

“This is a striking and unique book covering a long period of Benedictine history through the use of unusual and original sources. *A Benedictine Reader: 1530–1930* demonstrates the richness of the ageless Benedictine spirit in its many forms. Giving a succinct and clear context for all the primary texts chosen, it will provide readers with a valuable encyclopedia of Benedictinism in one volume.”

—Abbot Geoffrey Scott, Douai Abbey UK,
President of the Catholic Archives Society

“This welcome volume, *A Benedictine Reader: 1530–1930*, complements an earlier anthology, *A Benedictine Reader: 530–1530*. Together they provide students and scholars alike with an invaluable collection of texts illuminating the vast span of Benedictine monasticism.”

—Brother Bruno Heisey, OSB, Archivist at Saint Vincent Archabbey,
Latrobe, Pennsylvania

“The second volume of *A Benedictine Reader* is a welcome sequel to the first volume which covered the period from 530 to 1530 CE. That volume introduces lay readers to a wealth of writing by Benedictines, writings with which we might otherwise never have come into contact. The second volume begins where the first leaves off and takes us through the early part of the twentieth century. Like the first, the second volume includes a striking diversity of writings produced by Benedictines. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries we find spiritual exercises from *The Practice of the Rule of St. Benedict*, but also an address to the French Estates General advocating religious toleration, and excerpts of a book on the use of sign language in the education of the deaf. From the eighteenth century we have a play to be performed by abbey schoolboys, *The Marriage Contract*. From the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we find excerpts from a book on the liturgical year, writings of and about Benedictine missionaries to Australia and Tasmania, North America, and Africa, and a statement of principles on liturgy and social justice. The editors and translators of *A Benedictine Reader: 1530–1930* are to be commended for revealing Benedictines at work through the centuries, reflecting on, reforming, and re-imagining their living tradition.”

—M. A. Norton, Senior Lecturer in Philosophy,
Idaho State University

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A Benedictine Reader: 1530–1930

Edited by

Hugh Feiss, OSB, and Maureen M. O'Brien



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Contents

Dedication and Epigraph ix

Preface xi

By Maureen M. O'Brien

Contributors xiii

Introduction xvii

By Hugh Feiss, OSB

Acknowledgments xxxiii

I. Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries

1. Saint-Michel de Bois-Aubry, Jacques Bienassis,
and Religious Toleration 3
Introduction by Pamela Park and Hugh Feiss, OSB
Text selected and translated by Pamela Park
2. Fray Pedro Ponce de León, OSB (ca. 1508–1574),
and Education of the Deaf 27
Introduction by María Pilar Alonso Abad
Text selected and translated by María Pilar Alonso Abad
3. Augustine Baker, OSB, Recusant Benedictine: *Sancta Sophia/
Holy Wisdom* 39
Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
Text selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
4. Dame Gertrude More, OSB (1606–1633): Selected Prose
and Poetry 55
Introduction by Jacob Rieff
Texts selected by Jacob Rieff

5. Faremoutiers and the Benedictine Revival
in Seventeenth-Century France 79
Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
Text selected and translated by Hugh Feiss, OSB
6. The Abbey of Saint Walburg: Devotion to Saint Walburga
during the Thirty Years War 101
Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
Texts selected and translated by Hugh Feiss, OSB
7. The Congregation of Saint Maur in the Seventeenth Century:
Claude Martin, OSB, *The Practice of the Rule
of Saint Benedict* 123
Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
Text selected and translated by Hugh Feiss, OSB
8. Catherine Mechtilde de Bar, OSB (1614–1698), Founder
of the Benedictine Nuns of the Institute of Perpetual Adoration
of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar 147
Introduction by Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB
Text selected and translated by Colleen Maura McGrane, OSB

II. Eighteenth Century

9. Martin Sarmiento, OSB (1695–1772), Benedictine Scholar
during the Enlightenment 167
Introduction by Julia McCoy
Text translated by Julia McCoy
10. Benedict Michael Pembridge, OSB (1725–1806),
and the English Benedictine Congregation, 1688–1795 185
Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
Text selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
11. Maurus Lindemayr, OSB, *The Marriage Contract* (1770) 209
Introduction by Alkuin Schachenmayr
Text selected and translated by Alkuin Schachenmayr

