

# Obsculta

"Listen with the ear of your heart."



**September 2020**



**"Persevere in prayer. Gratitude will open our souls to the unity of God, self, and others. Gratitude moves us from limitations and fear to expansion and love."**

**Member of the Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod**

The quarterly newsletter of

**The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance**

***Worldwide Membership of Monks Living Outside of a Monastery***

**Founded 1981**

**1606 Briar Lake Circle Winston-Salem, NC 27103 336 918-0975**

**[www.CistercianMonks.org](http://www.CistercianMonks.org)**



Greetings Cistercians and Friends:

These past three months have been full of



- A Moral Reflection
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New “We Got Your Back” Memorial  
New College Seminary Certified Academic Institute  
New Associate Academic Dean  
New Courses on Canon Law  
New Honorary Degrees  
New Books by two Cistercian Authors  
New honors for our friends  
New ID cards  
New Fund Raiser





*The Most Rev. Abbot Oscar Joseph, Ph.D., D.S.T., O.C.C.O.*

## A Moral Reflection



I have a rather deep and important question for us.

But first let me tell you a sad story.

A few years ago I was helping a local church build their community. As a part of that I asked them to describe in one or two sentences what makes their church so different that others would be persuaded to join?

None of them were able to do that.

I then asked, what the founder of their church believed regarding the permanence of salvation?

They were all quick to answer, "Once saved always saved."

Actually that was the wrong answer. Their founder believed in the possibility of losing your salvation.

When I told them they all freaked out!

The purpose of my story is to encourage you to get to know what your church really believes.

**What does your church believe regarding culpability through participation?**

For example, if your church believes that abortion is a serious sin and if you were to drive someone to the abortion clinic do you share the same sin as they do?

What if you were to vote a political or religious official into office would you be culpable for their sinful legislations?

**If you are culpable then to what degree and what are your subsequent moral obligations?**

*The above is a moral conscience developmental question.*



## The Abbot Speaks Out--Hang on to your hat!!!

Christianity is a 100% religion. You have to be 100% committed. Most of us are not 100% anything never mind 100% into a faith effort. What can the church do?

All too frequently an alternative is sugar candy sola scriptura preaching filled with platitudes and false promises. This approach eliminates personal responsibility for our misdoings and misplaces guilt onto God. Thus the church/preacher creates a god that manipulates its followers and consequently is not trustworthy. The preacher shifts the light onto himself as the true and certain god.

I would like to believe that this play for power is not intentional, however slothful stupidity and living in narcissistic human weakness is indeed intentional. Churches, pastors, church leaders of every sort have been, for a long time, lead to believe that pop psychology, new age euphemisms and political correctness is biblically/traditionally supported.

I hate false platitudes and have fought my way to oblivion as I have attempted to straighten out the Face Book religious liars. Today I will discuss just one of the lies but if you want more examples read my up and coming book, ***Listen With The Ear Of Your Heart, Your Pilgrimage Toward Intimacy With God.***

An all too popular and so easily misunderstood phrase is, "Surrender to God, and He will do everything for you". The 20% Christian says "Cool." I will surrender and all will be well. Of course he has never surrendered to anything but that doesn't matter. It gets him off the responsibility hook. You might hear him say such things as, "I need a job. I am waiting on God." I am looking for a holy mate so I will just sit here and God will bring one to me." "Our country is in a mess all I can do is turn it over to God." We have all either heard or said such trash.

Let's get something straight. The Bible is not a book about attitudes. It is an action book. Love is an action word. Salvation is an action word. Peace is an action word. Surrender to God is an action word.

Psalms 37 and Tradition provides a list of surrendering actions.

1. *do not fret*
2. *trust in the Lord*
3. *do good*
4. *dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture*
5. *take delight in the Lord*
6. *commit your way to the Lord*
7. *be still before the Lord*
8. *be patient*
9. *refrain from anger*
10. *turn from wrath*
11. *be meek*
12. *be upright*
13. *be blameless*

### My summary:

Don't lead a life full of anxiety. Rather do good, make your home and other communities safe. Have God be the source of your pleasures. Don't keep changing your mind, be quiet and don't talk too much. Be patient with yourself and others. Anger and wrath is squashed by meekness. Do the right things.

**For Cistercian these actions are codified in their vows of Stability, Obedience and Conversion.**

Dear clerical brothers, understand that sola scriptura is the vehicle toward power driven church/clerical abuse. We need to have balance by knowing and teaching what the church has always taught everywhere to everyone.



