DAYLESFORD News
For the friends of Daylesford Abbey Winter / Spring 2022

ABBEY MISSION STATEMENT
Daylesford Abbey exists to enrich the church by our Norbertine communio, nourished by contemplation on God’s word, made visible in worship and service within the local church.
Recently I was asked, “What is your vision for the Abbey and its future?” That question inspired the topic for our November Founders’ Day presentation. Several of us, including the Abbey Mission Advisors, spent time reflecting on this. [The AMA are lay women and men who are invited to advise the Abbey leadership on issues pertaining to our mission.] I’d like to share a few highlights from the presentation, starting with a quote from our 1997 Vision Statement - “We are called to be apostles of peace to our own hearts and for one another, to be a healing and reconciling community, a hospitable family, where any of God’s children may find a sanctuary of healing and strength for Christ’s mission.”

I went on to speak of how Daylesford Abbey was born at the height of Vatican II, which was an attempt to bring the Church into the modern world. From the beginning, the Abbey enthusiastically embraced this spirit - things like the renewal of the liturgy; the desire to move from a hierarchical to a more collegial model of Church leadership, especially encouraging the laity to greater participation, as well as moving Catholicism to the forefront of the ecumenical movement. As a result of this “breath of fresh air,” many spiritual renewal movements were born. To say that the character of Daylesford Abbey was a product, in large measure, of these reforms from the Second Vatican Council is not an overstatement.

Furthermore, we now see, in the efforts of Pope Francis, an attempt to fulfill the promise of Vatican II, especially with a more collegial (or synodal) way of operating. We also recognize that Pope Francis is trying to move us from a somewhat legalistic mindset in the Church to a more pastoral and compassionate one. MERCY SHOULD BE THE ORDER OF THE DAY. We heartily agree.

However, given the current struggles and diminishment in the Church as a whole, which of course includes the Abbey, some have wondered what can we do to make a difference? I shared the inspiration that I found in the words of the 97-year-old former president Jimmy Carter: “I have one life and one chance to make it count for something … My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can, with whatever I have, to try to make a difference.” The Abbey’s future is in God’s hands; our task is simply to do everything we can to be faithful to the mission God has given us.

In his enthusiastic and hope-filled part of the presentation, Tom Christopher (Director of the Abbey Associates) then told us: “To prepare to be amazed.” Prior John Zagarella concluded the presentation by reminding us of the zealous commitment of St. Norbert to be a minister of peace and reconciliation.

We are counting on all our lay partners to join us in this endeavor, keeping in mind the motto of John Neitzel, our first Abbot: “that all may be one.”
If you’ve never attended AbbeyFest, you may be wondering exactly what it is. AbbeyFest is an all-day Catholic/Christian faith and music celebration. For me personally, the AbbeyFest experience is a two-day event. It begins the afternoon prior to the big event, when I join with a group of volunteers to transform the tranquil grounds of Daylesford Abbey into a venue ready to host over three thousand people. By the time I arrive, the assembling of the stage is well underway. For several hours, I help set up approximately 50 tents, unload lots of tables and chairs, put up temporary fencing, put out signs, and assemble trash/recycle receptacles -- all while getting reacquainted with folks that I haven’t seen in a year and meeting new folks with a servant heart for the Lord. Just as I’m beginning to realize that I’m not as young as I once was, the first sound check is performed and that brief sound of music pumps new life into my soul. As I head home, I’m tired but filled with anticipation for the day ahead. I also feel so grateful for the opportunity to have served with such selfless, caring people.

On the day of the big event, I begin as a volunteer. I arrive much earlier than necessary because I just can’t help myself. I’m like a little kid heading into a candy store! The Abbey grounds are gorgeous, the vendors and food trucks are arriving, last-minute preparations are underway and anticipation is in the air. How will the Lord reveal Himself today?

I’ve been a volunteer at every AbbeyFest. My favorite volunteer job, by far, is ticketing. Watching multitudes of believers arrive, filled with the Holy Spirit and ready to spend the day praising the Lord, brings such joy to this girl’s heart! Both young and old arrive, in strollers and wheelchairs, with earbuds, ear plugs and hearing aids.

When my volunteer shift is over, I join the crowd. Music fills the air. The area in front of the stage is filled with young people jumping and waving their arms. Further back I see people singing along with hands lifted in praise. Still further back, I see people visiting the vendor tents and over on the other side of the stage, I see people in prayer groups and others waiting to go to confession. Such diversity all in one place.

After several hours of music and speakers, it’s time for Mass. Having Mass outside is a special treat, especially on such beautiful grounds and surrounded by such a huge community of believers. Then, at the end of the liturgy, the presider (this year it was Archbishop Nelson Perez) asks all the young people, who are willing to be open to follow where the Lord is leading them, to come forward for a blessing. Watching hundreds of boys and girls walk forward is so encouraging and having the opportunity to pray over them means so much.

