

The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's
Volume VIII, No. 4 — Fall 2012

Home Again:

Saint Brendan's Under New Cover

Fr. Alan L. Andraeas, Prior

*Lord, you have assigned me my portion
and my cup; you have made my lot secure.
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant
places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.
Psalm 16:5-6*

Saint Brendan's is a unique ministry. It's part parish community. It's part monastery. It's part chapel. It's part retreat house. It's part homestead. It's part counseling center. It's part oblate formation. It's part religious society. Like a patchwork quilt, it's little bits and pieces of all those things. What's more, Saint Brendan's is also an ecumenical or inter-denominational ministry. That means our Friends, Oblates, partners in ministry, financial supporters, farm helpers, and chapel attendees range in their Christian expression from Pentecostal to Roman Catholic and from Baptist to Greek Orthodox. In fact, it's a fabulous place to experience the reality of Christ's prayer for unity in the Church (John 17:20-23).

While this kind of ministry comes with some wonderful blessings and opportunities—especially in reaching across denominational lines—it also calls us to a place of deep accountability. We cannot undertake this kind of labor as an independent ministry. Just as all of you have a 'home' with a particular

church, denomination, or communion, we also require the safety and cover of a spiritual 'roof' over our heads; we need to 'answer' to somebody.

As God has been forming, shaping, and leading Saint Brendan's over the past seven years we've been blessed under the care of several parent church bodies; each one a critical part of our own growth and maturity; and each one providing us a safe harbor at just the right time. And now, "for such a time as this," we have entered a relationship with a communion that we believe will be our home for years and years to come.

While this process has been quietly taking place in the background—nothing about Saint Brendan's has or will change—it began last April with our initial inquiry to the Missionary Diocese of All Saints (MDAS). We wanted to see if they would be a good 'fit' for our particular work and call. We sent them everything! Our articles of incorporation, our Breviary, our Rule of Life, our order of worship, every newsletter we ever printed, flyers, brochures, links to our website, copies of our formation study guides, service rubrics for receiving and advancing members of the fellowship, samples of our correspondence. Everything! And we asked lots of questions. And they asked lots of questions about us. We also downloaded everything they had and studied

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what their expectations were for clergy and religious societies within the communion. Many emails, phone calls, and a lengthy application process later, Mother Sue, myself, and the ministry of Saint Brendan's was administratively received under the cover of the MDAS with Bishop Richard Lipka serving as our "Bishop Visitor"



(in some traditions, Bishop Protector). Why is this important?

First, a little about the MDAS. The MDAS is one of 24 dioceses or jurisdictions under the 'umbrella' of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA).

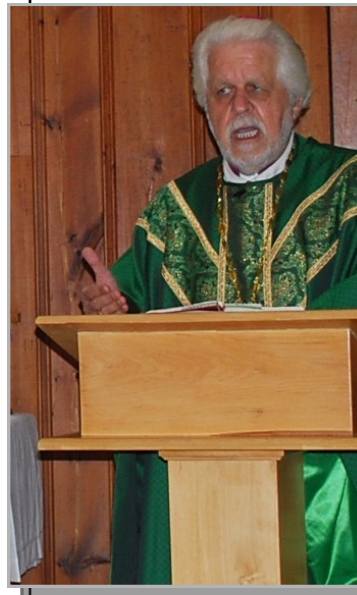
The ACNA was formed just several years ago as a biblical, sacramental, evangelical, and conservative Anglican Province comprised of those godly dioceses, churches, clergy, and laity that could no longer find a home in the increasingly heretical Episcopal tradition. At the same time many of these people and churches also held memberships in other Anglican organizations



which sought to champion solid tradition, biblical integrity, and an unwavering presentation of the Gospel. One of those organizations was called Forward in Faith, an unabashedly evangelical, traditional (with particular regard for a male-only priesthood),

and Spirit-filled Anglican renewal group that had its roots in England. Its American counterpart was called Forward in Faith/North America (FiFNA). Because of its clearly articulated traditional stance and Charismatic empowering, those congregations that held membership in FiFNA were moved by the Holy Spirit to join together into a new and unique diocese, the Missionary Diocese of All Saints. Because these churches were scattered across the United States, the MDAS was given the unique status within the ACNA of being a "non-geographic" diocese. Whereas most dioceses cover a certain region or area (and churches within that area are a part of the diocese), the MDAS is, instead, a diocese of those churches that are of like mind and practice regardless of their location. Since Mother Sue and I are evangelical, conservative, traditional, charismatic, liturgical, and sacramental, you can see how the MDAS was a perfect 'fit.'

