

Obsculta

“Listen with the ears of your heart”

March 2016



“Indeed, our affiliation with the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross has brought tremendous spiritual blessings to us and our dear ones. The Cistercian habit has become an effective and visible sign of the healing and reconciling presence of our Lord, Jesus.”

“The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross serves God in a variety of ministries throughout the world. Our union with each other, developed through common prayer also unites us to Jesus Christ, whom we ultimately serve with joy.”

The quarterly newsletter of
The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance
Worldwide Membership of Monks Living Inside and Outside of a Monastery
Founded 1981
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<http://stephenharding.college>

[Vimeo.com/Cistercian](https://vimeo.com/Cistercian)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/HolyCrossCistercians>

News From The Abbot General



Oscar Joseph, OCCO
Of Special
Interest In
This Obsculta

Welcome Oblate Charles Powers

Articles from our Monks

“The heresy of worshiptainment”

How the Cistercians can serve your
community

St. Stephen Harding Theological College
and Seminary celebrates

Information on Ordinations and the Order

Book review, *Getting Healed, Staying
Healed*

Greetings Brothers, Oblates and Friends:

These past few months we have updated our college/seminary, *St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary* web site. We have made over 200 changes and hundreds of additional design changes thus making it more readable and easier to use on mobile devices. I would encourage you to visit at our new UR <http://stephenharding.college> We can be very proud of the good work we are doing.

The college/seminary has helped to educate individuals for the priesthood and many others to further theological training. The college/seminary is an important aspect of our Cistercian charism.

I have prepared an Easter to Pentecost reflection that you might enjoy. It can be found on [Vimeo.com/Cistercian](https://vimeo.com/Cistercian).

Easter to Pentecost <https://vimeo.com/18189267>

Sometimes we kind hearted monks and ministers erroneously believe that we have to help every poor soul that comes our way regardless of the cost to ourselves and our families. This is not true. Please remember that while everyone is worth the effort it might not mean your effort or the right time or even their readiness for change. If you are doing your best and people are resistant or critical of you let them go. Remember they belong to God not you.

God is pressing me lately to create a monastic group in Winston-Salem NC. We are looking for married couples and singles, clerical or lay, who would like to help get us started. Please contact me for more information.



We would like to welcome our newest Oblate and his family to our Cistercian family.

Charles Powers

Greetings:

I am Charles Powers and I was recently accepted into the community as an Oblate.

I live in Erlanger, KY with my lovely wife, Larissa, my 6 year old son Elijah, my 4 year old Josiah and my 1.5 month old Micah (not pictured).

I currently serve part time as Administrative/Executive Pastor at the church I attend and a few hours a month as a Chaplain Team Coach for Marketplace Ministries. However, my biggest responsibility is homeschooling my boys.

I am a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor and have a Masters in Christian Counseling and am ordained through the Communion of Celtic Convergence Churches.

Some of my hobbies include reading and writing, studying works of the church fathers and church history as well as being outdoors, hiking, camping and gardening.

I try to embrace the charisma of the Order and will continue to grow in these disciplines and am so happy to have been accepted! Look forward to the journey ahead.



Free Range Catholic
by Rev.Br. Brendan, OCCO
Vicar General

It is not uncommon the hear folks lament over the use of labels. Things like, “I don’t label others”, “ I don’t like to be labeled”, or the ever popular “ I am non denominational because I don’t like labels”. Sure the verbiage varies, but the point is the same. My response to these lovely people is phooey! Of course we like labels, of course we use labels. Here is an experiment; go into the pantry, peel off all the labels and try to cook dinner. Bet they wish they had those labels now.

There is nothing innately wrong with labeling things, or people for that matter, as long as the labels are accurate. I want my can of green beans to be green beans. I want others who use the “label” Christian to be, well, Christians. Labels are good, they are useful, they give a brief description of what lies inside. Labels are helpful and make life more efficient.

Okay, so what does any of this have to do with the title of this article? Let me explain. All this weird thinking began last year as I was visiting an Eastern Orthodox monastery in New Mexico. I began to ask myself, what is my spiritual label? Not all that easy to define. Sure, I am Catholic, but not Roman. I am very Eastern in thought and practice and my roots are Anglo-Catholic. Geez, that’s a forty mile long label. To wordy, to long, I need to find a better one, but alas, it does not exist, so I made up my own. I am a Free Range Catholic!

