



FROM THE HEART OF

The Pelican

NUMBER 13

SUMMER 2012

Welcome!



**BISHOP PETER JUGIS WELCOMES
SISTERS GERTRUDE AND SCHOLASTICA
TO THE CHARLOTTE DIOCESE.**

DEAREST FAMILY AND FRIENDS,

PRAISED BE JESUS CHRIST! After a hiatus of nearly 2 years, another issue of THE PELICAN is finally appearing. The section on News & Updates below will fill our readers in on our move to North Carolina. Here I would like to share with you one of the many lessons learned in the intervening months.

Our move from Ave Maria, Florida, to the Charlotte, North Carolina area was one of intense prayer and discernment, trusting the Lord to lead us according to his paternal plans. At times, obstacles seemed to block our way forward, but we continued to pray, fast, and trust mightily. Although we made many acts of



trust in the Lord, I admit—exposing my weakness to you all—that at times I was gripped with fear. I had seldom experienced this emotion in my life, so I was amazed to see its paralyzing effect. I came to see that fear takes away one’s courage and can make a person emotionally head-shy, as if one were expecting more blows at any moment. In prayer I begged to be freed from its influence over me. Since I continued to make acts of trust (“Jesus, I trust in you”), I knew I was “on course” but I was far from feeling at peace.

After a good number of months, my prayer was finally answered. It was revealed to me that the cause of my fear was that I was *listening to the wrong voice*. I was subconsciously entertaining thoughts of doubt which began with “what if such and such happens?” or “what if such and such does *not* happen?” These doubts were not coming from God, but from the Enemy who was suggesting them in order to undermine my trust in God. What a revelation! By dwelling on these thoughts, I had unwittingly given them “life” and “power” to wedge themselves into my emotions causing fear and internal friction with my will which was grounded in God.

Once the Enemy was flushed out so I could see his machinations clearly, I took control of my thoughts and immediately dismissed any



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The Benedictines of Mary,

Queen of Peace

363 Armour St.

Davidson, NC 28036

Tel: 704-827-2490

email: qopbenedictines@gmail.com

web: www.qopbenedictines.com

Editor: Sr. Gertrude Gillette

Layout: Michael Schrauser

Photography: Sr. Gertrude, et al.

and every temptation to doubt. The fear disappeared almost overnight. I was amazed at my own ignorance. The Enemy had been so subtle that I had not recognized his tactics!

The irony is that I had read the teaching of the desert father, Evagrius, on the subject, but had not applied it to this situation. Evagrius taught that a person can overcome temptation by objectively discerning the origin of his/her thoughts. The origin, in turn, can be learned from ascertaining where the thoughts are leading: if they are leading to a sinful (or even negative) act they come from the demons; if they are leading to (or suggesting that we perform) a morally good act, they are coming from God. If they are morally neutral, they are probably produced by ourselves.

I knew all this, but I had not put thoughts leading to emotional instability (fear) in the same category as those leading to sin. The Evil One was very subtle here, but once this was pointed out to me, I saw his ruse clearly.

I now pass this on to our readers: be very careful and do not dwell on any thoughts that lead to unhealthy fear; I say “unhealthy” because, of course, there is the healthy kind of fear which prevents us from playing with knives or with fire! The fear I’m talking about is the negative kind which plays with our emotions and prevents us from living as liberated children of our most loving and trustworthy Father.

May the Holy Spirit teach all of us to discern His voice and to shun any which leads to sin, negativity, or mistrust of Him in any way. ✚

READERS: If we haven’t heard from you within the past two years, please write, call or email us to indicate that you would like to continue to receive our newsletter. If we don’t hear from you, we will remove you from our mailing list. Thank you for letting us know.

