

DECEMBER 2023

COMMUNITY OF HOPE International



Return of Reflections on the Rule at Advent

**DR BRANDON BECK - LAY CHAPLAIN, MONK
ST MARK'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SAN MARCOS, TX**

As I reflect on the rule of Benedict, as we come to the end and beginning of our reading of The Rule again, and again, I love that we coincide with Advent.

Our contemporary Advent acts vary in small ways from person to person and tradition to tradition, yet they share a common purpose. From a simple, Merriam-Webster definition of “advent,” we find that advent can mean “the act of coming upon a scene.”

Benedict’s Rule teaches us how to act in awareness of our common lives and everyday experiences as The Great Scene upon which we come in every moment, The Great Scenes of Biblical History we remember through the Psalms and Holy Feasts, and The Great Scenes the Bible teaches us to anticipate with Hope and Love each and all represent the Coming of Christ.

I can imagine myself coming upon a scene in the winter in the mountains of Italy. Picture it. Fog hangs low in the valley. A soft rain falls. Mountains rise above a small stone building cut into a rock hill. Inside, a young boy silently moves through the corridor lighting sconce candles. A gong sounds, softly, three times. Twelve men get up from their desks in their private rooms, walk quietly through the now lit corridor, meet and sit at a long table on which boys have served bread and soup. The boys are seated in the back of the room. Someone stands up and reads aloud:



Return of Reflections on the Rule at Advent Continued

1 Listen carefully, my son, to the master's instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart... 8 the Scriptures rouse us when they say: It is high time for us to arise from sleep (Rom 13:11). 9 Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls out this charge: 10 If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts (Ps 94 [95]:8). 11 And again: You that have ears to hear, listen to what the Spirit says to the churches (Rev 2:7). 12 And what does he say? Come and listen to me, sons; I will teach you the fear of the Lord (Ps 33[34]:12). 13 Run while you have the light of life, that the darkness of death may not overtake you (John 12:35)... (Prologue)

1 Just as there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell, 2 so there is a good zeal which separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life. 3 This, then, is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love: 4 They should each try to be the first to show respect to the other (Rom 12:10), 5 Supporting with the greatest patience one another's weaknesses of body or behavior, 6 and earnestly competing in obedience to one another. 7 No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else. 8 To their fellow monks they show the pure love of brothers; 9 to God, loving fear; 10 to their abbot, unfeigned and humble love. 11 Let them prefer nothing whatever to Christ, 12 and may he bring us all together to everlasting life. (Chapter 72)

Wow!! Imagine that Christmas Celebration!

Every day in the Benedictine monastery can be an Advent day when Christmas looks like that. Each day is a day to come upon new ways of seeing Christ in and being Christ to others—of coming upon infinite micro, meso and macro scenes of Christ's Love and of creating them too. Let the monastery of your heart be such an advent in our world this season.

Amen.



PRIESTHOOD ANNIVERSARY



17 years in the Ministry is significant because it signals maturity, growth and bringing one into the senior clergy category. Really, it is not the number of years one spends in the Ministry that matters but the quality of services that one rendered, lives you have touched and the souls you have saved. I therefore celebrate my priestly anniversary and want to express my heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering support and commitment rendered to me as I serve God and His people. Your words of encouragement have lifted my spirit and encouraged me not to retreat and surrender when need to surrender was due. Your prayers have provided comfort when I needed it most and your guidance has inspired my personal growth. As I look back on my Priestly journey, may you be filled with pride and encouragement, knowing that your faithfulness has made a lasting impact in my ministry. It is my prayer that God will fill me with wisdom and passion to provide Pastoral care to his people in the midst of calamities and despair. Lord have mercy on me a sinner.

Fr. Willard



The Community Of Hope International Malawi Report: COHI to Spread Beyond Malawian Borders

BY FR. WILLARD KAMANDANI



The Community of Hope International (COHI) was invited to participate in the Provincial Synod which started on October 30, 2023 and ended on November 5, 2023.

During the Synod, COHI had a chance to share with international delegates on who we are as an organization. Above is Fr. Willard handing over a Rule of Benedict book to the Bishop Oswald Mapika of Masvingo Diocese in Zimbabwe. He asked us to start a centre in his diocese.



In addition to the Synod's members, representatives from some of CPCA's mission partners, including United Society Partners in the Gospel (USPG), the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA), the Anglican Alliance, COHI and the US-based Episcopal Church organization called Global Partners.

We also had a good time to market our organization to other bishops. To the right is Fr. Willard and Botswana Anglican Bishop Metlhayotlhe Beleme who has invited us to start a centre in his diocese. He said his diocese has a shortage of priests and training laity for pastoral care will be ideal.





The Community Of Hope International Malawi Report: COHI to Spread Beyond Malawian Borders Continued

The Church of the Province of Central Africa (CPCA) has concluded its provincial Synod with a plan for new Dioceses and potentially two more Provinces, or member churches, of the Anglican Communion. The Archbishop Albert Chama is Primate of the Church of the Province of Central Africa. Under the theme ‘Growing the Church in the Broken World”, more than 120 clergy and lay representatives from across the existing 15 Dioceses- Botswana, Lake Malawi, Northern Malawi, Upper Shire, Central Zambia, Eastern Zambia, Luapula, Lusaka, Northern Zambia, Central Zimbabwe, Harare, Manicaland, Matabeleland and Masvingo gathered in Mount Soche Hotel, Blantyre in Southern Malawi, for the five-day meeting.