After Mass, it’s back to the music. This year the headliners were We Are Messengers and Matt Maher. Both know how to rock the house! Then, in contrast, we are called to quiet ourselves and prepare for Adoration. By this point, the sun has gone down, candles are distributed, and candlelight spreads through the crowd. A moment ago, the volume was way up. Now, thousands of people are on their knees holding candles and you can hear a pin drop - such a contrast. After Adoration, the volume is turned up one last time and the evening ends with a few last songs.

The day is a series of complementing opposites…light/dark, loud/quiet, young/old, dancing/kneeling. A true reminder of the diverse, yet complementary, Body of Christ.
With the coming of the New Year, I will be beginning my second semester of ministry as Chaplain at Immaculata University.

I am part of a three-person Campus Ministry Team led by a young IHM sister who also teaches theology on campus. We are in the process of hiring a third team member to replace a longtime lay campus minister who recently got another job. With Sr. Laura also relatively new to campus ministry, it feels exciting to be a part of forming a new team to serve the students.

My role will focus on celebrating the sacraments, preparing and leading various prayer services, training liturgical ministers and leading RCIA classes. I will also be seeking to reach out to students not currently involved in Campus Ministry, regardless of their religious affiliation. This growing group at Immaculata and many other universities are what the census-takers call the “nones”, those who do not identify with any particular religious tradition or denomination.

The past semester’s campus ministry program has included many opportunities to engage students. These included social events like movies-with-meaning, firepit gatherings, holy hours, numerous opportunities to serve in local charities and training our liturgical ministers for campus liturgies. We just completed a Busy Person Retreat, for students, which focused on helping them reflect on where their joys and talents meet the needs of the world.

Beginning this winter, I will also be leading the athletic team chaplains as we reach out to the student athletes, with the help of their coaches, to encourage them to connect their lives as athletes with their spiritual lives. In particular, I will serve as chaplain for the baseball team, one of the largest teams on campus. Moreover, I will be helping to develop and provide ongoing training for the other team chaplains.

Immaculata celebrated their Centenary this past October with a Mass and a Gala celebration which were beautiful. I felt blessed to be a part of the planning of the liturgy.

Overall I look forward with our new Campus Ministry Team to deepening our relationships with the students -- and, as a member of the Abbey’s vocation team, I am grateful for the chance to interact with some faith-filled young men in our campus community, whom the Lord might be calling to the Norbertine Community.
Back in November of 2020, I was hired as a part-time Chaplain in the Campus Ministry Department at Cabrini University. Nine months later, I was asked to be the full-time Chaplain as well as Chief Mission Officer of the University. In both positions I answer directly to Dr. Donald Taylor, University President.

As the University Chaplain, my main responsibility is to celebrate Mass on campus and to provide spiritual support to the Campus Ministry Department. Especially with COVID, last year things were very different with less than half of the students living on campus. This year most of the students returned to campus. So now at our two Sunday Masses we are able to have music ministers present for each Mass. We also are now able to have monthly socials after Mass.

Besides offering Mass throughout the week, I am now able to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance and have Eucharist Adoration in the evenings. We have also gathered in the chapel for an interfaith service and Evening Prayer. This past November, when we celebrated Cabrini Day classes were canceled to allow special events to take place on campus. We began with a Mass in honor of Mother Cabrini and followed this with a procession that carried an image of Saint Frances Cabrini from the chapel to the library which houses the Cabrini Room (with its collection of Mother Cabrini archives).

In my role as Chief Mission Officer of the University, I work closely with our University Planning Council. It is my responsibility to see that our Mission and our Catholic Identity Policy always remain part of the curriculum. In fact, the role and importance of both our Mission and Catholic Identity are addressed during the orientations programs for all students, staff and faculty.

Finally, in the past year, we have been able to host two groups of students for retreats here at Daylesford Abbey. The young men and women expressed how much they really loved being at the Abbey, and they were especially happy to be able to participate in our Norbertine liturgical celebrations as part of their retreat experience. This is something we hope to do even more frequently in the coming year.
It’s hard to write any kind of report these days without mentioning COVID. The virus has affected just about everything, with 800,000 deaths in the US and some 5,000,000 worldwide over the past two years. Praise God, with the help of the vaccines, we are today in a much better place – although between new variants and people failing to get vaccinated, it’s hard to say what the coming months will bring.

How has COVID affected the Abbey? Two of our priests died from the virus and we do not even know exactly how many were struck down from our larger community of friends and benefactors. For more than two months (including Holy Week), our Church was closed to the public – although this had the happy side-effect of prompting us to begin live-streaming our liturgies and so make it possible for all of us to pray together “virtually” (that new adverb which has become so much a part of our day to day conversations). When we were allowed to reopen, our pews initially had just dozens of people who joined us on Sundays (all masked and socially distancing). Today, our Sunday congregation is about 150 – and the choir is singing again!