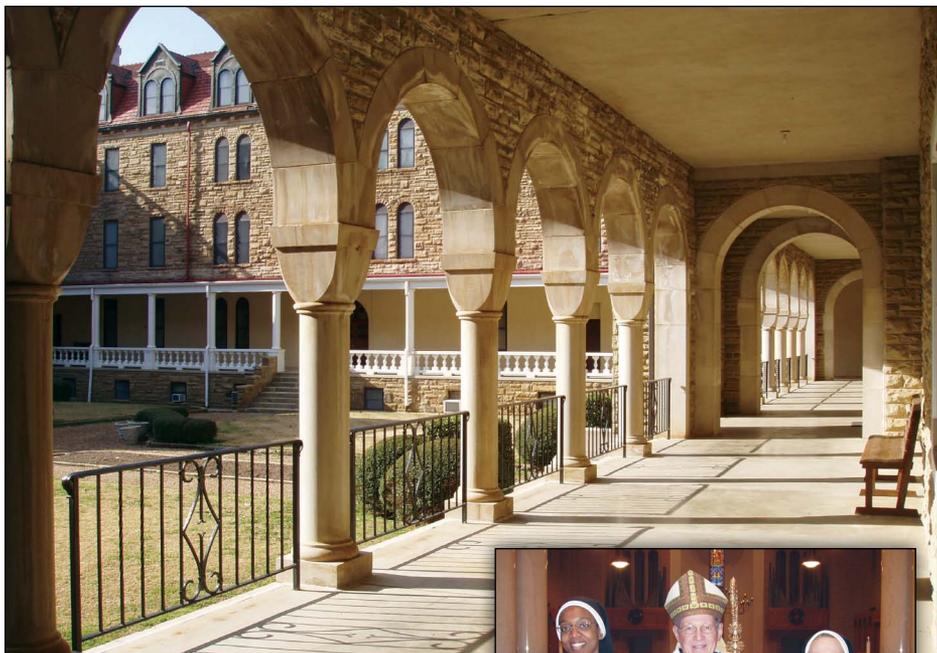


Bishop Peter Jugis and Abbot Damien Toilolo, O.S.B.

MOVE TO CHARLOTTE

After spending some eight years at Ave Maria University, it became clear about 18 months ago that the Lord was directing us to spread our wings and, like the Israelites of old, to follow the Lord into the “desert” where he would prepare us for something new. Our first stop on this journey was at our (then) mother house in Cuernavaca, Mexico, for three months, a time of spiritual re-grouping, so to speak. On our return to the U.S., we stayed for some weeks with the Benedictine Nuns at St Emma’s Monastery in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, and from there began negotiations that eventually led to an invitation by Bishop Peter Jugis to come to the Charlotte diocese. Sr. Gertrude had gotten to know Bishop Jugis when he was a priest studying canon law at The Catholic University in Washington, D.C., in the early 90s. Since we are doing something new in the Benedictine tradition, it was decided that the best way to continue our mission would be to start the process toward becoming a diocesan institute.

In February, with the encouragement of Abbot Damien and the monks of Valyermo, California—our long time friends and brothers in St. Benedict—we took the first step and became a Private Association of the Faithful in the Diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina, under the name of



*Above: Cloister at Subiaco Abbey, Arkansas
Right: Sr. Gertrude and Sr. Scholastica with Abbot Jerome Kodell, O.S.B.*



“Benedictines of Mary, Queen of Peace.” Until recently, we lived in a rented house about four miles from Belmont Abbey College, where Sr. Gertrude taught a couple of adjunct courses in theology last Fall. A most exciting fruit of that teaching experience came in the form of one of her students, Angel Santana, who was drawn to the Church from what she learned and—with Sr. Gertrude as her godmother—was baptized into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil this past April. God bless you, Angel!

In the meantime, Sr. Gertrude also taught a course on St. Teresa of Avila’s *Interior Castle* to a group of women at St. Mark’s parish in Huntersville, North Carolina. When news began to spread that we were available for lectures, retreats and courses, our Spring calendar quickly filled up as different parishes and women’s groups invited us to talk. We also began an Oblate Program for lay people who are interested in living out Benedictine spirituality in their own lives.



Sr. Gertrude with her class at St. Mark’s parish.

SUBIACO ABBEY, ARKANSAS

Early January 2012 found Sr. Gertrude and Sr. Scholastica at Subiaco Abbey, Arkansas, where they made their retreat and where Sr. Gertrude gave a workshop to the faculty of Subiaco Academy, the monks’ prep school for boys. The Abbey is situated in the midst of

rolling farm land, complete with their own Black Angus cattle. It was good to visit old friends there, to join the monks for their fine liturgy, to learn how they make and market their peanut brittle, and most of all to spend a few days praying, reading and being at leisure for God alone. We recommend the Abbey as a great place to make a retreat if any of our readers is looking for a quiet place in the middle of God's country.

NEW ADDRESS

In the Fall, Sr. Gertrude will be teaching part time at the new Christ the King High School in Mooresville, North Carolina, and teaching a course on Scripture at St Mark's parish in Huntersville on Thursday mornings. She will also be teaching a mini-course to the wives of the diaconate candidates at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory. Our new residence is half-way between the school



Above: Sr. Gertrude and Sr. Scholastica were happy confirmation sponsors to Xavier and Talon Campbell, here pictured with Bishop Jugis and their parents and grandmother.