# Observations

by

Br. Albert Joseph, OCCO

I'm going to share three observations : the first is being asked to confront death, the second is about talking to God, and the third is understanding God with the mind. Don't worry this is not going to be deep. I'll let you do that yourself if you so wish.

First, I was asked to administer the last rites to an elderly Christian in a nursing home. Since it was early in the Covid-19 pandemic, I prepared well for my visit, health wise. Expect the unexpected. What was I going to do; she was completely in an unresponsive state of life. Her reception of the last rites was delegated to me. Lord, let me respond for her, in her stead. We were back on Calvary. The words I gave her were "Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom", and we all know His response. I anointed her and gave her absolution. I know she was at peace because I shared that peace.

The second observation is about prayer. I've often prayed the prayers of St Francis of Assisi because his prayers are prayers that allow me to pray from the heart. With this thought in mind I'm going to recommend a prayer book that I found some five or six years ago entitled SAINT AUGUSTINE'S PRAYER BOOK. See for yourself. It can be ordered from the Holy Cross Monastery bookstore. The monastery is in West Park, New York. If you feel stuck at prayer, this is the ticket.

Now the third observation: trying to understand God, a little bit. Try reading THE ORTHODOX WAY by Bishop Kallistos Ware. The Bishop speaks to our soul intellect. God is fundamentally mystery and how we might understand this mystery, so to speak.





## Living Simply or Simply Living

**Janice Joy Ariza, O.C.C.O./Obl**



Lately I have been thinking about how much simpler my life is because I am working at home. It is more predictable and has a daily rhythm that my life did not have when I was going to the office. There is no traffic, a looser structure and much more flexibility. I, of course, still have meetings and phone calls, but the hurry and pressure from outside and somewhat uncontrollable sources do not exist right now. It is much like living in a monastery where the order of the day is paced and peaceful. This seems like living simply, but it actually is much more complicated to just live a simple life. Our minds go to places where we complicate things. We have a natural inclination to have expectations which leads to disappointment or frustration. We start layering what if with if only and then you have an internal traffic jam with the clock ticking and your temperament declining.

One afternoon I found myself spiraling into a boredom and worse yet, an overwhelming feeling of what purpose does any of this lifestyle have for me. My answer came during a Zoom program I was facilitating on the reasons why things happen. Where is God in all of our lives? Pondering with the group some answers and responses to this question was interesting. Some thought God is always with us and closely involved with each one. Others were unsure. The presenter invited us all to look at the following scripture:

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number thee; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Jeremiah 29: 4-7

There was a silence after this scripture was read. No one said anything because it was like the light went on. We simply need to be about our Father's business and carry on with living. To be present in the dailies brings satisfaction, patience, kindness and most of all a purpose



*Oblate Janice Joy Ariza is the mother-in-law of Br. Benedict, OCCO and was inspired by him to join the Cistercians. Oblate Janice has visited us at the Monastery in Winston Salem, NC. Consequently we discovered her wonderful gift of joy.*



**KATHLEEN P. RIVEST, PH.D., D.D.**

**MARIAN SCHOLAR**  
PUBLISHED AUTHOR  
TV AND RADIO PERSONALITY



### **The Fifteen Promises of Mary to Christians Who Recite the Rosary**

- Whoever shall faithfully serve me by the recitation of the rosary, shall receive signal graces.
  - I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.
  - The rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.
  - It will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the heart of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things. Oh, that souls would sanctify themselves by this means.
  - The soul which recommend itself to me by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish.
  - Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not by an unprovided death; if he be just he shall remain in the grace of God, and become worthy of eternal life.
  - Whoever shall have a true devotion for the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.
  - Those who are faithful to recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plenitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.
  - I shall deliver from purgatory those who have been devoted to the rosary.
  - The faithful children of the rosary shall merit a high degree of glory in heaven.
  - You shall obtain all you ask of me by the recitation of the rosary.
  - All those who propagate the holy rosary shall be aided by me in their necessities.
  - I have obtained from my Divine Son that all the advocates of the rosary shall have for intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.
  - All who recite the rosary are my son, and brothers of my only son Jesus Christ
  - Devotion my rosary is a great sign of predestination.
- (Given to St. Dominic and Blessed Alan)



We congratulate Bishop Seraphim Mary, OSF on his appointment to Associate Dean/Faculty member. Because of his expertise we are now able to offer courses in Canon Law.

