:3-5). In other words, tribulation keeps us on our toes so that when we stand before God, we are experienced, hopeful Christians rather than ones lulled into complacency by an 'easy' life. And while we are looking forward to the destruction of the earth, we are to 'live holy and godly lives.'

This word 'holy' (in the Greek *hagios*) is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *chag*. It means to 'gladly celebrate' or 'keep the feast.' It has hints at being giddy or dancing in celebration. Now please don't confuse this with the people that Paul wrote about, who were saying 'peace and safety' at the time of destruction (2 Thessalonians 5:1-2). No, this 'holy celebration' is the kind found at the altar; the response to Paul's words, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast!" (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). Holiness also means blameless and pure – not tainted by the ways of the world. We are to be godly, too. We are not to look like we fit into this world, but that we fit into heaven. We are to be breaking ties with a creation destined for destruction as we make ties with the indestructible Kingdom of God.

Paul offers one more hint to teach us how to accomplish this holy and godly living. He says we are to 'glory in tribulation' (Romans 5:3). This 'glory' is an odd mix of wishful prayer. Are we to be wishing for release from the tribulation? If that is true, Paul wouldn't go on to explain that tribulation leads to patience, experience,

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**“We are not to look like we fit into this world, but that we fit into heaven.”**

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hope, and a way to not embarrass ourselves when we stand before God. Perhaps this wishful prayer is more akin to Christ's prayer: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Prayer is not our ticket *out of* tribulation; it is our way *through* tribulation! Our prayers are often reduced to a 'wish list' or agenda of what we would like. But our prayers also need to be wishful thinking about what God wants - heaven's agenda for earth instead of earth's agenda for heaven. That is a hard lesson to learn, and impossible to understand when it comes from a church whose members dress like the world, talk like the world, eat like the world, play like the world, and are otherwise entrenched in the world. That makes holiness look like the world, and I don't think that's what Peter had in mind. Looking forward to the 'day of God' 'on earth as it is in heaven' means to look forward to the day when heaven and earth are destroyed and the new heaven and new earth are created. Holiness, then, is something other-worldly.

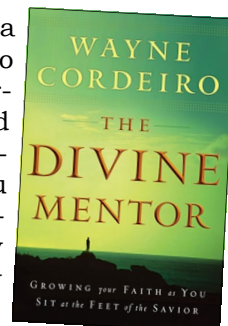
The Saint Brendan's Fellowship is a mixed group. We have a Life Vow member with more monastic experience than Alan and I put together. And we have a brand new member who just received her Breviary and Rule of Life last month. We spoke to both of them just recently and, surprisingly, they are saying nearly the same thing.

Dennis, our Life Vow member, has a chapel in his house. For him, holiness involves creating a 'special room' for meeting God. (Remember how people used to have a special room just for entertaining 'special company?' These rooms had the best furniture, and nobody was allowed in without good clothes and perfect manners. If only our churches had such honor for holy space! Some still do. Some houses, like Dennis', do too.) Laura, our brand new Friend of Saint Brendan's, wrote about her first month's experience with praying the Offices - set time of prayer throughout the day. She uses phrases like 'beautiful rhythm of keeping God first in my daily life' and 'learning

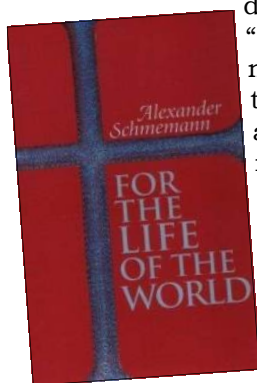
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#### ONE OF OUR MEMBERS WRITES...

Greetings fellow Friends and Oblates. I'm Jo Ann Munson from north central Florida; a fellow sojourner with you in practicing domestic monasticism. I wanted to share two books with you that I have found helpful. The first is *The Divine Mentor* by Wayne Cordeiro. He is a pastor and author who has established numerous churches in Hawaii and the Pacific Rim. His book leads the reader into an easy yet rich way to have daily devotions. He calls it the SOAP method. Each day find a **S**cripture in your reading that you believe God wants you to focus on. **O**bserve what the passage is about, **A**pply that message to your life, and close with **P**rayer. He believes that journaling what you study every day is important. This is his form of discipleship and training. The book is printed by Bethany House and you can order it from there or from his website "New Hope Oahu." Other types of study can be incorporated into his method. For example, I like word studies and do that as part of the Observation section. I encourage you to go to his website and see for yourself what it's all about.



The other book I've been reading is Alexander Schmemmann's *For Life of the World*, printed by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988. I pulled this off my shelf to have something to read while waiting at the doctor's office. It has really blessed me. Let me give you a quote that blew my socks off: "...what is to be...rediscovered...is the content of the daily services. For these are not meant to be 'prayer breaks,' periods of spiritual refreshment and 'peace of mind,' but truly liturgical acts, that is, acts performed on behalf of and for the whole community as an essential part of redeeming the mission of the Church." He goes on to remind the reader that as good as prayer breaks and refreshment are we are meeting with God and these are times to reorganize our lives around God. That helped the "Intentions" before each Office to make even greater sense to me. The author is an Orthodox priest; keep that in mind as he takes you through the Sunday worship service and explains what each part is about. I hope you can still find this book in print. You won't be disappointed.



I wanted to be brief, but if you're looking for some books to enrich your life you might want to try these. They have enriched mine. Let me know what you are reading. You can reach me at [ja\\_munson@bellsouth.net](mailto:ja_munson@bellsouth.net). God's richest blessings. Jo Ann

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to listen to the Holy Spirit.’ Both Laura and Dennis have been through some hard knocks lately, but both have found solace from the ‘destruction’ by breaking away from the world for a bit and connecting with God.