Left: Angel Santana, Sr. Gertrude's former student and god-daughter, with Bishop Jugis.

and the parish, and has the added advantage of having two extra bedrooms so that we can host women guests on retreat and any who might be interested in a monastic vocation.

THE MOVE TO NORTH CAROLINA

The move to North Carolina had an added advantage: we had a yard for the first time! In Florida we had always lived in a duplex or townhouse with virtually no yard and no where to plant flowers or vegetables. When we moved into the house on Mulberry Court we found that the owner had planted a garden, but it was overgrown and had not been kept up. Sr. Scholastica set about clearing the weeds, planting flowers and putting in our first ever vegetable garden! She had learned a bit of gardening from Sr. Theresa, who—as she was declining and could no longer water her plants on the lanai—taught her how to water and care for the potted plants. She learned quickly and eagerly threw herself into beautifying our yard and supplying our table with healthy and tasty vegetables. The first to come



Sr. Scholastica in the garden at Mulberry Court.

in were the zucchini and cucumbers, followed by the tomatoes and peppers. Thank you, Sr. Scholastica! Some friends at Rivendell Farms in Huntersville, North Carolina, have been most helpful in advising us on how to do organic farming. It is very Benedictine to stay close to the soil and praise God for his wonderful gifts of sustenance.



PHOTO: ANTHONY PERLAS

KISS OF PEACE TRAIL BARS

Monasteries are often known for the products they sell. St. Benedict encourages “home industries” so that the monks remain as much as possible in the confines of the cloister. Since we need to supplement our income we decided to try and make trail bars ... nutritional snacks that are gluten and sugar free. The low overhead but proficient peanut brittle enterprise of the monks at Subiaco Abbey gave us the impetus we needed to try and do something comparable. After experimenting with recipes all Spring, we are proud to present our first product: a delicious combination of almonds, peanuts, sesame and sunflower seeds, dates and honey—a perfect nutritional snack. Please see our website (created for us by Anthony Perlas), www.kissofpeacetb.com, or the ad on the page opposite. We are also developing a second recipe which substitutes pecans for peanuts. Stay tuned as other types of trail bars become available.

The name “Kiss of Peace” is inspired by our desire to spread the monastic value of peace in this world, and what better way than to remind everyone to pray for peace when they

eat one of our tasty trail bars? The purpose of the Kiss of Peace exchanged at Mass is to make an outward sign to our brothers and sisters that we are at peace in our hearts with everyone and therefore can proceed with a clean conscience to receive communion. In the Scriptures, Jesus tells us to make peace with our brother or sister before offering our gift at the altar (Mt 5:24), showing that heaven does

not look kindly on our prayers if we insist on holding a grudge. Harmony and peace, therefore, are not options but necessary Christian values that the world so badly needs today. Our KISS OF PEACE TRAIL BARS are a friendly reminder of this Christian and monastic value. To emphasize this, we encourage our customers to: "Share one with a friend as a sign of peace and friendship." +

PHOTO: ANTHONY PERLAS



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* **Note:** at the moment, we have not gone "commercial," so the prices given are suggested "donation" amounts.

Our customers in the Charlotte area have the option to pick up their order. Please indicate this when you place your order—either by emailing us at qopbenedictines@gmail.com or by calling us at 704-827-2490. We'll subtract the shipping and handling costs and let you know the total.

Please remember us when planning gift boxes for the holidays or for any occasion!

Thank you for your order!

More Teachings on *Anger*

FROM THE WRITINGS
OF ST. AUGUSTINE

BY SR. GERTRUDE GILLETTE

FOURTH IN A SERIES ON
AUGUSTINE'S TEACHING ON ANGER

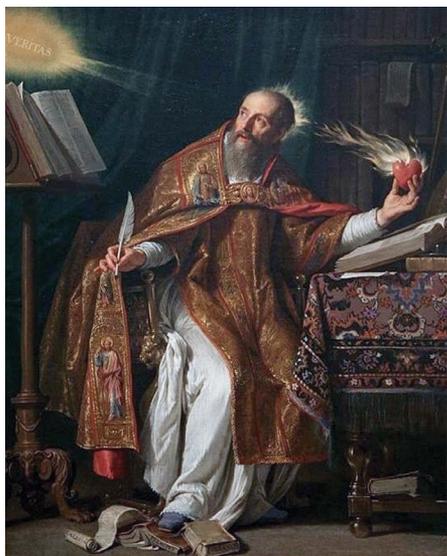
In our last issue, we examined three of the four elements which break down community life according to St. Augustine. We will now examine the fourth element: anger, drawing on his Rule for monks as well as on his daily experiences as the Bishop of Hippo.