We have all heard the term free range when it comes to farming, but do we understand what it means. It does not mean the farmer lets the chickens run wild, unprotected and without supervision. It does mean the farmer allows the flock out of the barn to seek nourishment he is unable to provide. The flock still has boundaries and fences; still has protection and oversight, but the flock is able to seek out nutrients that may be lacking in the continuous, never changing feed of the farm.

Yep, I am certainly free range. I have the boundaries of my Cistercian Order, my Catholic practice and my Christian faith, but I also have the freedom to seek out nourishment wherever God may lead. I have found such sustenance in the Church of Rome, the Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and yes even the Protestant Church. Rich, fulfilling and satisfyingly nourishing bread of heaven. And all the while I still feel the protection of the Church and the direction of the Abbot. I am free range, but I no longer am running wild.

God bless brothers and sisters, and when it comes to your spiritual lives I say,“ stay thirsty my friends”.



Jimmy Allen, Postulant

Finding Christ in Community Living

St. Benedict directs us to bear each other's infirmities whether of body or of mind. He advises not to follow what is profitable to ourselves but what is profitable to others, and showing honor to others is better than receiving honor ourselves. He further writes, "Let them show to each other all brotherly charity with a chaste love. Let them fear God, love their Abbot with sincere and humble affection, and prefer nothing whatever to Christ". These nuggets of wisdom supply us with all we need to find Christ in community living.



Leslie Berry

Owner/Designer at Key Lime Designs, Winston Salem, North Carolina

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Leslie is a graduate from Appalachian State University in graphics and printing, She started a graphic design business, Key Lime Designs, directly after graduating in 2005.

Leslie has also worked at Keiger Graphic Communications as project manager, web designer and developer/builder of cross-media campaigns and web-to-print stores.

The Abbot General says: The above is a moment of gratitude for Leslie's professionalism and creativity.

Leslie has produced and maintained our Cistercian and Stephen Harding webs sites and two other sites for us personally. We have experienced the torture of dealing with *other* webmasters/designers. Leslie does what she says in a timely and efficient manner. What I like best is that she speaks English not webanise. Not only can I understand her but she is a delight to work with. You can also work with her near or far. So give her a call today!!!

Father Dr. Dr. Joachim Seeger, ORCC
Oblate/OCCO
From Germany



What is Easter?

The night of Saturday to Sunday is dedicated in many churches and Christian communities around the world remembering the light that has come through Jesus Christ into the world.

Crucifixion was the most brutal method of execution in the Roman Empire. The crucifixion of Jesus was the worst in the world's history, a time when humanity in their arrogance and stupidity even went to kill the son of God.

We know that all of those who were involved in the crucifixion were only accomplices who did not know what they were doing. For behind the events of the crucifixion of Jesus was God's adversary, Satan, who now believed that he had carried off a great victory.

But things turned out differently. God raised Jesus Christ on the night of Saturday to Sunday from death and thus made the greatest defeat a triumphant victory.

Thousands upon thousands of people since the resurrection of Jesus Christ now say with great certainty: "My Lord lives - and I will live!" There are countless examples of how people no longer thought of death as death at the end of their lives, but only as a transition from this life to an otherworldly eternal life with God.

These were the people who had accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior and lived her life with him. They could - and can today - say at the end of their lives, what the Apostle Paul exclaimed: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? "(1 Cor. 15, 55)

The heresy of worshiptainment, page one, continued next page

The great heresy of the church today is that we think we're in the entertainment business. A.W. Tozer believed this to be true back in the 1950s and 60s. Church members "want to be entertained while they are edified." He said that in 1962. Tozer grieved, even then, that it was "scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction was God."*

More recently, David Platt has asked: "What if we take away the cool music and the cushioned chairs? What if the screens are gone and the stage is no longer decorated? What if the air conditioning is off and the comforts are removed? Would His Word still be enough for his people to come together?" (*Radical*)

Would it be enough?

Tozer got it right: "Heresy of method may be as deadly as heresy of message."

HALLOWEDNESS, NOT SHALLOWNESS

Like Tozer, we should be concerned that so many people in our churches want to be entertained while they worship. We should be concerned when we no longer recognize the difference between the two. And we should be concerned by the growing belief that adding more entertainment value to worship is necessary for the church to accomplish its mission.