I must admit that Alan and I have not been so faithful in our keeping of the Offices this past month and we have felt the distance created between heaven and our little chunk of earth. What are our excuses for not keeping the offices? We have been too busy, too tired, too overwhelmed, too much farm, too little help, too many animals. (Aren’t we really good at ‘proving’ how busy we are? Do you have ‘good’ excuses for not spending time glorying in God? Do they sound trivial when you remember that all those excuses are connected to worldly things that will be destroyed at Christ’s return, and that you have denied yourself daily encounters with the peace and rest of the Eternal Kingdom to which you belong? It’s humbling to think of it that way – I know from personal experience. My earthly life

is no excuse for avoiding a connection with my eternal life – and the Savior who makes it possible!)

Harold Camping was wrong about the date, but he was not wrong about Christ’s return. Mankind



slips more and more into an insane frenzy for power, money, and worldly possessions. We as a race are slipping into the abyss that follows destruction. Only the Church, the true believers in Christ who hold the indestructible Logos in their hearts, can offer peace and life.

Those who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. But they will not know to call on that name unless they believe – unless they hear that there is a way out – unless someone tells them. That’s what Paul says (Romans 10:13-15). What should we tell them? “Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand!” ✠

## The Final Word: Saint Gregory of Nyssa (c. 394 AD)

Paul teaches us the power of Christ’s name when he calls Him the power and wisdom of God, our peace, the unapproachable light

where God dwells, our expiation and redemption, our great high priest, our paschal sacrifice, our propitiation. He declares Him to the radiance of God’s glory, the very pattern of His nature, the creator of all ages, our spiritual food and drink, the rock and the water, the bedrock of our faith, the cornerstone, the visible image of the invisible God.



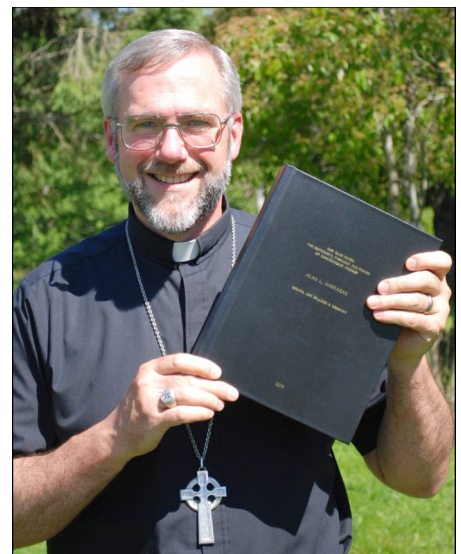
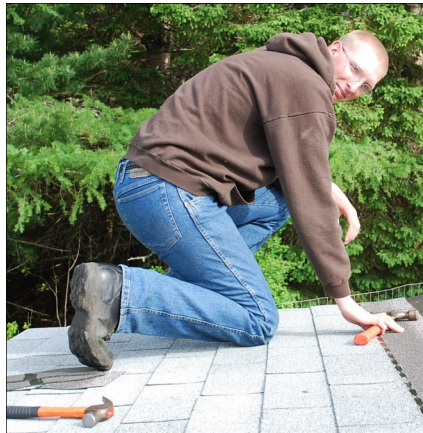
He goes on to speak of Him as the might God; the head of His body, the Church; the firstborn of the new creation; the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep; the firstborn of the dead; the eldest of many children. He tells us that Christ is the mediator between and mankind; the only begotten Son crowned with glory and honor; the Lord of glory; the beginning of all things; the king of justice and of peace; the king of the whole universe, ruling a realm that has no limits.

Paul calls Christ by many other titles too numerous to recall here. Their cumulative force will give some conception of the marvelous content of the name “Christ,” revealing to us His inexpressible majesty, insofar as our minds and thoughts can comprehend it.

Since, by the goodness of God, we who are call “Christians” have been granted the honor of sharing this name, the greatest, the highest, the most sublime of all names, it follows that each of the titles that express its meaning should be clearly reflected in us. If we are not to lie when we call ourselves “Christians,” we must bear witness to it by our way of living.

*Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) was a bishop in what is now modern-day Turkey. He was the younger brother of Basil the Great and a good friend of Gregory Nazianzus. His importance has long been recognized in the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Catholic, and Roman Catholic branches of Christianity. Gregory wrote about the nature of the Trinity, the infinity of God, and the doctrine of salvation.*

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



**TOP LEFT:** Saint Brendan's hosted two grade school field trips in June; M. Sue stands with the Kindergarten/Pre-K class from Edmonds. **TOP MIDDLE:** Our son, Zachary, home on several weeks of leave from the Coast Guard, helps with a roofing project on a new turkey shelter. **TOP RIGHT:** A 7th grade boy from the Wesley grade school holds Olaf, one of our new kid goats. **MIDDLE LEFT:** Our latest experiment: a 'chicken tractor' for 'controlled, free-range' pullets (young chickens). **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Fr. Alan's doctoral dissertation was finally accepted and approved; he holds the 427-page bound copy of his dissertation. Congratulations, Rev. Dr. Andraeas! **BOTTOM LEFT:** children from the Wesley school learn how to make felt from alpaca fiber. **BOTTOM MIDDLE:** Where did the felting fiber come from? Our newly shorn alpacas! Shadrach is sporting his new summer haircut. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Saint Brendan's added an incubator to its equipment inventory. This is the first of our turkey poults being hatched out.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Saint Brendan's Monastic Retreat Community  
turned six years old on July 10th, 2011.  
May Jesus Christ be praised!