Amazingly, as the accompanying charts reveal – even with COVID affecting the second half of fiscal 2019-20 and all of 2020-21 – the virus did not stop the generous support of the great bulk of our friends and benefactors. Truly, your goodness to us is ‘humbling’ (there are many causes you could support and you chose the Abbey) as it is simultaneously ‘affirming’ (your communio with us remains among the greatest of our many blessings).

Then too, in the midst of all the pressures prompted by the virus – we nonetheless took the risk of following through on our plans for a capital campaign entitled ‘Repair My Church’ (to do the necessary upkeep and replacement required in our 55 year old building). We estimated that (to replace the HVAC system and much of the lighting as well as confront the leaks and simple wear and tear on the church roof) we needed $ 1.7 million dollars – but that number just seemed unreal, so we proposed a campaign goal of $ 1.2 million.  Well, low and behold, as of today we have cash and pledges totaling $ 1.8 million (COVID notwithstanding).

Each day, we gather in the Abbey church for our community Mass (what we call the ‘Summa’, the ‘high point’ of the day), which is offered for our families, friends and benefactors -- thanking the Lord for the gift you are to us and asking His blessing on you and those you love.

With grateful hearts, we bid you God’s Peace,
Father Joseph Serano, O. Praem.
Abbey Treasurer
Repair My Church Campaign
“A Huge Success”

We have completed our Campaign to repair our Church. The goal was $1.2 Million but we raised $1.8 Million, with over $1 million already paid. Thus, we were able to begin our first phase of repairs by replacing the HVAC units in time for winter. We are also addressing how to replace or repair the Church roof. God’s blessings to all who made the Campaign a huge success, especially to our chairs, Bonnie and Steve Devlin.

Raffle & Picnic

Our Picnic and Raffle were held on Sunday, September 12, 2021, on the Abbey grounds in a large tent, with boxed lunches prepared by our kitchen staff. The $5,000 prize was won by Jim and Sharon O’Brien, $1,000 was won by Forrest Fisher and $500 by James Eastwood. The Abbey netted $28,000. Many thanks.

Art Show

Our Art Show was held the weekend of October 1-3, 2021, hosted by Karen Landman and her hardworking Committee. Their work netted $10,300 for the Norbertine Community. Again, we are very grateful.

Golf Outing

Our 18th Annual Golf Outing was held on Monday, June 21, 2021 at Hershey’s Mill Golf Club. There were 68 golfers, and 28 additional guests came to dinner. The Abbey netted $24,000. Our sincere appreciation to John & Marita Parthemore, the chairs for this 18th Annual Event. Mark your calendar for the 19th Golf Outing on June 20, 2022.

Dinner Dance and Auction

Our 53rd Annual Dinner Dance and 2nd Virtual Auction was held on Friday, November 19, 2021 at Aronimink Golf Club, part of the celebration of the 900th Anniversary of the founding of our Norbertine Community. The Virtual auction had over 70 items and went over exceptionally well. Our guests numbered 150. They danced the night away to the music of Back2Life. Our heartfelt thanks to the Committee under the leadership of Michele & Denny Howard. The dance netted $50,000.

Annual Giving

2022 Annual Giving will launch its Campaign in February. Last year we surpassed our goal and realized $282,000.00 thanks to our faithful donors, and Dolly Johnson, who continues to chair the annual event.
“The Devil Made Me Do It”: Evil, Sin, and Conscience  
Three Thursdays, February 10, 17, 24 @ 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM  
Free Will Offering  
(we ask $15 per meal if you wish to join us for dinner at 5:40 PM)

On three Thursday evenings in February, Father Joseph Serano will explore three topics: what traditionally is called the “the problem of evil” (how can you believe in the goodness God in the midst of all the evils in the world?), the complexity of sin (its layers and dimensions) and the force of conscience (our moral compass as we seek to be our best selves). Since the talks are cumulative and complementary, it is recommended (though not required) that participants attend all three sessions – each of which will allow ample time for questions, comments and discussion. Registration is required.

Ash Wednesday Day of Recollection: On Aging, Dying, and Rising  
Rev. Andrew D. Ciferni, O. Praem.  
Wednesday, March 2 @ 9:30 AM - 2:00 PM  
Free Will Offering  
(we ask $10 for lunch)

Rev. Andrew Ciferni will offer a Day of Recollection for Ash Wednesday 2022. The conferences and meditations will reflect on the realities of aging, dying, and rising in both our physical and spiritual lives. The day begins with a conference at 9:30 AM, followed by time for silence, Mass, lunch, and then a second conference with guided meditation. Registration is required.