I may stand alone, but it grieves me when I see worship services characterized more by props, performances, and pep rally atmospheres than by any sense of divine sacredness; and hallowedness giving way to shallowness.

This is not about worship styles. The issue is not traditional versus contemporary versus blended worship. It's not about organ versus worship band. That discussion misses the point completely. This is about the heart and focus and intent of worship. The real issues, for me, are these:

1. Who or what is the spotlight really on?

If the figurative spotlight in our church services is on anyone other than God, it is not worship. If the spotlight shines brighter on human performance than on the gospel of Christ, it is not worship. If anyone other than Jesus is receiving our adulation and applause, it is not God we worship.

2. What message are we communicating?

The message of the church—the message the world needs to hear from us—is not, "Come and have a good time," "Come and be entertained," or "Come and find your best life now."

Tozer said: "Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have fun in His name."

The message of the church is the message of the cross. Lest we forget, Jesus' cross was a source of entertainment only for those who mocked Him as He hung on it.

The heresy of worshiptainment, continued

3. How are lives changed?

“But our methods are attracting and winning people!” some will say.

Tozer addressed that sentiment: “Winning them to what? To true discipleship? To cross-carrying? To self-denial? To separation from the world? To crucifixion of the flesh? To holy living? To nobility of character? To a despising of the world’s treasures? To hard self-discipline? To love for God? To total committal to Christ?”

THE WORD DOES THE WORK

David Platt and the church he pastored, The Church at Brook Hills, decided to try to answer the question, “Is His Word still enough for His people to come together?” They stripped away the entertainment value and invited people to come simply to study God’s Word. They called it Secret Church. They set a date—on a Friday night—when they would gather from 6:00 in the evening until midnight, and for six hours they would do nothing but study God’s Word and pray. People came. A thousand people came the first time and it grew from that. Soon, they had to start taking reservations because the church was packed full. Secret Church now draws tens of thousands of people via simulcast in over 50 countries around the world—with no entertainment, no bells and whistles or smoke machines.

Why do they come? Platt explained in an interview: “People are hungry for the Word. There’s really nothing special or creative about it. It’s just the study of the Word *The Word itself does the work!*”

People are hungry. They are hungry for a diet of substance, not candy. More of the Word. Deeper into the Word. Less of what Tozer called “religious toys and trifles.”

*Tozer quotes are taken from *Tozer on Worship and Entertainment* by James L. Synder

Lord, Teach Us How To Pray



We can hold retreats for your community/church.

Cistercians have a long history of leading retreats, healing services, giving workshops and counseling

Contact the Abbot General for more information. We have monks throughout the USA.

Abbot@bellsouth.net

336 918 0975

- What is Prayer?
- Prayer Busters
- Busting the Prayer Busters
- Life Changing Prayer

April 18, 25 May 2, 9, 16, 23

7:00 PM-9:00 PM Each Evening

More communication with God
More peace within yourself
More peace with your neighbor

Pine Grove United Methodist Church
1130 Jonestown Rd
Winston Salem NC 27103

DYNAMIC

Who should participate?

- Christians who want to improve or kick start their prayer lives.
- Those who want to pray deeper and with more meaning.
- Those who are just plain stuck.
- Pastors
- Teachers
- Ministers
- Christian Counselors

The quieter you become
The more you can hear

Each evening there will be time for individual quiet prayer just as though you were at a monastic retreat.

dynamic

Mini Retreat Facilitator:
The Most Rev. Oscar Joseph, OCCO



For more information
(336) 918-0975
Visit our Website:
www.CistercianMonks.org

Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO is the Archbishop and Abbot General for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, a worldwide community of monks. This gives him a unique and valuable perspective on the New Testament and the contemporary Christian Church. He is also an experienced teacher, seminar leader, author, as well as being a radio and television personality.

Must register by April 11, 2016

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____

Getting Healed, Staying Healed
Book fee \$15.00 due at first meeting.
Donations welcomed.

Mail registration to:
Abbot General
1608 Briar Lake Circle
Winston Salem NC 27103
Or e-mail to Abbot@bellsouth.net

Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary

The purpose of **Saint Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary** is to continue the scholarly, classically catholic, and deeply spiritual formation, which was encouraged by Saint Stephen. And also like Saint Stephen, to be both contemporary and forward thinking.