THE TREATMENT OF ANGER IN HIS RULE

SINCE ANGER IS THE UNDERLYING element which is the cause of many types of quarrels and disturbances, Augustine speaks of it directly. In doing so, he is less concerned about its minor manifestations than with that anger which grows in intensity and places brother against brother. As usual, he begins with the ideal:

*Either have no quarrels
or put an end to them as soon as possible.*

If life were only thus! The North African doctor is aware that even in good relationships and healthy communities, misunderstandings arise which can cause a moment of anger. One must face the difficulty, clear it up and put the conflagration out immediately before the fire gets out of hand. Such immediate action prevents unresolved quarrels/conflicts from smoldering and posing a potential threat. Using a scriptural metaphor, Augustine likens anger to a splinter which should not be allowed to turn into



PHILIPPE DE CHAMPAIGNE, 'SAINT AUGUSTINE,' CA. 1645

timber. “Timber” is a particularly apt translation for it not only implies a larger piece of wood compared to a splinter but it captures its inflammable nature as well. Also implicit in the metaphor is the link between anger and condemnation: being angry with a brother brings down divine judgment on oneself (Mt 7:1-5).

The second metaphor is even stronger: “lest anger...turn the soul into the soul of a murderer.” Since *the* murderer in scripture is Satan whom Christ calls “a murderer from the beginning” (Jn 8:44), these words are meant to strike the heart of the brothers with terrible fear, as if Augustine were saying: “Realize under whose influence you are acting and the consequences of your action: no murderer inherits the kingdom of heaven.” This kind of shock therapy is employed in Scripture by Christ himself, and Augustine does not hesitate to use it from time to time when the consequences are dire: anger can separate one person from another, and a person from God for all eternity. If life in any community should lead to greater and greater harmony, anger is diametrically opposed to it. Anger is a “great danger” (*Ep.* 210.2), a poison whose malicious power breaks down the

normal functioning of the body and can cause its death. Thus Augustine's strong censure.

SPECIFIC CASES IN HIPPO

The first case involves a community of nuns in Hippo, governed by a Mother Felicitas. In the first of two letters that he writes to her, Augustine begins with the positive appreciation for the value of mutual love and unity in the Spirit. He then goes on to discuss correction in community. It is not clear whether a quarrel has already occurred between Mother Felicitas and one or more of her nuns due to a rebuke by the abbess, or whether Augustine is advising the superior to exercise her role as corrector in order to heal an existing division. Whatever the case, the bishop goes on to outline the two classic scriptural reactions to a legitimate rebuke: the wise man will be grateful, the fool or scorner will harbor resentment and may respond with hatred. If the latter occurs, the love of the one reproving is put to the

// Anger can separate one person from another, and a person from God for all eternity. //

test. She (i.e. Mother Felicitas) must not return hatred for hatred; instead the same love which prompted her to reprove in the first place, must "endure unmoved." If she were to react in kind, by returning evil for evil, or hatred for hatred, she would be most unworthy to reprove another but would rather deserve to be reproved herself. The motive in all this must be an earnest desire to live in concord and peace—never to win an argument: "Be more earnest to dwell in concord

than to vanquish each other in controversy." At the end of the letter, Augustine leaves his readers with another of his "shock phrases" this time employing his most telling image of anger in his whole monastic corpus:

As vinegar corrodes a vessel if it remain long in it, so anger corrodes the heart if it is cherished till the morrow.

The second letter deals with the issue of a serious schism which has broken out in the monastery. From what can be gathered from the letter, the majority of the nuns have petitioned for the removal of the abbess. However, as Augustine reminds them, the convent increased in numbers considerably under her guidance and all seemed to be going well until a new priest was appointed as the priest-superior. There may have been a difference of opinion between the priest and the abbess and the majority of the nuns felt that the priest—being a cleric—had the greater authority. This is pure conjecture since Augustine does not give us details, seemingly because he is not particularly concerned about them. What does concern him is the resultant split in the community. Wisely, he refuses to visit the community to settle the issue...precisely because this would result in their airing the detailed accusations which have already reached his ears. He has no stomach (or heart) to hear more of it; it would only cause him more pain, not to mention the pain he would cause them by his unsympathetic stance to anything leading to disunity and a lack of charity.