Lenten Reflection Series  
Facilitated by Members of the Abbey Community:  
Andrew Del Rossi, Eileen Hotte, Peter Land, Heather Makowicz, and Peggy Walsh  
Tuesdays, March 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5 @ 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM  
Free Will Offering  
(we ask $15 per meal if you wish to join us for dinner at 5:40 PM)

Join us for an opportunity to read, reflect on, and unpack the Lenten scriptures. Each Tuesday during Lent, we will gather and focus on the upcoming Sunday’s readings, particularly the Gospel. Each week, a different member of the Abbey community will lead the reflection, often joined by the Norbertine priest who will celebrate Sunday’s Mass. Participants are encouraged (but not required) to attend all five sessions. Registration is required, if you are joining us for dinner. Registration is required.
Holy Week Triduum Conferences
with Sr. Laura Downing, IHM
Director of Campus Ministry at Immaculata University

Good Friday, April 15 at 10:00 AM
Holy Saturday, April 16 at 10:00 AM

You are welcome to stay overnight at the Abbey, during some or all of these days. Overnight Room and Meals: One night: $115  Two nights: $205  Three nights: $295 (including Holy Thursday evening)

(Conference Commuter are invited to make a Free Will Offering) Registration is required.

Caring for Our Common Home: Laudato Si’ and Permaculture Wisdom
with Andrew Del Rossi, Th.D. and Peter Land
Wednesday, April 20 @ 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
Free Will Offering
(we ask $15 per meal if you wish to join us for dinner at 5:40 PM)

Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical, Laudato Si’, is subtitled “on care for our common home” and is a commentary on consumerism, irresponsible development, environmental degradation, and global warming. In the encyclical, Francis challenges us to take “swift and unified global action” on these issues. Despite there being an apparent corporatized push for hi-tech “green initiatives,” there is a wealth of wisdom to be found in the natural systems and can serve as a guide for the spiritual life. This session will explore the spirituality of Laudato Si’ and how it connects to the principles of permaculture, which uses the principles of regenerative agriculture, rewilding, and community resilience in congruence with indigenous and traditional knowledge. Registration is required.

A Summer Retreat for Religious Sisters
with Nicholas R. Terico, O.Praem.
“We Remember, We Celebrate, We Believe”
Monday-June 20 to Friday-June 24, 2022
Requested Offering: $410

Daylesford Abbey warmly welcomes Religious Sisters of all Communities to a special time of Retreat in the early days of summer. We will gather for one fifty-minute conference each day centered on topics of spirituality that reflect the reality of our daily lives:

* The Painful Blessing of “Severe Grace”
* Going Where We Have Never Been
* Praying Our Prayers of Yearning
* Finding God/Finding Our True Selves
* We Are God’s Work of Art

There will be an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation as well as individual time with Fr. Nick. We encourage you to enjoy the beauty of the Abbey grounds for quiet prayer & reflection. Come join us! Registration is required.
**Group Retreats**

The Spirituality and Retreat Center at Daylesford Abbey provides a comfortable and functional setting for your unique retreat or event. The Center is open to all people. We welcome groups to hold retreats, days of recollection and meetings/workshops in our facility.

Whether you are coming from a church, school, support group, or community group, we believe you will be enriched by the beauty and tranquility of the Abbey.

**Complimentary Abbey Amenities include:**

- Prayer spaces in the church and chapels, Mary Garden and Heil Garden
- Spacious grounds with gardens, walking paths, wildlife pond and outdoor Stations of the Cross
- Adjacent Fox Hollow Hiking Trail
- The Abbot Killeen Library
- WiFi access
- Air-Conditioned Meeting Rooms
- 40 guest bedrooms (singles and doubles)
- Retreatant lounge
- Elevator and Handicap Accessible Entrance
- Dining Hall and Full-Service Kitchen

We are currently booking group retreats for the 2022 year and beyond!

*For more information and pricing, call (610) 601-8702 or email adr@daylesford.org.*

---

**Private Retreats**

The Spirituality and Retreat Center is open for private, personal retreats.

There is plenty of room to roam our beautiful grounds, located in the Chester County countryside about 20 miles west of Philadelphia. Take time this Winter or Spring to immerse yourself in the peace and serenity of a private retreat at the Abbey.

Suggested Donation: $115 first night, $90 each additional night (meals included)

To book a private retreat, call (610) 601-8702 or email adr@daylesford.org.

---

**Retreat Gift Cards Now Available**

Give the gifts of peace, tranquility, and reflection.

Gift cards are a donation in exchange for a retreat at Daylesford Abbey’s Spirituality and Retreat Center. Options are available for Weekend Retreats, Five-Day Retreats, and Single Day Retreats.

For more information, please visit:


---

**Registration is easy!**

Phone: (610) 647-2530 ext. 1330
Email: registrations@daylesford.org
Online: [www.daylesford.org](http://www.daylesford.org)
Return Service Requested