Scholarly:

Our courses are comparable, and often superior, to the best Theological Schools.

Course texts and authors are of the highest academic standing.

Our faculty members are academically trained and experts in their fields.

Classically Catholic:

Our courses are solidly catholic in content.

Our faculty members are trained in Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox traditions.

We have a strong focus on Sacramental Theology.

Spiritual Formation:

We believe that theological education should be spiritually transforming.

Many courses are on Spiritual Formation, Direction, Mysticism, Asceticism.

Many courses on devotions to and the lives of the saints.

Courses focus on Scripture studies.

Many of our faculty belong to religious communities.

Contemporary:

We meet the need for off campus studies.

We use the World Wide Web for research.

Courses are practicable/applicable, readable and deal with current issues.

We offer more courses than most seminaries.

Our faculty members are currently active leaders in ministry.

We provide a unique opportunity to receive both training and licensing for Christian Counselors.

Forward Thinking:

We work with other bishops and abbots and their jurisdictions to educate their clergy and laity.

We allow students to create their own courses and programs.

We offer a wide variety of alternative studies/programs.

We are reasonably priced with many scholarships for those either in sacramental ministry or studying for Holy Orders.

Special options are available for third world countries.

We have a School of Orthodox Theology.

We have the flexibility to meet many unique situations.

Saint Stephen Harding would be proud of our efforts to confess the faith and equip the Church.

New URL !!!

<http://stephenharding.college>

Come and visit us!!!

Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary

What are the students saying about us!!!!

<http://stephenharding.college>

“A wonderful by-product of education at St. Stephen Harding is the relationship one can develop with the personalized focus. Frankly, I want to continue studying as a result and that’s the best compliment I can offer anyone involved with St. Stephen Harding, or any student considering the pursuit of a degree. Bravo! Rev. Oscar Joseph, may God continue to bless your endeavors and seminary – they have certainly blessed me!”

“Indeed, it has been a great, fruitful experience to have studied at St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary. I had finally attained one of my dreams, to have a theology doctorate, and I had done it thanks to the guidance and encouragement of the Abbot.”

“The course offerings from St. Stephen Harding target some of the most interesting and practical areas in theology today. Not only are there a great number of choices available, but the student is encouraged to think ‘out of the box’ in true Socratic fashion; ‘independent’ study is truly that, with support coming from the school to pursue one’s goal, not just to get a degree. When one factors in the reasonable cost, personalized dedication of teaching staff, the academic rigor expected, the result is one where the spirit is nurtured as much as the mind. That is the meaning of ‘holistic’ in it’s true Christian sense.”

“I am lead to boast about the education received as well as ‘free’ insight offered from the Abbot. I must admit, I wasn’t sure I could pull this off – a Master’s degree while juggling so many other things in life, but thanks to his gentle, always humorous guidance, I was able to realize a long term ambition.”

Daily Prayer for the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

C. Let us pray
C. Our help is in the name of the Lord,
R. *Who made heaven and earth.*
C. Holy Lord, Holy Mighty One,
R. *Incline your ear towards us.*
C. St. Benedict, Father of our Order
R. *Pray for us.*
C. Mother Mary, Queen of Heaven
R. *Pray for us.*
C. All the Angels and Saints
R. *Pray for us.*

Please pray this prayer every day.

All. O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you praise and thanks.

May we respond to Your call in charity and courage and grow in numbers and holiness.

Bless our Abbot General Oscar Joseph with good health, growth in wisdom and grace. Help him to see the world as you do.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with leaders, both monks and clerics, who will carry forward our charism.

May our Beloved Order be blessed with the material and financial resources necessary to fulfill its mission.

We ask you, Lord, to bless us with a residential monastery in Winston-Salem where we can live as brothers and host others in a spirit of hospitality as taught by our Father, Benedict.

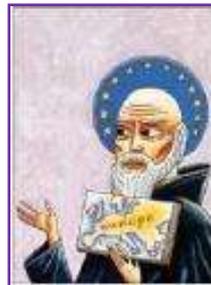
Holy Father Benedict help us to bring a contemplative balance to everyday matters, to cultivate the daily disciplines of work and prayer, to persevere in our vows of obedience, stability and daily conversion.