Well, belonging on paper is nice, but having a formal reception is even better. On Sunday, September 26th, Bishop Richard Lipka—the Suffragan (Auxiliary or Assisting) Bishop to the Diocesan Bishop, Bishop William Ilgenfritz—visited Saint Brendan's and, during the worship service where he preached and served as Chief Celebrant



Bishop Lipka preaching at Holy Trinity Chapel during his visit to Saint Brendan's.

of the Eucharist, he officially received the ministry of our Monastic Fellowship into the MDAS.

It's good to have a home. And it's good to have a 'Papa' who can speak into our lives and ministry, who will call us to accountability, who will challenge us with new ideas, who will reprimand us when we step out of line, who will encourage us when we feel weary, and who will hear our confession when we have grieved the Holy Spirit. We are blessed and we know we are loved and will be cared for. Again, nothing will change for you—we will continue to serve the Lord as an

inter-denominational lay monastic ministry—except for the knowledge that your Father Prior and Mother Prioress are themselves under the cover and blessing of godly authority.

Please take the opportunity to look at these various websites so that you know more about our new home. And please keep 'our' leadership in your prayers. ✠

Missionary Diocese of All Saints

www.themdass.org

Anglican Church in North America

www.acna.org

Forward in Faith North America

www.fifna.org

"Again, nothing will change for you...except for the knowledge that your Father Prior and Mother Prioress are themselves under the cover and blessing of godly authority."

Come Rain or Shine

Mother Sue Andraeas

For it was fitting that he [God], for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation [Jesus] perfect through suffering.
Hebrews 2:10 (ESV)

If you're tired of farm stories you may either want to jump to the spiritual application of this article, or just skip it completely. But it has been a very farm-intensive week here, so all of life gets run through the 'farm filter.' I wasn't even sure there'd be a newsletter this month!

Alan has been in Virginia at Liberty University since last Sunday. It's Saturday, 6 days later. In his absence, and along with attending the funeral of a dear friend, and the grieving that comes with such a loss, I have had to deal with every species of critter here demonstrating how superior they are to our fences. We have had days and days and DAYS of rain, and our solar-powered fences have not seen sun so they're not working. Every animal here knows it and has proven it.



I spent yesterday, in the cold wind and driving rain, rebuilding a donkey fence by first dismantling other fences, pulling them out of overgrown grass and sod and saplings, and then rebuilding at least a small area for our donkeys, Chula and Doyle, to be in. Doyle has been out of his fence 4 of the 6 days. Yesterday alone, he was out 6 times! (To his credit, he comes when he's called, he never leaves the property—except to help the neighbors fix their truck one night—and he even showed me where he was getting out! Good boy!!) But it was a very long day for me. I'd go outside, work for an hour or so, come back in soaked to the bone, swap those clothes for the ones IN the dryer because they

were what I had on last time I was soaked to the bone. (Thank God for a dryer—I would have run out of sweatshirts!)

It took 12 hours to rebuild the donkey fence—in between feeding 50+ chickens/turkeys, milking and feeding goats, begin-

ning the process of breeding the goats for next year's milk. (Ok. That was mostly self-defense. It was much easier to focus on the donkey fence when

JOIN US IN PRAYER. Please help us pray through several needs and concerns that we have at the Priory House. **(1) Permanent perimeter fencing.** We need to revamp our fencing to ensure the safety of the animals. Much of our fencing is temporary; permanent fencing would be a valuable asset. Cost will run approximately \$2.00 per foot. **(2) Holy Trinity Chapel.** We're beginning to prepare the ground where the new chapel will be built. Next is the foundation work. Pray for favor and finances so that the project does not get put on hold. **(4) Work from home.** We're having a small certified kitchen added to the back of the Priory House so that we can sell the things we make. Help us pray to find/afford the proper equipment (stainless steel counters, sinks, shelving/racks, etc.).