III. Nineteenth Century

12. The Abbey of La Trinità, Cava dei Tirreni:
 Archive of a Millennium 233
 Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
 Texts selected and translated by Hugh Feiss, OSB
13. Abbot Prosper Guéranger, OSB (1805–1875), Solesmes,
 and *The Liturgical Year* 265
 Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
 Texts selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
14. Abbot Maurus Wolter, OSB (1825–1890),
 and the First Fifty Years of Beuron 283
 Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
 Text selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
15. Father James Ambrose Cotham, OSB (1810–1883),
 Monk and Missionary 305
 Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
 Texts selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
16. Abbot Rosendo Salvado, OSB (1814–1900), Founder
 of New Norcia Abbey in Western Australia and Missionary
 to the Aboriginal People 329
 Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB
 Text selected by Hugh Feiss, OSB
17. Abbot Boniface Wimmer, OSB, Benedictine Founder
 in North America 353
 Introduction by Joel Rippinger, OSB
 Text selected by Joel Rippinger, OSB
18. Saint Walburg Abbey, Eichstätt, Bavaria, and the Founding
 of the American Benedictine Women's Communities
 (1806–1881) 359
 Introduction by Ephrem Hollermann, OSB
 Texts selected by Ephrem Hollermann, OSB

19. Father Ignatius Lyne (1837–1908): Monasteries in the Church of England 381

Introduction by Greg Peters

Text selected by Greg Peters

20. John Henry Newman (1801–1890) and the Benedictines 401

Introduction by Owen Cummings

Texts selected by Owen Cummings

IV. Twentieth Century

21. Saint Ottilien and Tutzling and Their African Missions, 1883–1906:

The Travel Diary (1905) of Abbot Norbert Weber, OSB 419

Introduction by Hugh Feiss, OSB

Text selected and translated by Hugh Feiss, OSB

22. Blessed Columba Marmion, OSB (1858–1923):

Spiritual Guide 445

Introduction by Joel Rippinger, OSB

Texts selected by Joel Rippinger, OSB

23. Father Virgil Michel, OSB (1890–1938):

Liturgy and Social Justice 457

Introduction by Joel Rippinger, OSB

Texts selected by Joel Rippinger, OSB

Index of Subjects 467

Index of Persons 481

Index of Locations 491

Dedication and Epigraph

*Omnibus fratribus et sororibus in Christo Domino
et patre nostro Benedicto, pax.*

We are badly in need of the undramatic but transformative wisdom of Benedict's Rule if we are to live with gratitude and, in the very fullest meaning of the words, common sense in our feverish, lonely and fearful world. Listen; other ways are possible.

Rowan Williams, *The Way of St Benedict*

Preface

A Benedictine Reader: 1530–1930 is the fifth book I have had the pleasure to work on with Fr. Hugh Feiss, OSB. The first text I worked on with Fr. Hugh was his translations of the works of Achard of Saint Victor (Cistercian Studies Series [CS] 165, in 2001). Since then, we have worked with a distinguished group of scholars on *The Lives of Reforming Monks, 1 & 2* (CS 222, in 2010, and CS 230, in 2014), and *A Benedictine Reader: 530–1530* (CS 275, in 2019). We add to these now the second volume of *A Benedictine Reader*, which has contributions from thirteen scholars presenting texts originally written in six different languages. This text marks for Fr. Hugh and me the twentieth year of our collaborations. What I have valued most about this work has been Fr. Hugh's dedication to finding and elevating the voices of Benedictines, past and present, that help us better understand what it means to be a Benedictine. This could not be more true than in the volume before you.