We pray for all those who have requested our prayers particularly members of our Order and those who are in union with us.

We pray also for those who may have given up hope or have forgotten to pray for themselves.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever.

Amen.



The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance is an independent dispersed contemplative Religious Order that consists of laymen and women, single or married and male Diocesan clergy, from Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Old Catholic traditions who live in the world as well as in monasteries or hermitages.



Our Cistercian roots date back to the eleventh century.

We live the Cistercian charism in our love of solitude, contemplation, work, and study as well as living under the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and vows of Conversatio, Stability, and Obedience.

Our purpose is to:

- a) seek perfection.
- b) praise and worship God

Our work is to:

- a) produce educational materials.
- b) host retreats.
- c) found autonomous religious communities.
- d) prayerfully intercede for those in need and for peace in the world.
- e) perform works of charity, pastoral ministry and mission work



The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is 33 years old. We are one of the oldest Religious Orders of our kind.

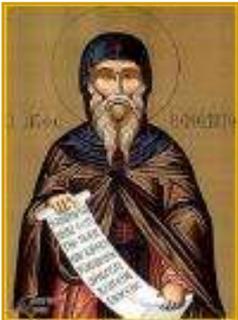
Our members come from a wide variety of backgrounds including educators, medical and mental health professionals, law enforcement, engineers, retired and disabled individuals, homemakers, and even a peanut salesman.

Our monks and oblates give sacrificially to their communities.

Additionally the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross operates The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary and Saint Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology. They currently have 5 Certified Degree Granting Academic Institutes and provides education for a worldwide student body and several Diocesan jurisdictions.

Martyrs and monks have always been the spiritual fiber holding together the Church Catholic.

Br. Columcille, OCCO writes, *“I believe Cistercians, and all contemplatives to be the heart of the Church. Our intentions, made perfect through the Holy Spirit, support all of the apostolic work around the world. Perhaps the stars would fall from the sky were it not for men and women dedicated to a life of prayer and sacrifice. We are a part of something holy, and are being made holy in the process.”*



We, the Cistercians of the Holy Cross, are embedded icons, living sacramentals; who sustain, grace, and hold together the fiber of our communities.

Monks can also be deacons and priests



Deacon Monks can

- Develop local faith communities
- Do religious services
- Preach
- Baptize
- Marry
- Bury

Priest Monks can also

- Celebrate the Holy Eucharist
- Hear confessions
- Give The Sacrament of the Sick



- The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is happy to receive male applicants for Holy Orders, e.g., Priest, Deacon. We would also consider incardination for other rightfully ordained clerics.
- While there are traditional qualifications for ordination/incardination, the principal interest is discerning a true vocation and developing Priests or Deacons who are fruitful ministers. Therefore, educational requirements may be individually tailored.
- We celebrate valid apostolic lines of succession, the seven sacraments and liturgical worship consistent with the historical churches. While some practices may differ, e.g., married clergy, we adhere to the dogmas constituted by true apostolic teaching.
- If you are interested in ordination or incardination, complete the application found on our website and forward it to the Abbot General. His office will then contact you.



Great videos for all occasions and needs. Good for personal study and group discussions. Can be used to introduce others to the Cistercian charism. Check them out.

There are several new videos available. Check them out.

The Abbot is really funny in some of these videos.
Can you believe it?

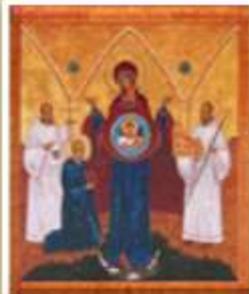
www.vimeo.com/Cistercian

Two NEW teachings on Sexuality

I have really enjoyed ALL of these videos and I think that this technology is blessed by your and by our intent. I think it's really difficult for many of us to "feel" like we are a community, what with distances, languages, etc. Your videos have helped me in that regard. I think of them as chapter talks and pray for my brothers and superiors in relation to what you have said. I am honored to be part of such important work.

