



IDAHO KNIGHTLY NEWS

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Editor's Note

If anyone would like to submit an article for the Idaho Knightly News, please email me your article using Microsoft Word. Keep it between 1 page and 1.5 pages.

Also, I'd request that the Commandery Recorders please send me the dates of their Christmas Observance to list in the next edition.

Upcoming 2022 Events:

Northwest York Rite Oct. 14-15
Thanksgiving.....Nov. 24
Christmas Eve Dec. 24
Christmas Day..... Dec. 25

What is Monasticism: Part 8

By Barry E. Newell

The Legacy of Monasticism

Monasticism has impacted our modern world in a variety of ways and much

of Western civilization owes its life to the monks of medieval Europe. The biggest example that I want to highlight is our education system. Many modern universities are built in the gothic style of 12th-century monasteries, but this isn't the only way. The cap and gown used by faculty and graduates during graduation ceremonies were also influenced by monastic life. Most may be unaware of the history of such regalia though. Looking back at the establishment of medieval universities, monks played an important part in the continuation of education and knowledge, but medieval universities offered an alternative pathway to knowledge rather than adopting the strict monastic lifestyles, one could simply attend the university and then return to their life once one graduated. However, in the early years of medieval universities before monastic schools were displaced, most professors/teachers were priests and/or monks. As seen in the history of monasticism, monks wore robes (of various colors) that dictated their order and priests wore robes as well that signified their religious status. So today, as we graduate, we wear robes/gowns of differing colors and cuts to differentiate the school we studied under,

the degree we are receiving, and the university we attended.

While many see Christianity as oppressive and antithetical to the progress of knowledge, monks were critical to keeping the flame alive during the dark ages. The fact that so many ancient documents were written or preserved through monasteries is another way that our education system today was influenced by monasticism.

Monasticism has also left a legacy of agricultural and culinary development, pharmaceutical and medicinal development, and the precursor to social services.

Monasticism Today

In the post-Protestant Reformation world, monasticism declined and, in many areas, died out, but interest in monasticism has increased since the second half of the 20th century though that is primarily through the laity and oblates; for the former Soviet States, not only has an interest has grown since the fall of the Iron Curtain, but membership has increased.

Whether in decline or revival, monasteries still rely heavily upon the support of the laity, but this isn't anything new. Medieval monks still needed a non-monastic workforce to work the lands, trade with, and in some area areas for sustenance (as seen with the Desert Fathers). As an Oblate of the Temple and St. John, I find it my duty to serve my church and the congregation. The biggest monastic value is hospitality and making everyone feel welcome.

In today's world where governments provide a whole host of social services, I'm

not surprised that mendicant orders had to change and completely rely on their respective church for their continued existence. With the revival and rise of Gnostic Christian churches such as the Apostolic Johannite Church, I can see the need for a monastic order that assists in spiritual mentoring and publishing contemplative books.

Monasticism is a living thing that must adapt to its environment. In this modern world of advancing technology and instant gratification, monasticism must still adapt, but the motivation of monasticism remains the same: the love of God and the desire to be a devoted servant of the Word as best we can in this imperfect life.