What is most striking about this period of Benedictine history is the way Benedictines and their communities weathered the sometimes turbulent geo-politics of the eras. Historical events transformed medieval Benedictines into modern ones, and one might even see here a shift from a cloistered movement to a pastoral one. Medieval Benedictines were assuredly impacted by the geo-politics of the period, but the lives in Benedictine communities were not radically changed by those historical events. The same cannot be said for the Benedictines whose works are represented here. What follows should challenge us all to consider the following question: What is essential about being a Benedictine? This is perhaps one of the most vexing questions facing students of monastic history. Benedictines are not Cistercians. Benedictines are not Carthusians. Benedictines are not

. . . and the list goes on. As you read the selections before you, either as a whole or as stand-alone readings, ask yourself this question: what is Benedictine here? What makes Benedictines Benedictines when circumstances beyond their control force them to change? How pliable is Benedictinism?

In this choice of difficulties, when there was a duty to stay and a duty to take flight, the monastic bodies were not unwilling to come to a compromise with the age, and, reserving their fidelity to Saint Benedict, to undertake those functions to which both the world and the church called them.

—John Henry Newman, 1859¹

That Saint Benedict himself lived in turbulent times assuredly informed his Rule and contributed to making the Rule of Benedict a steadfast anchor in modern times. From the outset Benedict recognized the value of having some flexibility (both internal and external) so long as the foundation stayed strong. That there would be times of trouble meant that individual monasteries would need this flexibility to adapt to changing times. That flexibility has made the Rule of Benedict ever vibrant into the twenty-first century. How else can a rule written in the sixth century still be compelling today? That flexibility, however, has been and is tempered by the Benedictines' commitment not only to the Rule of Benedict, but also to the liturgy and to *lectio*.

As you read what follows, bear in mind what Fr. Hugh says of the nuns of Saint Walburg, as one might argue that it holds true of the history of all Benedictines: "it is a story of grit and grace."²

Maureen M. O'Brien
St. Cloud, Minnesota

1. From John Henry Newman, "The Benedictine Schools," from *Atlantis*, January 1859, 415 (quoted in chapter 20 below).

2. Chapter 6 below, p. 102.

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Introduction

Hugh Feiss, OSB

The Sixteenth Century

In this volume, as in its predecessor, we have tried to include a variety of genres, times, and places. We regret that we were not able to include any texts about Benedictines in Eastern Europe or Benedictines in Brazil, where some communities have centuries of history. The aim of this introduction is to situate the chapters that follow chronologically in the larger political, religious, and monastic contexts.

The Protestant Reformation

In Germany, the Protestant princes and reformers were not favorable to monasticism. Some monasteries were turned to other purposes. In some monasteries some of the monks embraced Protestantism and others did not. Some monasteries remained Catholic at least for time. In 1517, the Benedictine Congregation of Bursfeld included ninety-four monasteries, more than half of the monasteries in what is now Germany. At the end of the upheaval of the Reformation, forty of these were no more. In Switzerland, the monks of Pfäfers and Fischingen became Protestants. Four of the monks of Saint Gall became Protestant; the rest were forced to flee, but were able to return in 1532 after the Battle of Kappel in 1531, in which Ulrich Zwingli was killed. In England and Wales Benedictine monasteries were closed, and English men and women who wished to become Benedictines had to join monasteries on the continent. Monasticism disappeared from the Nordic countries. The monasteries of Scotland were suppressed from 1560 onward at the urging of John Knox. It is calculated that there were about 1,500 larger monasteries (not counting dependent

priories and cells) in Europe before the Reformation. More than half of these were closed or destroyed.¹

We see the tensions of the period in the address of Abbé Bienassis to a *parlement* in 1561. France was divided religiously; some Catholic leaders wanted Protestants expelled from the country. Bienassis argued that faith was not something that could be forced, and if Protestants were not allowed to practice their faith they would probably become atheists, which in his estimate would be a worse outcome. Peace was not established until near the end of the century; during the wars of religion (1559–1598) many French monasteries were sacked and destroyed, some never to reopen. Nevertheless, during those years the seeds of a renaissance of religious life among Benedictine women in France were sown, as the story of Faremoutiers illustrates.