**The Independent Anglican Church, Canada Synod is an Official Certified Academic Institute for Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary.**



- Associate Dean/Faculty
- Coadjutor Bishop (Independent Anglican Church – Canada Synod)
- B.A.(Hons) Law – Carleton University
- B.Ed – Education – University of Ottawa
- M.A. Law & Jurisprudence – Carleton University
- LL.D. Doctor of Laws (Honorary) St Stephen Harding Seminary
- Post-graduate reading in Law – Carleton University

Seraphim Mary completed post-ordination studies at the Institute of Religious Life – University of Notre Dame. He completed his religious formation with the Franciscan Order of Divine Compassion. He serves as a certified member of the Ontario College of Teachers, a member of the Ecclesiastical Law Society, and is a legal scholar, lecturer, and Franciscan retreat leader.

CL: The study of canon law consists of the study of church law and regulation. A number of disciplines are related to this subject: theology of canon law, philosophy of law, fundamental concepts of Roman law, elements of civil law, history of the fundamental canonical structures of canon law, history of the sources of canon law, and the relationship between the Church and civil society.

- CL 100 - Canon Law: An Introduction (Credit Hours 2)
- CL 200 - Legal Philosophy (Credit Hours 3)
- CL 300 - Canon Law and Pastoral Ministry (Credit Hours 6)
- CL 400/500 – Christian Liberty and the Law (Credit Hours 6)
- CL 450/550 – Christian Legal Philosophy (Credit Hours 6)
- CL 600 - Christianity and Common Law (Credit Hours 6)
- CL 650 - Advanced Christian Legal Philosophy and Canon Law (Credit Hours 9)





## Introducing the Br. Benedict, O.C.C.O. Memorial “We Got Your Back” Program

**Br. Benedict often said, "Miracles are always happening because God loves you. He's got your back."**

Before I describe the birthing of the Memorial Program let me reintroduce you to Br. Benedict. You might remember that Br. Benedict was a life professed monk with us who went onto heaven two years ago.

He was an exceptionally holy monk whom I loved dearly. Unfortunately both he and his wife Alexis had a number of disabilities and lived in constant physical and emotional pain. We had the privilege of helping them financially particularly with some medications. Via video I and his family conducted the “Last Rites” by his hospital bed. God lead a Roman Catholic Eucharistic minister to arrive at the conclusion of our service. He died shortly after surrounded by his family and a host of angels. I offer here some additional information that was presented at his funeral in the hopes that you might grow to love him as much as I.

.....

*Br. Benedict, OCCO , Passed to the heavens surrounded by his family and many angels. So many angels that the hospital staff saw them. Br. Benedict and I spent many video hours together. He had been hurt and disappointed by the church. He had to figure out if I was trustworthy. In that process we became the best of friends. When it was time to join he went to town selling me on his Cistercian journey. “Dear Father Abbot I dreamed of being a monk when I was little. As you can see I am still in love with St. Benedict. I agreed to the obvious. So he took on a pensive look and said, “Well Abbot let me think about that.” Br. Benedict was so very humorous, captivating and a dear lover of our Lord. I miss him terribly.*

His wife Alexis describes Br. Benedict “as a deeply devoted man, not only to God, but to his family, friends and any stranger who needed a prayer or a friendly conversation. He had a gift for making anyone feel like family. He could see people's hearts and never held a grudge. He was stubborn and difficult but he was also the kindest, sweetest and most caring man I ever knew. He was my Viking Monk, intense, funny, and kind. Benedict was always full of life despite being in so much pain for so long. He wanted people to see the strength, not the weakness, and tried to maintain that until the end.

He never blamed anybody for his faults and was way too hard on himself. Being a former Marine, he would hide his pain and often push it too far. I would tell him that he needed to show people how much he was actually suffering, but he couldn't do it.

He was my soul mate, my best friend, and the love of my life. I never once regretted being with him and I never felt gypped by his illness. I would have taken care of him forever. I am the person I am today, and a better person, because I was blessed with the presence that is Benedict.”



**Br. Benedict often said, "Miracles are always happening  
because  
God loves you. *He's got your back.*"**

**The Br. Benedict, O.C.C.O.  
Memorial "We Got Your Back" Program**

The Memorial Program is developing nicely. While it is not yet completed I am inviting you to join us in the development of this unique program that would serve our dear Cistercian Monks and in many cases the clergy of the Independent Anglican Church of Canada located in the USA and Canada.