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...

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world—supernatural and eternal."

— C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, "hope"

the doe-in-heat and the buck were in the same pen. Babies arrive Mar 13. Mark your calendar, folks! ☺) Dogs needed to be taken care of, visitors were here overnight (a welcome break! THANKS DICK AND SUE!), emails to answer, particularly from Alan who was having his own version of a difficult week. You get the picture. It was not the kind of week where there's nothing to do, and yesterday was downright crazy.

In the middle of all of that, I had several requests from people who wanted to visit. Some just wanted to come and rest and visit, or chat while buying milk and eggs. Some wanted to learn the gardening techniques we use. Some wanted to try their hand at milking a goat. Some wanted to see what raw goat yogurt tastes like, and if it helps with health issues like the experts claim it will. They all wanted to *experience* farming in one way or another or at least reap the benefits of our labor and, on any other day, I would have been ecstatic to think that people are interested in 'returning to Eden.' (Adam was the original 'garden guy' wasn't he? The history of our faith begins with earthly soil and ends on heavenly soil where there are trees, tended this time by God Himself, growing by streams of living water! See Revelation 22:2.)

While I tried to be nice as I explained that there would be no 'farm experience' this week, what I *wanted* to say was, 'if you want to experience farming, come over and chase animals in the dark with a flashlight through puddles and trees with thorns. Fix fences in the rain where the mud is so deep it sucks the boots right off your feet and you stomp in the cold mud in your socks—and have to put all that mud back in your boot. Milk a goat when your hands are swollen and bleeding from being frozen and shredded while mending fences the day before! Try to juggle grief over the earthly loss of a friend with grief over a donkey who will NOT stay in his pen. Boy, wouldn't that just make you want to be a farmer!?'

At one point when the wind was particularly strong yesterday, and I was feeling particularly sorry for myself as the fencing kept pulling away from the post, curling up, and rolling back down the muddy hill, and I was thinking



about how nice the suburbs sounded, my mind went back to a few Saturdays ago when our bishop was visiting. Bp. Lipka was making his first visit to St. Brendan's and we (mostly I) gave him an ear-full of what spiritual life has been like here the past few years. (It wasn't pretty, and I owe him an apology.) We talked all afternoon. Both Alan and I still wanted him to hear our confessions and time was getting late.

Since there is no place in this house to close a door for privacy other than our bedroom and the bathroom (when you heat mostly with a woodstove, air circulation is everything), Alan set up chairs in the garage beside the table saw. I imagine Jesus feels at home in a wood shop—even with power tools—so it wasn't a totally inappropriate spot. As the sun went down and we sat in the darkening evening, I confessed the secret parts of my interior life that are less than stellar. His advice, as usual, was spot-on. (He has never heard my confession before, but I have found that the Holy Spirit provides both healing and correction if we are faithful to confess our sins to one another in the presence of Christ.) God's advice, through our wise bishop, was... stop griping about the cross. He said it in a much gentler, more pastoral manner, but that's what he meant. This life is what Jesus gave me to carry. It may not be easy or glamorous, but it's what I need to grow in faith in order to be what others need from me.

I chased after the fencing as it rolled down the hill, thinking about what 'the cross' looks like. Most Christian teaching suggests that 'the cross' we are to bear is a sickness, or financial distress, or unruly children or grandchildren. In fact, most contemporary Christian teaching would also suggest that our personal cross comes prior to our salvation; that our lives are hard and painful before we are saved, and 'happy all the day' af-

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ter we are saved. That is, they are 'happy' until Satan attacks us and we have to fight him back—and then don't we feel good? But as I hauled that fencing back up the hill, against the wind, I realized that 'the cross,' for me anyway, was the role God has given me—here—for the sake of others, good days and bad. Isn't that simple definition true for all of us? Jesus' cross was the role of Savior that God had given him for our sake. Some days, like when he fed thousands of people, were glorious. Others, like being alone in the garden with even his friends deserting him, were just awful.