In commendam abbots

Jacques Bienassis, a priest who was vicar general of the diocese of Tours, was the abbot of Bois-Aubry, but not a monk. He was an abbot *in commendam*, that is, he had a right to income from the abbey. Such a right was usually the gift of the king. Cardinal Richelieu († 1642) held both Cluny and Cîteaux *in commendam*; Cardinal Mazarin († 1661) held twenty-five abbeys that way. The practice did nothing for the monastery, unless the commendatory abbot took an interest in the spiritual well-being of the monks of the abbey or even, as in rare cases such as the Cistercians' Armand-Jean de Rancé at La Trappe and Jean de la Barrière at Les Feuillants, the commendatory abbot decided to become an observant monk himself. We do not know what profit Bienassis derived from his abbey of Bois-Aubry, or if he took an active interest in the monks' welfare. The abbey had some life in it during the last part of the fifteenth century, when a massive new bell tower was constructed. From the beginning of the sixteenth century abbots of Bois-Aubry were appointed by the abbot general of the congregation of Tiron or by the

1. García M. Colombás, *La tradición benedictina: ensayo histórico*, tomo VI, Colección Espiritualidad monástica 36 (Zamora: Ediciones Monte Casino, 1996), 495–505.

pope; these abbots generally held several ecclesiastical offices (“pluralism”) and were sometimes appointed by relatives (“nepotism”). Jacques Bienassis may have been the first abbot *in commendam* of Bois-Aubry, but he was not the last. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were very few monks connected with the abbey of Bois-Aubry, and they seem to have served in parishes. Overall, this practice of *in commendam* abbots was one reason for a fairly widespread languor in monastic life before and after the Reformation.

Spain

Unlike what happened in France and Germany, the Reformation did not bring religious division to the Iberian peninsula. Reform of Benedictine monasteries came to Spain at the urging of the Catholic monarchs, Ferdinand and Isabella, who united Castile and Aragon under their rule, concluded the reconquest, expelled Jews who would not convert, and sponsored Columbus’s voyages to the Americas. Ferdinand and Isabella supported reforming “observant” movements in religious orders. This cause was promoted by Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436–1517), an observant Franciscan who became an advisor to Isabella and Ferdinand and later archbishop of Toledo and a cardinal. He promoted religious humanism, biblical studies, and the publication of religious literature, which were the soil from which grew the flowering of Spanish mysticism in the sixteenth century.

As a result of royal urging, the Congregation of San Benito of Valladolid was formed in 1492. Several dozen monasteries joined the congregation. One of them was Montserrat, whose abbot, García Jiménez de Cisneros (1455–1510), cousin of the cardinal, not only revitalized the abbey but established a printing press that published religious works. His own work, *Ejercitatorio de la vida spiritual* (1500), drew on writings of the *Devotio Moderna*, Bonaventure, and Carthusian writers such as Hugh of Balma. It was widely read; Ignatius of Loyola seems to have received a copy of it from his Benedictine confessor in 1522.²

2. Bernard McGinn, *Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain, 1500–1650* (New York: Crossroad, 2017), 11–18.

About fifteen years after this, Fray Pedro Ponce de Leon was born. He entered the monastery at Sahagún but spent most of his monastic life at the monastery of Oña. He held several offices there, but he is known to history (and legend) for his work with the deaf. While serving as tutor to two deaf boys, he developed a form of sign language to teach literacy to the deaf. Oña was well endowed and well connected and had ties with the boys' family. It is puzzling that Fray Pedro made a will with several provisions that included prayers for himself and others and for an endowed physician in the monastery. It seems irregular for a monk to have had disposition of private property.³

The Seventeenth Century

In the seventeenth century, France succeeded the Habsburgs of central Europe and Spain to become the leading Catholic nation in the world. The French kings held rights to appoint bishops. Efforts at coexistence between Catholics and Protestants such as those of Jacques Bienassis failed, and the Wars of Religion (1562–1598) followed. Those wars pitted Catholics against Huguenots, but also the crown against members of the nobility. This tumultuous political history affected religious life. Dioceses were without bishops; religious life in rural areas was interrupted by war; monasteries, many of them decadent, were despoiled by the Huguenot armies.