I do not yet have all the parts put together. I am seeking your thoughts and what you would want to volunteer to do.

So Far:

1. We have the beginnings of an Emergency Need Fund. Two of our monks have donated a total of \$2000.00. I am looking for more donors. We need to reach at total of \$5000.00. Please send your donations via the link on our website.
1. We currently have a monk writing up more detailed rules and I have someone who would be an excellent administrator.
2. We currently have an insurance agency that works with Medicare, Medicaid and other health insurances that can advise/sell such policies.
3. We are currently speaking to a couple of Medical types on advising our members on healthy diets and exercise.
4. We might have a Marian Scholar that would be a resource.
5. We have a Cistercian monk/professional counselor willing to give short term counseling to men.
6. We have someone who would be willing to offer Spiritual Direction.
7. We have an auto mechanic consultant.
8. We have a female exercise support person who can also give emotional and spiritual support to women.
9. We have a number of educational videos regarding life's difficulties.

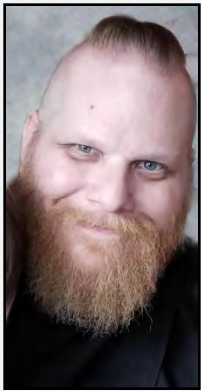
**You can see where I am going. I know that each of you has giftedness that would be welcomed.**

**All activity is volunteer. No money is exchanged for voluntary services.**

**Please do not hesitate to be creative and even give me advice.**

**These "Got Your Back" topic areas are meant to be down to earth aids with everyday needs.**

***I do not know of any dispersed religious order that has done this for its members.***



## The Br. Benedict, O.C.C.O. Memorial “We Got Your Back” Program

We already have \$2,000.00  
We need  
\$3000.00 more



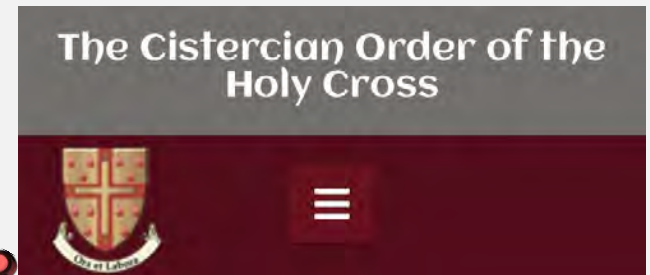
You can give to the emergency or general fund in  
the following ways.

Goes into  
emergency medical fund



<https://charity.gofundme.com/Cistercianorderoftheholycrosscommonobse rvanceinc>

Goes into  
general fund



[www.CistercianMonks.org](http://www.CistercianMonks.org)  
Donation button

facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/donate/264093034579618/10223412687813510/>



<https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage?orig=%2F>

Lookup Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross

# ***The Cistercians honor their members and friends in a number of ways.***

## **Honorary Doctoral Degrees**

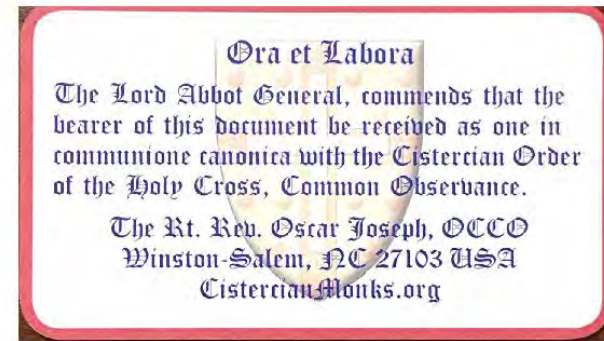
St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary offer these degrees for the purpose of rewarding or advancing outstanding persons. Honorary degrees may be awarded to a person deserving of honor by virtue of scholarly distinction, noteworthy public service or significant contribution to the church at large.

## **The Companions of the Holy Cross Comites Sancti Crucis**

Is a medium for The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance to give their highest honor to those individuals who demonstrate extraordinary love for the Holy Cross through outstanding qualities of character.

**If you are interested in receiving our blessings please contact Abbot Oscar Joseph, OCCO for more information.**

## **Sacred membership cards that have an Apostolic Blessing**



This Identification card celebrates and honors your association with the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross. Whether you are a life vowed member or a valued friend of the Order please know that I embrace each of you and dispense upon you the riches of the Lord's blessings.

