

# The Navigator

The Newsletter of the Fellowship of Saint Brendan's  
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## HOW ARE WE DOING? WHAT ARE WE DOING?

Sue Andraeas, Prioress

What in the world is that? No-body could explain it to us. Not the people who asked us to continue the work, nor the many

*Then Mattathias cried out with a loud voice, saying: "Let everyone who is zealous for the law and covenant come out with me!" Then many who were seeking righteousness and justice went down to the wilderness to dwell there, because evils pressed heavily upon them. cf., 1 Maccabees 2:27-30*

Saint Brendan's was founded in 2005, and for the past almost-19 years we've tried our best to work this unique plan we sensed God had given us long before we set foot in Maine. Some called the plan odd. (God's work is rarely 'normal'! Read what some of the guys in the Old Testament were asked to do. Odd!) We knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that this whatever-it-was-going-to-be would have certain key components: prayer, study, worship, watchfulness, hiddenness, working with children, shelter and provision, discipline, and a Fellowship. That last bit is where you fit in. This 'odd' mission was given to us (thrust upon us might be more accurate) not by people but by God. We, after all, had totally different ideas for how our retirement was supposed to look and it didn't involve 40-60 hour work weeks and constantly having to learn some new thing! And this whole blessed package was handed to us under the title of *lay monasticism*.

bishops who have provided apostolic cover over us, nor could the 'internet experts' in the early days of Saint Brendan's. Alan and I felt like we were pioneers, breaking new ground in a new move of the Holy Spirit. (If you do an internet search today of lay monasticism, you'll see all sorts of explanations and groups you could join! Indeed, Alan and I were called to a new move, but we weren't the only ones!)

In the beginning, we were told to move slowly. We were told not to rush into formulating a *Rule of Life* (how to 'play the game' of life at Saint Brendan's) or our *Breviary* (the 'agenda'



Saint Brendan's  
2005

for our intentional times of prayer and intercession), so we didn't. We allowed those defining works to grow and morph in much the same way that we ourselves have. As of last year, the official *Breviary* is published. There is now a chapel on the property, although the plan has never been to have a typical church congregation. This is a place where the local Fellowship of Saint Brendan's can worship. It is a private service, although it is open to visitors and members of our local community if they wish to worship with us. There is no membership, no set denomination.

Like Roger Schutz's Taizé Community in France (more on him and his community in a minute), Saint Brendan's is an ecumenical work under the apostolic cover and protection of our fabulous, understanding bishop who has graciously allowed Alan to develop a worship book unique to our interdenominational work (think Catholic Missal or Anglican BCP). And this year, we will

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begin the next version of our *Rule of Life*. At present, Saint Brendan's Rule is an adaptation of Richard Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline* along with the Fruit of the Spirit and our own 'Pillars of Monasticism.' The revised version will be a more original explanation of the inner and outer spiritual disciplines each member should be developing in their personal lives, plus guidelines for community life on the property. We can't begin to tell you how nice it is to finally see, in tangible terms, what God has been doing here in spiritual terms.

### Right Term; Wrong Definition

If you ask the average dude in the pews what monastic life is, he will probably respond with something like this: it's monks and nuns. And who are they? They are people who decide to live together in convents or monasteries, wearing robes (habits) with beads and crosses, not owning anything, giving their earthly wealth to their community, spending their days singing Gregorian chants and getting calluses on their knees from constantly kneeling to pray, then getting up in the middle of the night to pray some more. Some teach in Catholic schools. Some make things to sell to help support their community. None can do things normal people do like watch football games or go on vacations or order delivery pizza. For the most part, this would be an accurate description—but it would not be complete.



The original monasteries (I'm going to use St. Benedict's, founded in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD as my example) didn't begin because a group of Christians wanted to be more legalistic and 'out there' in how they managed their walk with God. They were founded because the Church was becoming more like the world and less like heaven. The earliest Christians finished their catechism training so that, when (not if) they were persecuted for their faith, they would not deny Christ. Then Christianity became legal. Then trendy. Pagan gods and their temples were out. Jesus, cross jewelry, and insignias on military shields were

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in. If you wanted to get ahead in business, join the Church; great place to network.