Br. Columcille, OCCO

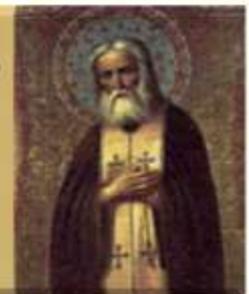
Technology gives our worldwide community one more way of coming closer together. I have produced a number of videos to provide personal messages and teaching opportunities for our members. I hope that they will be both enjoyable and inspiring.



The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary

and

The St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology



St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary welcomes students to a wide variety of degrees, programs, licensing, and continuing educational opportunities. Check it out <http://stephenharding.college> for more information and application.

Getting Healed, Staying Healed

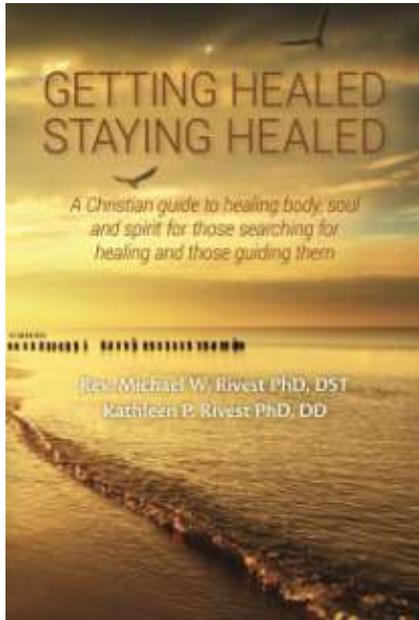
A Christian guide to healing body, soul and spirit for those searching for healing and those guiding them

Authored by Rev. Michael W. Rivest, PhD, DST and Kathleen P. Rivest, PhD, DD

Imagine that you could experience true freedom in everyday life. Healing and can move barriers that prohibit you from giving and receiving love.

Doctors Michael and Kathleen Rivest believe that to be healed is to be in a right relationship with God. We all face obstacles in our lives, and whether it's the sins we commit or the sins of others, these impediments block our ability to experience the loving and merciful nature of God. It is this fractured connection to our creator that produces a brokenness or sickness within our bodies, souls, and spirits. This often puts us in personal and relational conflict.

The Gospel isn't called the Good News without reason. Christ came to heal us from the doubts and fears that keep us in conflict, separation and sickness. It is possible to step into His presence.



Personal yet professional, *Getting Healed and Staying Healed* is grounded in Biblical wisdom and reveals how to remove barriers through the power of prayer so you can experience the healing love of God.

Written for counselors and spiritual directors, as well as lay people, this insightful Guide also draws from inspirational letters and case studies to show the various ways healing can be expressed.

The insights in this book aren't just good ideas—they are Scriptural truths that open the door to lasting transformation.

About the authors:

Rev. Michael W. Rivest, PhD, DST, is a Licensed Clinical Pastoral Counselor, NCCA. Michael is also a diplomate of the National Board of Christian Clinical Therapists. Additionally he is Board Certified in Sex Therapy and Counseling. Civil and religious leaders seek out his advice for both personal and professional development. Michael is also an experienced college educator. He has conducted seminars and workshops throughout the United States and Canada. Both he and his wife are television and radio personalities.

Kathleen P. Rivest, PhD, DD, is a Licensed Clinical Pastoral Counselor, NCCA and a Certified Crisis and Abuse Counselor with more than 20 years' experience working with adults and children who have suffered abuse and/or neglect. Kathleen is a Marian scholar and the founder of Popcorn LaLa, LLC.

Get your copy at: GettingHealed.today or Amazon.com for overseas book orders or Kindle

CISTERCIAN ORDER OF THE HOLY CROSS, COMMON OBSERVANCE



We serve men and women, clerical or lay, married or single by:

- *Helping them grow in perfection through the use of the Rule of St. Benedict, our Constitution and Manual, and community life.*
- *Consecrating to a first or second order religious life those who want to live either in community or outside community.*
- *Third order oblate program.*
- *Validating and assisting those already living the religious life but not living in a formal community.*
- *Supporting men with a call to the diaconate and priesthood through ordination, incardination.*

The Cistercian charism is a refuge for ardent lovers of God. The adherence to the Holy Rule of St. Benedict and focus on contemplating God in prayer is a precious balm on hearts aching for closer union with the Lord. The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross is an opportunity for men or women to become a true monk or nun in this revered tradition."

*For more information contact
Abbot@bellsouth.net*