I pray that this document will remind you of our shared life of prayer, work and that you are in a communion of persons who celebrate a common faith and discipline, The Rule of St. Benedict.

I further authorize The Cistercian Order's vowed and promised members to honor their valued friends who have shown such affection for our work with this same sign of communion.

I have blessed this document with Holy Water and my Apostolic Blessing thus making it a sacred source of grace for you and reception of St. Benedict's protection.



# **The Companions of the Holy Cross**

## **Comites Sancti Crucis**

Is a medium for The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, Common Observance to give their highest honor to those individuals who demonstrate extra ordinary love for the Holy Cross through outstanding qualities of character such as:

### **Dedication to personal or corporate spiritual growth:**

Demonstration of Spiritual Giftedness through evidence of genuine Fruits of the Holy Spirit

### **Personal courage to overcome overwhelming odds through the use of:**

Godly wisdom

Dedication to Justice

Uses temperance, humility, meekness, discipline

### **Self Sacrificing:**

Charity (love and generosity) towards the Cistercian Order, or a specific member of the Order, social, physical, emotional, spiritual needs of others

Generous with their time, talents and resources

Genuine care for the unlovable.

### **Nominations**

Nominations\*\* for receiving the highest honor of companions of the Holy Cross may be given by Members (those under vows), Postulants, Oblates, leaders, Council Members, faculty, and others directly associated with the Cistercian Order.

The petitioner should send to the Office of the Abbot General:

The contact information including, mailing address and e-mail of the petitioner, and the candidate. Include several paragraphs describing the candidate's biography and reasons for the nomination.

Upon making a decision the Office of the Abbot General will advise the petitioner on further actions.

### **From the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross you will receive a number of wonderful benefits.**

You have an "Associate Membership\* into the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

We will give you a pin representing the shield of the Cistercian Order that may be worn.

You will have our apostolic benediction and spiritual covering/protection.

You and your intentions will be prayed for during the monks/Oblates morning prayers.

You will have access to The Cistercian leadership for personal prayer and spiritual guidance.

You may use the letters CHC after you name as a declaration that they are Companions of the Holy Cross.

You will be invited to retreats and events.

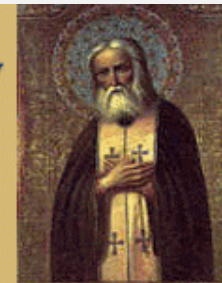
\*"Associate Membership" is a non-voting participation in the Grace and Charism of the Cistercian Order

\*\* Members (those under vows), Postulants, Oblates, leaders, Council Members, faculty and others directly associated with the Cistercian order are not eligible for nomination to the Companions of the Holy Cross.





*The St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary*  
*and*  
*The St. Seraphim School of Orthodox Theology*



**Honorary Doctoral Degrees have been awarded by colleges/universities and the church for centuries and are recognized as a sign of distinction and appreciation.**

Often they can open many “doors” that would otherwise be closed.

Additionally an individual with this degree has the additional honor and use of the title Doctor.

St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary offer these degrees for the purpose of rewarding or advancing outstanding persons. Honorary degrees may be awarded to a person deserving of honor by virtue of scholarly distinction, noteworthy public service or significant contribution to the church at large.

**Recent Recipients**



**Rt. Rev. Peter Goodrich, C.H.C., Th.D., D.D.**

Honored member of Companions of the Holy Cross  
Also received an earned Doctorate in Theology



**Rt. Rev. Noel Zbigniew Gondek, LL.D.**



**Rt. Rev. Richard Best, D.D.**

***Honoris Causa Doctoral level degrees:***

**D.D. DOCTOR OF DIVINITY**

for bishops or other exceptional religious figures

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for excellence in theological scholarship and/or teaching

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for academic/teaching excellence

**LL.D. DOCTOR OF LAWS**

for excellence in knowledge and application of Canon Law

**LITT.D. DOCTOR OF LETTERS**

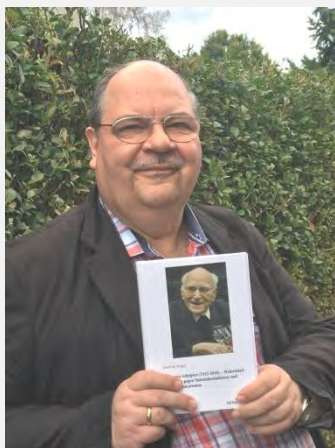
for excellent achievement in humanities, creative art, scholarship and teaching