I also had a very good time with Bishop Fanuel Magangani of the Northern Malawi Diocese. Bishop Magangani was a very important figure in as far as COHI is concerned. He was the one who invited Rev. Tom Papazolankis some 13 years ago while he was studying together at Nashota House. He was very happy that COHI is growing in Malawi and beyond.



Bishop Beleme and his diocesan delegates to the Provincial Synod.



Fr. Willard and Canon Andrew Suman, the first national coordinator for COHI.



Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care

EDITED BY JOHN SWINTON AND RICHARD PAYNE
HELEN HANSEN, PHD, PASTORAL CARE COORDINATOR
SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

A graphic for the book review featuring an open book with a pen resting on it. The text "Book Review" is overlaid in a large, black, serif font.

Book Review

I am reading *Living Well and Dying Faithfully: Christian Practices for End-of-Life Care*, edited by John Swinton and Richard Payne. I was led to this book after listening to an audio recording by John Swinton. At the same time a COHI partner at Saint Mark's Episcopal Cathedral in Minneapolis and I were leading a group of women who were interested in preparing their Advanced Directives. Our Circle of Care has been working on identifying best practices in end-of-life care, and these women had some excellent questions about spiritual needs at end of life. I am now reading this book and plan for our pastoral care team to use it this coming program year. One chapter, by Karen D. Scheib, on Ecclesial Practice of Care at the End of Life, addresses the role of the congregation in caring for the dying and their families/communities. Scheib describes a very open approach to the involvement of the congregation in supporting people who are at the end of life. I was moved by the idea of respectful full connection among the “communion of saints”—between the living and dying members of a Christian community. The author also addresses how our cultural norms and death can translate into practices that may be either nurturing or wounding in end-of-life care. This book, I believe, is an excellent resource for those of us who are involved in end-of-life care.





Waiting

CRAIG WILSON-HOLY INNOCENTS EPISCOPAL, ATLANTA

Waiting. Hope. Anticipation. Christmas isn't here yet. I know, it's everywhere already. Heck, Home Depot had it all out Labor Day Weekend. And I must admit, my Disney tree is up, Mark has the yard done, and my CDs (yes, CDs) of Oxford and King's choirs are already playing. And, yes, I have already turned to The Hallmark Channel a couple of times and even had a good cry. But Christmas isn't here yet in the liturgical church. And in my heart, it isn't fully here yet either. I have grown to appreciate and even savor the season of waiting. It helps me keep in check that lingering piece of me that demands immediate gratification, that piece that wants the prize without paying for the ticket or throwing the



ball. (Throwing the ball would make for a very long wait for me. I am terrible at it!) Waiting can often get tedious. Especially for us "right now" types. Frankly, between political and social unrest, Covid, and wars, I feel like we have been waiting an awfully long time. Waiting for peace, hope, love, and joy, which are represented in the four Advent candles. I think the trick, or maybe the message, is this: Wait for the joy. But don't wait for the peace and hope and love. Take them along for the ride through Advent. Live them. BE the peace and the hope and the love. We need them now. Be them for you. Be them for our nation. Be them for those who mourn or are scared or sick or lost. For peace and hope and love, make them part of the waiting. The joy is coming. I promise.

**The newest video password has been released!
Please check with your regional rep. for more
information.**



TRAINING ACROSS THE REGIONS

PAM PIEDFORT-ST. GEORGE CHURCH, SAN ANTONIO, COHI BOARD MEMBER

*We're learning of more trainings across COHI, and we're thrilled at the growth and innovation happening. **Please send us stories and photos of your center trainings for the newsletter!***

Centers Band Together to Provide Training

KAREN MURPHY-GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH, GAINESVILLE GA

Our Southeast Region of COHI will begin our second training banding together, and it has been a wonderful way to get fantastic presenters and share the workload.

About once a month our S.E. Regional Team meets on Zoom, and we take minutes and blast them out to all in our region. The team worked together to make a plan. We came up with a timeline for recruitment, for in-person meetings in our own parishes to get to know each other locally, and then for a gathering on Zoom to “get to know you” with the region. Finally we will meet on Zoom weekly on Sunday afternoons for trainings beginning in January 2024. (We will take a few Sundays off for Holy Week, Palm Sunday, and Easter.) We split up the modules among four of us to secure presenters from our parishes and other areas. Using our own clergy, we have been able to help keep presenter fees to a minimum.

Craig Wilson, from Holy Innocence Episcopal Church in Atlanta and S.E. Regional Rep, will be our Zoom master, and both Craig and Janie Godbold, from Trinity Cathedral in Columbia, SC, will serve as our co-trainer-facilitators. Sarah Roberts, our national COHI President, has been helpful in getting our trainer-facilitators up to speed with the use of breakout chat rooms, etc. We are looking forward to a wonderful series of presenters for our modules.



Church Has Inaugural Training

SARAH ROBERTS-COHI PRESIDENT, MEMBER ST. MARY AND MARTHA EPISCOPAL CHURCH, BUFORD GA

St. Mary and Martha Church, under the direction of Priest in Charge, the Rev Laura Masterson, is excited to be having its inaugural COHI training in February 2024.





2023 Annual Reports

**JAN
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2024**

2023 Annual Reports are due to the Board by January 1st.

See COHI newsletters for October and November 2023 for details



We want to hear from
YOU!

TELL US ABOUT BOOKS & BLOGS YOU
LIKE, WAYS OF REACHING CARE-
RECEIVERS, & TRAINING IDEAS THAT
WORK!

Deadline: 12/29/23

EMAIL PAM PIEDFORT TO SHARE YOUR STORY!
PAM.PIEDFORT@COHINTERNATIONAL.ORG