God has called all of us to *this* life—for His glory and the sake of others. Unfortunately, we want to 'experience' Christianity

rather than live it. We want to step in on the good parts—uplifting worship, answered prayer, help well-received by those whom we offer to help, you know—the fun parts—and then rest and 'vacation' when we need it. We want to 'just milk a goat' so to speak, or 'ride a donkey', or 'pick vegetables' without doing the parts of Christianity that feel more like suffering. And we want to do them on our terms, when it's convenient. We don't want the tough bits, and you know what they are for you; unanswered prayer, worship that feels dry and like it's bouncing off of heaven's doors, trying to maintain a devotional life alone, being dismissed as crazy or worse when you share Christ's love with others. There are days when our faith feels like putting up fences in the wind and rain—and they still don't work; days when the Lord seems far away and our struggles seem pointless. We have a choice on those days. Either we give up and abandon the cross we've been given, or we remember that it is that very suffering that perfects us.

This word 'perfect' in Hebrews 2:10 doesn't mean what we usually think of as perfection. It doesn't mean 'without spot, wrinkle or blemish' (Ephesians 5:27). The word used for THAT kind of perfection is 'holy.' No, the verse in Hebrews explains that even Jesus was 'made per-

"Still it must be our free choice to die daily to the flesh and live for Christ, and living for Christ requires a cross.."

fect' by his suffering. He was already holy—without spot, wrinkle, or blemish! This perfection means completed, accomplished (think of an accomplished musician or artist), fulfilled.

We are made holy by the blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ. We cannot *make* ourselves holy. Technically, I suppose, we cannot perfect—fulfill—ourselves either. But, by the rejection of this cross of suffering for the sake of others, we can reject our fulfillment and 'perfection.' Jesus didn't try to fight his way off of the cross even though there is no way that nails and wood from a fallen world could have held the Son of God to any devise of suffering he did not submit to willingly! (In other words, his fight was to stay ON the cross!) Likewise, God will not give us a cross that we cannot come down from if we don't want to. Suffering for His sake is always optional, but it is necessary. Still it must be our free choice to die daily to the flesh and live for Christ, and living for Christ requires a cross. We must make a constant, concerted effort to carry the burden of our faith, joyfully, in order for our suffering to perfect us. It isn't enough to pop in for the good experiences of faith but then toss our cross in a dark corner



somewhere when things get tough. We are fulfilled, perfected in the suffering he has ordained for us.

What cross does Jesus ask *you* to carry? Loneliness and isolation? Family members who are difficult to love? Poverty, sick-

ness, or other 'blessings' that require you to trust Him for your daily life and strength? Pray for the strength to not only endure but to embrace this gift of a cross that Christ has given you. And yes, it is a gift even if it isn't a fun earthly experience, because it makes you a complete person, ready for heavenly experiences!

(Thanks, Bp. Lipka. Your words saved the day yesterday.)

Rejoice!

Our Newest Members...

Please welcome (and pray for) the newest members of the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan 's:

Dcn. Michael Clark, Virginia

Juli Clark, Virginia

Becca Greene, Maine

Patrick Quinn, New York

Diana Miller, New York

David Caron, Ohio

David Holifield, California

We also had a recent 'promotion' when one of our Friends was recently received as a Oblate Postulant:

Mary Greene, Maine

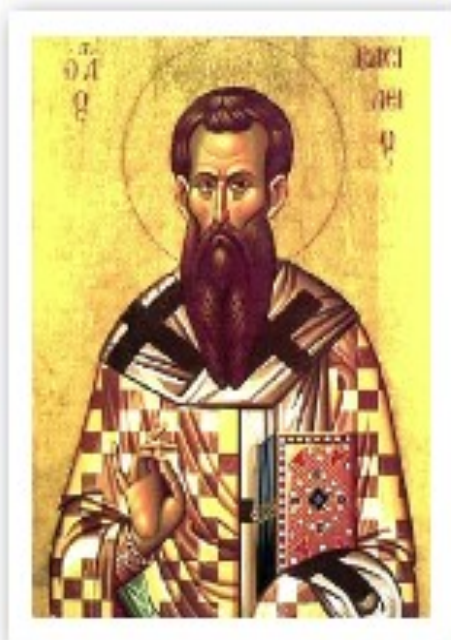
The Final Word:

St. Lactantius (c. 250-325 AD)

[Editor's Note: When we moved to Maine seven years ago we decided not to get cable, satellite, or 'dish' television. That left us with only one broadcast channel, PBS. A year ago we decided that even that was too much exposure and we put the TV into a closet. That means we've been "out of touch" where the entertainment industry is concerned for quite some time. When we travel and have to stay in motels (I just came back from a one-week trip to Virginia), a quick channel scan of the television in our room reveals just how ensnaring and perverted even "family and prime time" programming has become. And except for the most stringent parental controls, not even the Christian home is immune. Surprisingly, this is not new. Read this quote about the entertainment that was available in the 3rd century and how little things have changed.]

"I am inclined to think that the corrupting influence of the stage is more contaminating than the gladiator combats. That is because the major subject of comedies is the dishonoring of virgins or the love of harlots. And the more eloquent they are who have written the narratives of these disgraceful actions, the more they persuade others by the elegance of their words. In like manner, the tragedies place before the eyes of the audience the incests and murders of perverse people. They also portray dire crimes without impunity. And what effect do the immodest gestures of the actors produce, except to teach and incite us to lust? And since all actors are men—even those who portray female roles—their slight bodies are rendered effeminate after the gait and dress of women. They imitate unchaste women by their disgraceful gestures. Why should I even mention the mimes, who instruct others in corrupting influences? They teach adulteries while they act them out. By pretended actions, they train their audiences to do those actions that are real. What can young men or virgins do when they see that these things are presented without shame and are willingly watched by those of all ages?"

[Lucius Caелиus Firmianus Lactantius was a Christian apologist who began his career as a teacher of rhetoric at Nicomedia. He was a convert to Christianity. His abilities to teach and defend the Faith were quickly recognized. He was called upon by the Emperor Constantine to be a Christian tutor for his son Crispus. He is mostly known for his writings, several of which still survive. "Divinae Institutiones" was a treatise written to present the truth of Christianity to scholarly skeptics. "De Opificio Dei" was an attempt to prove the existence of God based on the marvels of the human body. "De Ira Dei" focused on God's punishment of human crimes. And "De Mortibus Persecutorum" historically chronicled how the persecutors of the Church fell themselves to horrible deaths.]



Life at the Priory House



TOP LEFT: David Caron, a Friend of Monastic Fellowship presents a refinished baptismal font and a newly made 'singletree' (so that the donkeys can be put to work!) to Saint Brendan's. **TOP MIDDLE:** Mother Sue grooms a neighbor's horse, Louie, before going on a trail ride. **TOP RIGHT:** Trees are removed near the Priory House in preparation for the foundation work for the new Holy Trinity Chapel. **MIDDLE LEFT:** The HMS Bounty made a port visit to Eastport, giving Fr. Alan a chance to regain his "sea legs." **MIDDLE CENTER:** Mary Greene kneels and recites her promises of oblation during her reception as a Postulant in the Monastic Fellowship of Saint Brendan's. **MIDDLE RIGHT:** Hermann's Royal Lipizzaner Stallions came to town, giving Fr. Alan, M. Sue, David Caron, and John King a chance to watch and enjoy these beautiful horses perform. **BOTTOM LEFT:** Bishop Lipka pauses for a picture during his visit to Holy Trinity Chapel. Among those in attendance that Sunday were (L-R) Jim Heyer, Jane Doré, Judy Heyer, Fr. Alan Andraeas, Bishop Richard Lipka, Archdeacon John Mark Lipka, M. Sue Andraeas, Becca Greene, Lorraine Casey, Mary Greene, and Susan Ober.

BOTTOM LEFT: Bishop Lipka pauses for a picture during his visit to Holy Trinity Chapel. Among those in attendance that Sunday were (L-R) Jim Heyer, Jane Doré, Judy Heyer, Fr. Alan Andraeas, Bishop Richard Lipka, Archdeacon John Mark Lipka, M. Sue Andraeas, Becca Greene, Lorraine Casey, Mary Greene, and Susan Ober.

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