The European society that emerged after the fall of the Roman Empire embraced everything about Christianity except...Jesus. Oh, they had no problem with His name or His teaching! They just didn't like the "take up your cross and follow Me" bits. In a counter response, small pockets of Christians, living in monasteries and convents, sought ways to remain true to Jesus' call, and to live like the Early Church as seen in the New Testament. Their lives were no longer being sacrificed in Roman coliseums, so they looked for ways to complete St. Paul's instructions to

become 'living sacrifices' (Romans 12:1). They searched the Scriptures for what later came to be called the Disciplines; ways to separate from mainstream culture in order to be more closely knit to heavenly culture. Every part of their lives (diet, speech, entertainment, relationships, finances, possessions, study, and even worship and prayer) were scrutinized to see how to be the *ekklesia* (Greek for the 'called-out ones'), which is what the Church is supposed to be.

Instructions given in Hebrews 13:11-17 already hints at monastic life: living outside the city, being careful that possessions don't

possess you, offering continual praise, serving others through prayer. It's not these actions that guarantee your spot in heaven. It's the placing Christ above all other aspects of your life that does. St. Paul writes to the Church in Philippi,

"For His [Christ's] sake I have suffered the **loss of all things**, and count them as refuse, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own, based on law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith; that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may **share in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death**, that, if possible, I may attain the resurrection from the dead" (Philippians 3:8-11).

In monastic life, the strict disciplines are not the end in themselves but tools that help us to separate from worldliness while connecting us to Jesus.

Monastic life continued in much the same format for centuries—and continues to this day. In post-WWII Europe, howev-

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er, a new form of monasticism emerged. The work began in France, a country that was disillusioned and impoverished following Nazi occupation when many churches sold out to the 'state church' of Hitler. Soldiers, wounded in body, mind, and spirit, were wandering around with no way to get home—or had no home to return to. Roger Schutz, a Swiss called by God to be Christ to these soldiers, started a community called Taize. I'm not going to give a lengthy explanation of this work here, although it would be justified. (The music alone is worthy of investigation. It's as unique to this Community as Gregorian Chant was back in the day.)

In my opinion, Taize stands as the first *lay monastic* work. It's ecumenical. Anyone can participate for a day, for a season, or for life. The emphasis is on prayer and praise. Worldly life is set aside. And I can't imagine what Europe would be like today without God's intervention through calling the called-out ones in this manner. Thank you, Jesus!

If you notice, the beginning of both the traditional form of monastic life, and the beginning of what today is called lay monastic life, both occurred as the safety net of society was ripped away. Rome fell. Constantine took over—and God called St. Benedict out of Rome to 'reboot' the Church. Fascism fell. The victors of WWII took over—and God called Schutz out to the French countryside to 'reboot' the Church. It was the monasteries that founded the first hospitals, orphanages, and nursing homes. So...what's happening in our day? Why is God again calling His people out of the mega-churches

(or mega-church wannabes) with their mega-programs and mega-budgets to live simply and hidden-ly? I'm not going to be drawn into a political analysis of our times. But society is again toying with dangerous ideologies and plans and, no matter which 'side' you look at, the Church overall is happy to follow along. No country is stable in its leadership, finances, and food sources. Saint Brendan's and other similar missions make more sense every time we turn on the news!

### What Happens Now?

I'm going to be honest with you here. One of the hardest parts of the adventure as caretakers of Saint Brendan's has been trying to fit a Fellowship, strewn across multiple states and countries, into the work God is doing here locally. We run a distance seminary for those seeking Holy Orders to the Permanent Diaconate, prepare for worship services, manage a farm, and we're no spring chickens! It's a struggle to also write newsletters and try to keep in contact with all of you. Most of you are just as busy as we are! We understand!! Cell phones and email have made communication easier, but for some reason, keeping in touch has gotten harder.

Alan and I were growing frustrated by the lack of response to the hours we put into newsletters, and then it occurred to us: Saint Brendan's *ISN'T* supposed to be providing spiritual instruction to you; you have your own pastors, priests, and teachers! Our role is to be a model for you in your walk of lay monasticism. Or as St. Paul said, "Follow my example, as I fol-

## HOLY HYMNODY

From the halls of power to the fortress tower / not a stone will be left on stone /  
Let the king beware for Your justice tears ev'ry tyrant from his throne /  
The hungry poor shall weep no more / for the food they can never earn /  
There are tables spread / every mouth be fed / for the world is about to turn.