The whole thrust of the letter is an exhortation to end the division within the community and the resultant "quarreling and jealousy, angry tempers and personal rivalries, back-biting, general disorder, and hushed comments about one another." The very list shows the magnitude of the problem. As in the *Rule*, Augustine does not mince words. Where is this leading? ...unto death. He is again utterly serious.

Another case of anger involved a member of Augustine's clerical community. Although not a

monk, he was a priest and had promised as did all the others to live in poverty with the bishop. Augustine is hurt and shocked to discover that Januarius has left a will, thus turning his promise of poverty into a lie. Besides causing a scandal in the city, the will occasioned a quarrel between his two children, both of whom were minors and were living in the monasteries of men and women. Januarius had not left the money to either of them, but to the Church. Actually,

**// As for the money,
only that which is
untainted will be
accepted by him
in the name of
the Church. //**

he had previously given the money in trust to the Church until his children were of legal age to decide their own future. Going back on his promise, he disposed of the money as if it were his own. Augustine, however, will have none of the money for the Church: to take money that rightly belonged to the children would be to take dirty money. Besides, the father died angry and unreconciled with his son, which again has tarnished the gift. If the Church were to receive the money, it would be endorsing such actions among its parishioners. Augustine's stance underscores the biblical message that parents have no right to disinherit a child (cf. 1 Tim 5:8) and that God's will is for angry fathers to be reconciled to their sons before their death. As for any money, only that which is untainted will be accepted by him in the name of the Church. As for the quarrel between the two young people:

the daughter wanted the money for herself, since the father had always said it was hers, while the son wanted it to go to the Church. Like a father, the bishop promised to sit the children down and listen to them, enlisting as well several lay members of his congregation to advise him in settling the matter amicably for all.

The repercussions of Januarius' anger reinforces the advice which the bishop gives in his first letter to Mother Felicitas: do not let anger carry over till the next day, or it will eat away at the heart. If the priest had not allowed the anger towards his son to simmer, both the quarrel between his children and scandal to the town would have been avoided.

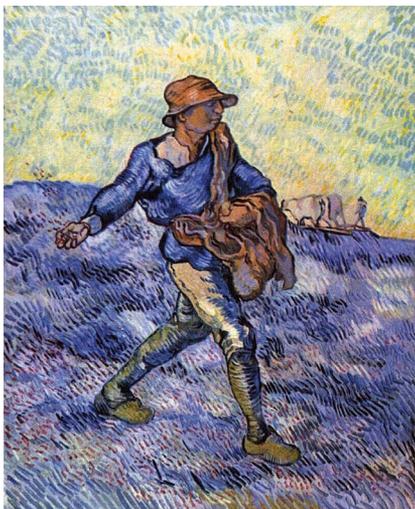
A final example is one used in a previous issue but relevant here and so bears repeating. To deter gossipers, Augustine had carved into the table the saying:

*Whoever thinks that he is able,
To nibble at the life of absent friends
Must know that he's unworthy of this table.*

"Once, when some intimate friends of his, fellow bishops, were forgetful enough of his verses as to gossip, he upbraided them so sternly that he lost his temper, and said that either they should rub these verses off the table, or [if they were to persist in their gossip] that he would get up and go to his room in the middle of the meal." Augustine's anger in this instance is not the vice (a response to a perceived hurt always intended to hurt in return) but a vehement display of emotion intended to prevent the disruption of fraternal charity and unity.

POSTSCRIPT

Unfortunately we do not know the outcome of his advice to the nuns. Did they end their schism and accept the guidance of Mother Felicitas? Perhaps the fact that we hear no more indicates that things settled down peacefully. We are happy to record that the children of Januarius reached real concord in an equal and amicable settlement of the money. ✚



Thank You!

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL of you who have been so kind to us during our transition to North Carolina!

Your prayers, your support, your kindness has touched us deeply. Please be assured that you are in our daily prayers. We would also like to express our gratitude to all our dear friends and readers who belong to the Sowers' Club — thank you for the generous donation of \$100 which you send to us once a year. Your generosity is a terrific help to us at this time when we have only part time employment. For those of you who have not yet joined the Sowers' Club, please consider

A Sower went out to sow... Some seed fell upon good ground and yielded grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Mt 13:3,8

doing so. You Sowers are planting the seeds which enable our community to grow and flourish. Thank you again — all you “old” and “new” Sowers — for thinking of us this year. God’s gracious blessings upon you! — *The Sisters*

TO OUR BELOVED SOWERS: Please fill out and detach the form below, including your prayer intention(s). When you return it with your donation, please use our legal title on all checks: Queen of Peace Monastery, Inc., 363 Armour St., Davidson, NC 28036 God bless you much!

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