***Honoris Causa Master's level degree:***

**LITT.M.A. MASTER'S OF LETTERS**

for excellent achievement in humanities, creative art, or scholarship and teaching

**Go to [StephenHarding.College](http://StephenHarding.College) for more information**



**We congratulate Dr. Joachim Seeger, OCCO/obl  
on his recent academic accomplishment.  
*A second new book***



Priests from the Münsterland fight against National Socialism and GDR Communism - new book published by Peter Lang  
author Joachim Seeger  
Hermann Scheipers (1913 - 2016) - Church resistance to National Socialism and GDR communism

#### A biography

The present study, which was accepted as a rigorous dissertation at St. Elisabeth University in Bratislava, deals with a Catholic cleric from Münsterland, Hermann Scheipers. His life and work are shown here biographically. He belongs to the minority of Germans who do not simply accept the National Socialist and then the Communist regime, but actively resist it. Hermann Scheipers knew how to stage or celebrate the symbolic power of his biography. He knew the impact of his biography, his reputation, because he was the "concentration camp priest" par excellence. Hermann Scheipers was a man of convictions and a symbol for the multiple struggles that Catholic dignitaries faced in the 20th century. This work serves the church-independent contemporary history research to work up the National Socialist past of the Catholic church.

ISBN-13: 978-3631826362

#### Selling price

CHF \*\* SFr. 58.00EURD \*\* € 49.95EUR \*\* € 51.40EUR \* € 46.70GBP \* £ 38.00USD \* \$ 56.95

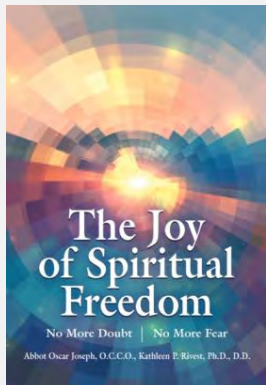
Berlin, Bern, Bruxelles, New York, Oxford, Warszawa, Vienna, 2020. 246 pages

#### Content

Introduction - Childhood and Adolescence - Between Adaptation and Resistance - The Experience of National Socialism and War - Postwar Period in Germany - Relocation to the GDR, an Existential Decision - Pastor in the GDR - Honor and Dignity - End of Life - Conclusion and Overall Appraisal

#### Author information

Joachim Seeger, born in Recklinghausen in 1959, studied Catholic theology, history, pedagogy, German studies, philosophy, practical philosophy, social sciences, psychology and literature. He holds a doctorate in theology and a doctorate in history, a theologian, a pedagogue and a master's degree in applied ethics. He works as a teacher at the West vocational college in the city of Essen. Now he holds a third doctorate in philosophie (PhDr.) from the St. Elisabeth University in Bratislava (SK).



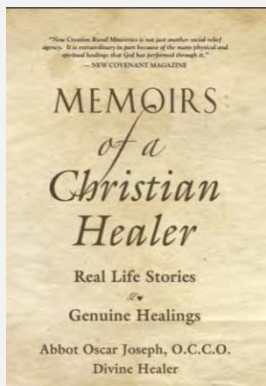
## The Abbot Just Published Three New Books



**The Joy of Spiritual Freedom** leads and inspires the reader to enter into a joy filled relationship with a loving God. It is grounded in Biblical wisdom revealing how to remove debilitating doubt and fear. It also draws from inspirational letters and case studies that illustrate the Gospel path toward freedom.

Get your copy TODAY at 20% discount

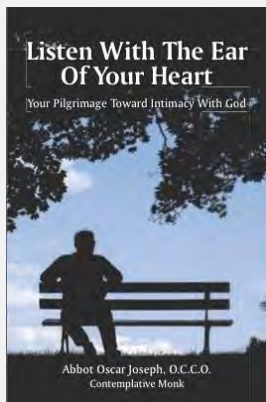
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**Memoirs of a Christian Healer** will inspire and empower the reader to walk in God's mercy. The Abbot recounts real stories and genuine healings. This is a book that you cannot put down. **Memoirs of a Christian Healer** chronicles the miraculous works of God. As you walk with the Abbot through his own difficulties you will experience the joy of victory and the sorrow of human weakness. Incorporated within the many stories the Abbot includes reflective lessons on the Healing Ministry.