Though the nations rage from age to age / we remember Who holds them fast /  
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp /  
This saving word that our forebears heard / is the promise which holds us bound /  
'til the spear and rod can be crushed by God / Who is turning the world around.

Chorus:

My heart shall sing of the day You bring / Let the fires of Your justice burn /  
Wipe away all tears / for the dawn draws near /  
And the world is about to turn.

### "Canticle of the Turning"

Text and Music by Rory Cooney; based on Luke 1:46-58  
Tune: Irish Traditional—*Star of the County Down*

## 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...

**"Brother, this is a way contrary to all human reason but, like Abraham, you can only advance along it by faith, not by sight, confident that whoever gives their life for Christ's sake will find it."  
— Brother Roger Schutz**

*From the opening statements made in the service of Life Profession at the Community of Taizé, Burgundy, France*

low the example of Christ" (1 Corinthians 11:1). We've been working hard at the wrong work!

Once I began to look at where God has been leading YOU, rather than trying to drag you along with US, it began making more sense. Lay monasticism is a way for anyone—with an intentional desire to die to self and follow Jesus—to help Him fulfill the words of the prayer He taught us to pray. I'll summarize: Father, in heaven, you are holy. We want Your Kingdom (not ours) to come. We want Your will (not ours) to be done here on earth the same way Your will is done in heaven. Give us what we need just for today. Don't allow us to be tempted to stray off course. Keep us away from evil. Why? Because everything belongs to You—creation, all power, all glory—for all time. Including now. So be it!

Simplicity of need. Simplicity of desire. Simplicity of execution. The Church is heaven on earth if we allow it to be. Monasticism throughout history is a conscious move toward following God's will here. Now. And some of you have been doing brilliantly! Let me share with you a brief testimony of some of YOUR faithfulness in this endeavor. This is the work of some of your fellow Fellowship members:

\*One sold property in an urban area where he was a 'somebody' at his cathedral and in his city. He bought rural property in the middle of nowhere to be nobody special...in

the world's eyes. This new, now multi-generational, property includes livestock and gardens. He attends services at a local, very non-sacramental church, but one where people love the Lord and serve Him well. Ecumenical. Hidden. Intentional. Disciplined.

\*One realized that the greatest assets to doing God's work are disciplined, healthy minds and bodies. When we met him, he

was severely diabetic due to diet and lifestyle. He has worked to reconcile these choices with God's desire for him, has lost much weight, and is now nearly free of insulin dependence, all while serving God in his church, and community. (Way to go! I haven't taken the opportunity to call you personally yet, but I will! I'm proud of you, my brother!) Discipline. Prayer. Relinquishment.

\*One couple has devoted their time and expertise to helping others through woodworking, metalworking, textiles, and helping a

Community of Sisters (nuns) to maintain their Abbey. They are selfless in giving, fun to talk to, and, in all honesty, Saint Brendan's would not have survived without their tangible aid here on the property and their intercession from a distance. (We are grateful!) Secret. Joyful. Self-sacrificing. Servants.

\*One has left a prestigious secular job to organize local mission projects that aid community development in a country that doesn't help its poor the way America does. It's a thankless, lonely, soul-numbing job that requires as much time in prayer and meditation as it does administration and execution. Simplicity. Poverty. Prayer. Contemplation. Service.

\*Many have begun gardens, water preservation, studies in natural medicine, animal husbandry, alternative power production via solar, wind, or off-



**"Monasticism throughout history is a conscious move toward following God's will here. Now. And some of you have been doing brilliantly!"**

grid living—all with the aim to not be preppers, but to wean ourselves away from dependence upon the luxuries of our society. Why? Because, as we've already seen, the monasteries have always been places that retain ancient wisdom for the day when society cannot provide energy, food, and medical care, and protection for whatever reason. (As I write, much of Iceland's geothermal heat production has disappeared under a lava flow. Can you imagine having no heat in your home? In Iceland? In winter?? Much of what we take for granted is not a 'given'.) And many of you share of your bounty as God blesses your endeavors. Discipline. Study. Self-sacrifice. Generosity. Hope.

In the months to come, as we reach the 20-year mark of Saint Brendan's, we want to encourage you to continue seeking God's kingdom, drawing away from earthly dependence, and tapping into that vast power and glory of God's kingdom. We're going to do better at providing resources for those of you who want to develop your own local lay monastic chapters, to explore God's call upon you in your area. You can't all be farmers. Or move to the country. But I think the Fellowship that solidifies in the next year or so will be people who are ready to discipline their lives, so they are

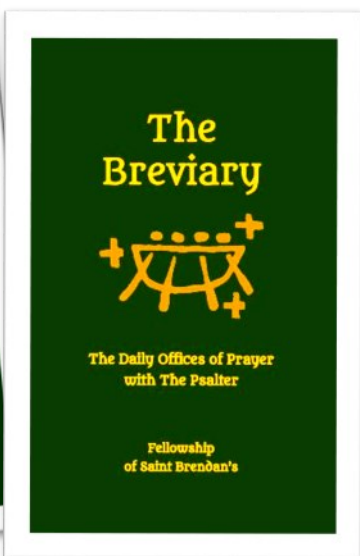
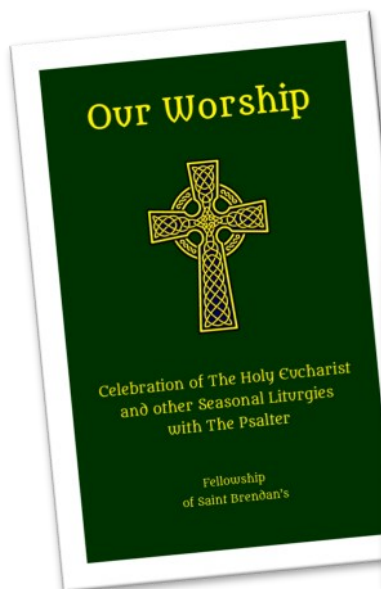


ready to share in the sufferings of Christ, to loosen the grip of worldliness on their minds and bodies, and to be genuinely called out.

Are you in?

Rejoice!  
Sue

## For our Community Life



In support of our community life at Saint Brendan's, we have two new resources available to you. The first is our corporate liturgy, *Our Worship*. The second is our corporate prayer, *The Breviary*. Why these two books? While we receive our denominational and episcopal cover through the Anglican Church in North America, many people in our fellowship are not Anglicans. Our call was never to turn the members of Saint Brendan's into Anglicans, but to introduce our members to the Church's rich heritage of worship and prayer—those two things that stand at the very heart of Christian life and discipline.

Visitors to the Priory House for the past 19 years are well aware that these resources have been 'works in progress'. And while these two books are grounded on previous versions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, they have also been developed with a view toward those things that are fully evangelical, extremely conscious of the 'shape of the liturgy', and anticipatory of the move

of the Holy Spirit. Profoundly biblical while remaining true to their Anglo-Catholic predecessors, we commend *Our Worship* and *The Breviary* for the private and corporate use of the Fellowship of Saint Brendan's and for those of the broader Church of Jesus Christ who "long for the ancient paths."

*Our Worship* includes the Sunday liturgy used in Holy Trinity Chapel at Saint Brendan's, along with liturgies for Ash Wednesday, a Bible-based version of the Stations of the Cross, Good Friday, and the Intercession Litany. *The Breviary* includes the Daily Offices for Morning Prayer, Midday Prayer, Evening Prayer, Compline, and the Intercession Litany. Both volumes contain our unique version of *The Psalter*. Both are case-laminated, hardbound books. If interested, *Our Worship* (434 pages) costs \$25.00 (price includes shipping). *The Breviary* (400 pages) costs \$20.00 (price includes shipping). Contact us for more details if you wish to get your own copies.

# The Prior's Ponderings



already help to carry or share in Christ's sufferings (cf., Philippians 3:10; Colossians 1:24; 1 Peter 4:13), do we have the capacity for a similar empathy with God?

*['The Prior's Ponderings' will be a series of short Scripture studies on things that grab my attention. Contemplate them. Pray about them. Share them if you are so led.]*

Jesus presents us with a curious question in Luke 18:8, "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" He asks this at the end of His parable about the persistent widow and the elect who "cry to God day and night." This appears to be a call for the Church to watch, plead, petition, and pray; to seek those things that are right and just; things that reflect the mode and manner of heaven in an unjust world.