Get your copy TODAY at 20% discount

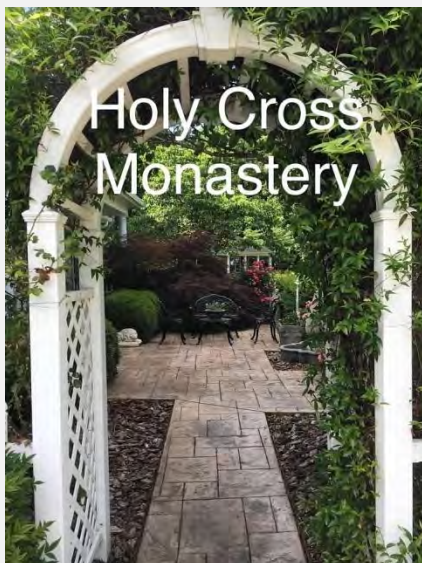
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**Listen With The Ear Of Your Heart** captures the joy and interior peace available to everyone. It transcends denominational differences. Regardless of where you are or what you think about yourself, God is pursuing you and is already present to you.

God created you to yearn for intimacy with Him. Yet few know the road to such intimacy. **Listen With The Ear Of Your Heart** presents a dynamic pilgrimage utilizing Scripture, the teachings of the Church Fathers, The Rule of St. Benedict, prayer, meditation and contemplation. The Pilgrimage begins by helping you to release your fears born from the lies and misconceptions that have been rooted in you from infancy. You can listen to God in a down-to-earth sustainable prayer life that is immune to the heretic nature of our culture and the stress of daily life. The book concludes with aids on creating a life structure that will enable you to walk in, with and through Him. Everything becomes prayer. Abbot Oscar Joseph shares some of his captivating life experiences which make **Listen With The Ear Of Your Heart** a life-changing experience.

Will be available shortly on Amazon.com



**You might be interested to know that we at Holy Cross Monastery have both an active prayer and ministry life.**

Not only do we take care of the business and administrative aspects of our beloved Cistercian Order we also minister by:

- Serving the students and faculty of St. Stephen Harding Theological College and Seminary
- The Companions of the Holy Cross
- Conduct pre-marriage preparation
- Spiritual Direction
- Hospital visitations
- Offer the Sacraments
- Conduct Sunday Services
- “We Got Your Back” Memorial administration
- Publish quarterly newsletters, Obsculta
- Conduct a variety of public services/seminars/retreats
- Meet with and provide mentorship to a variety of local and national ministers/ministries
- Sponsor two Face Book Missions.

## **Recently we had a the Joy of Administering a Baptism**

Julie, is an honored member of our Companions of the Holy Cross, Lucas is a devoted father, Liam captures the heart of every one.

Lucas and I gave birth to precious Liam on March 8, 2020. He has been the joy of our lives.

Recently, on Saturday, August 15, just shy of Liam turning 6 months old, we celebrated his baptism. It was a touching service as we welcomed him into the Christian faith. During the ceremony we were deeply moved with the overwhelming understanding of our role in raising him up to know Jesus Christ.

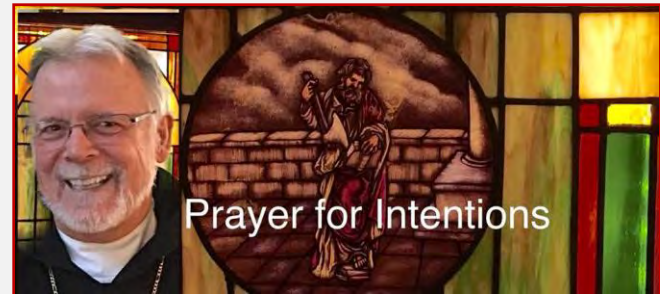
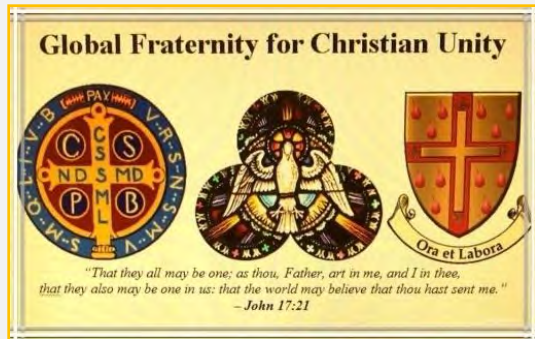
We have been deeply moved by the time, attention and guidance Abbot Oscar Joseph has given us in the raising of our son Liam. And we are grateful that he has worked to teach and remind us time and again that God's love and grace is deeper still.