Jesus assures us that these are the very things that God also looks for in His children. But the way He phrases this question suggests the possibility that, when the time comes, the Lord may not find what He's looking for.

Why? Because the Church steps into each new day with a high potential for its own failure. Like the nation of Israel throughout the Old Testament, the Church has had seasons of great spiritual strength and fervor and seasons of great falling away, particularly when it embraces the decaying culture of the world more than it wants to embrace the kingdom of heaven. We are in such a time right now as whole denominations are wildly careening into actions, attitudes, and doctrines that reflect nothing of the heart of Christ.

As God looks down on the brokenness of our world and the equal brokenness of the Church, I wonder: does He cry? We know that Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35). But Jesus also cried over the city of Jerusalem; over its blindness and future destruction (Luke 19:41-44); over its brokenness. This is important to remember because Jesus said He only does what the Father does: "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of His own accord, but only what He sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise" (John 5:19).

If God does cry, how do we respond? The Bible tells us that He already holds *our* tears of brokenness in a bottle (Psalm 56:8). Are we, likewise, willing to hold *God's* tears over the brokenness He sees around us? Can we? In the same way that we

I suppose it all boils down to our response. Sometimes a broken heart only wants someone to grieve and cry tears with them, and that's okay. In fact, sometimes it's the only possible response. However, at other times, a broken heart is a catalyst for action for those who help to carry those tears. As God looks at the state of our global culture (as it embraces every dark and wicked thing) and the state of the global Church (as the weeds are quickly overtaking the wheat), how do His tears stir us to action? Ideally, it's by giving Him exactly what He's looking for—little outposts of faithfulness, prayer, worship, authentic servanthood, sacrifice, devotion, discipline, discipleship, true Christian community, and all in love and imitation of Jesus Christ. That's what Saint Benedict did at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century with a small group of like-minded men in Monte Cassino; a pattern of life, repeated over and over, that literally saved Europe through the Dark Ages.

As Rome was crashing down around itself and the Church was basking in its political and financial sovereignty as an equal to its secular rivals—and as carnality, greed, and arrogance were gripping both—believers moved by the tears of God responded with, "What I have is Yours, heart, soul, mind, and strength, in unity with my neighbor, for Your sake and glory." And from that desire

to carry God's tears came beautiful, little pockets of people unashamed to live holy and consecrated lives. Will the Son of Man find faith on the earth when He comes? If God's tears mean anything to us, He will.

Fr. Alan Andraeas



## **The Final Word: Brother Roger Schutz (1915-2005)**

Roger Schutz, popularly known as Brother Roger, was a Swiss Christian leader and monastic brother. In 1940 Schutz founded the Taizé Community, an ecumenical monastic community in Burgundy, France, serving as its first prior until his murder in 2005. Towards the end of his life, the Taizé Community was attracting international attention, welcoming thousands of young pilgrims every week, which it continues to do after his death.

*[The following is an extract from the Preamble of the Rule of Taizé which Bro. Roger finished in 1953.]*

Brother, if you submit to a common rule, you can do so only for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Henceforth your worship and your service take place in a community of brothers, within the body of the Church. From now on you are no longer alone. In all things, you must take your brothers into account.

This Rule contains only the minimum necessary for a community seeking to build itself in Christ, and to give itself up to a common service of God.

Assured of your salvation by the unique grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, you do not impose discipline on yourself for its own sake. Gaining mastery of yourself has no aim other than to render you more available. Let there be no useless asceticism; hold only to the works that God commands. Carry the burdens of others, accept the petty injuries of each day, so as to share concretely in the sufferings of Christ; this is our first discipline.

You fear that a common rule may stifle your personality, whereas its purpose is to free you from useless shackles.

Never stand still; go forward with your brothers; run towards the goal in the footsteps of Christ. His path is a way of light. In order that the pure brightness of Christ may enter into you, it is not enough to gaze on it as though you were a disembodied spirit. You must commit yourself resolutely, in body and soul, on this path.

Be a sign of joy and of brotherly love among men. Be present to the time in which you live; adapt yourself to the conditions of the moment. "Oh, Father, I pray you, not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from evil."

Love your neighbor, whatever may be his political or religious beliefs. Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians—all who so readily confess love for their neighbor, and yet remain divided. Be consumed with burning zeal for the unity of the Body of Christ.



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