**The Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross sponsors two Face Book Groups.  
Each group consists of 500+ active members. The groups are closely monitored to stay mission focused.**

**We invite you and your friends to participate**



### **The Global Fraternity for Christian Unity.**

This group offers a private forum for MEMBERS ONLY In order to provide a venue of encouragement for continued spiritual formation of individuals and groups invested in the discipline of prayer in a safe environment free of criticism.

We are encouraged to develop personal prayer lives for the purpose of spiritual personal and corporate growth in unity with God and each other.

For more information about The Global Fraternity for Christian Unity please go to [CistercianMonks.org](http://CistercianMonks.org). and click the link to the Global Fraternity.

**This is a one of a kind program for  
Christian Unity**

Prayer For Intentions/Global Fraternity of Christian Unity

An online ministry of the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross.

Prayers for sincerely personal needs.

This group has a supportive family environment. Where "strangers" sincerely pray and give support to each other.

**I cannot compliment this group enough. If  
you need prayer or wish to be a prayer  
partner with others please join.**

***Both groups have ministered for over two years.***





# ***Want to Learn About Life? Talk to Your Cat***



## **Stability/Obedience/Conversion of Life**

*Should I miss our morning stability promise on the stairs Mister is sure to take ownership of my chair. His attitude is a clear demand that I keep the promises that I have made. My focus should first be on him. After all I did promise to do everything that I can to not only maintain but advance our relationship. He consistently reminds me to do the doings of the stability that I had promised and my need to change my behaviors.*

**Stability is a rooted engaging commitment to place, time and relationships.**

Expectations found in genuine stability:

### **External**

Reliable patterns in persons and life events where one can productively live their life while attending to the present moment.

### **Internal**

Inner stability is focusing on God and responding to the moment with love. Face one's pain and destructive emotions. Look for the best in others and an eagerness to forgive.

**Stability is achieved through persistence, patience and humility. Focus on God and prayer.**

**For Benedict obedience is an action taken when we exercise both physical and emotional stability.**

**Obedience to others is the way that we live out our obedience to God.**

**Obedience is accountability in community and in relationships by focusing on the needs of others.**

**Obedience is putting God at the center of our lives thus giving a balance between our needs and the needs of others.**

**Obedience is to take only an action that is endorsed by those who show wisdom and understanding.**

### **Conversation of Life**

Is openness to possibility of changing behaviors to respond to God's plan for your lives and your vows of stability and obedience by practicing the presence of God and keeping your death always before your eyes.

# 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 Memorial Day for our dear Br. Paul, OCCO is June 24th. He was a true blessing to our Order.**

- 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. We adhere to 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.

**From The Abbot:**

***Rather than list the qualities of the Cistercian Charism and discuss what we can do for you I am listing below some comments from members on what we have done for them.***

*“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.”*

*“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.”*

*“There were certain things that prayer, study, and scriptural research have convinced me are required in my own path. It was important for me that the order be contemplative, and that it adhered to the traditional orthodox teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was not interested in joining an order that was too easy, or that bent over too far to be politically amenable. It was important to me that I would be well guided along the way.”*

*“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.”*

*“When I joined the Cistercian Order of the Holy Cross, the first thing that changed was my prayer life. Before, it was a life-less obligation, a burden my wife and I committed ourselves to pray at least the Morning and Evening Prayers and whenever time allows, to pray the other offices as well. This helped us to become more prayerful, teaching us to offer everything to God each day; referring to Him even the mundane things of our daily life. I started seeing myself opening more and more to my wife in terms of communication, becoming more forgiving and affirming. My relationship with the Lord started improving tremendously. Whereas before, obeying God is a duty, now it is a joy.”*

**Suspicious Signs of a Call to Contemplative Religious Life**

**Desire to grow in union with God through prayer. Love of God that manifests itself in a desire to give one's life to Him. Desire to live simply. The wish to live life with less stress and more order. Generosity. Ability to listen to others and accept direction when needed. Desire to worship God in all the moments of life.**

**Contact us immediately if these symptoms appear.  
[Abbot@bellsouth.net](mailto:Abbot@bellsouth.net)**

# 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, 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](mailto:Abbot@bellsouth.net)*