The French did not attend the Council of Trent (1545–1563) and were slow to accept its reforms. However, when peace was finally achieved, French Catholicism revived. *Dévots*, dedicated lay Catholics, mostly aristocratic, encouraged religious devotion and assisted in the founding and reform of religious houses. The influence of the spiritual revival in France led by figures such as Francis de Sales († 1622) and Cardinal Bérulle († 1629) stimulated new forms of

3. Antonio Gascón Ricao and José Gabriel Storch de Gracia y Asensio discuss the legend and the will in *Fray Pedro Ponce de León, El Mito Mediático: Los mitos sobre la educación de los sordos* (Madrid: Editorial universitaria Ramón Areces, 2006).

devotion. The educational level of parish clergy seems to have been improved. The Vincentians and other orders conducted missions in rural areas. Lay confraternities flourished. The Jesuits, Capuchins, and Carmelites offered spiritual guidance and ardor.⁴

The Thirty Years War (1618–1648)

The wars that wracked Europe in the wake of the Reformation were particularly devastating and brutal. It is hard to imagine the destruction they caused in areas of Germany that now seem so serene. The experience of the Sisters of Saint Walburg Abbey in Eichstätt in the 1630s conveys something of the complexity and terror of the times. Eichstätt was a small state whose secular and religious lord was the bishop. Eichstätt, lying just north of Bavaria, was threatened and sometimes pillaged by various armies during the Thirty Years War. A community of canonesses there, Mariastein, suffered much more than the Benedictines of Saint Walburg. The diary of the prioress of these canonesses, Claire Staigner, gives a chilling account. It was to their patron Saint Walburga that the canonesses, sisters, and townspeople turned in this time of crisis. The piety and horarium of the Benedictines underwent changes at the instigation of their bishops and Jesuits. Their ability to remain true to the Benedictine Rule and their own traditions, and at the same time to be open to new theological and devotional trends, seems to be a basic characteristic of Benedictines, whose spirituality hinges on liturgy and *lectio* but can accommodate new forms of devotion, such as devotions to Mary or eucharistic adoration.

Benedictine Women in France

The sad story of post-Reformation Bois-Aubry was not the fate of all Benedictine communities in France. Women's monasteries like Montmartre and Faremoutiers shook off mediocrity and worse, and became exemplary Benedictine communities. The diary of the abbess

4. Bernard McGinn, *The Persistence of Mysticism in Catholic Europe: France, Italy, and Germany 1500–1675* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder and Herder, 2020), esp. 1–16.

of Faremoutiers, Françoise de la Châtre (1574–1643), tells the story of this renewal in one ancient and aristocratic Benedictine community. She successfully restored traditional Benedictine practices such as cloister and dispossession, but also welcomed some new ideas from the French piety of her time.

Mechtilde Catherine de Bar (1614–1698), forced by the threat of a Swedish army to flee the convent she had joined, took refuge at a Benedictine monastery. In 1654 she founded the Benedictine nuns of Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Her rule emphasized adoration and annihilation, ideas found in Bérulle and Condren. She asked her sisters to be victim souls, making reparation to God for dishonors perpetrated against the Eucharist.

The Congregation of Saint Maur

Among Benedictine men in France, the best-known reform effort was that of the Congregation of Saint Maur. Before long the congregation was a large association of monasteries, at the head of which was a superior general, who resided at Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris, and a general chapter that appointed both the successor to a deceased superior general and the priors in the monasteries of the congregation. By 1630 the congregation had thirty monasteries, and it continued to grow rapidly after that, so that in 1648 its members numbered 1500 monks, though negotiations to unite with it Cluny and the reformed congregation of Saint-Vanne in Lorraine fell through.

During the Jansenist controversy in the second half of the seventeenth century, the superiors of the congregation tried, not altogether successfully, to keep their monks out of the fray. Within the congregation there were monasteries designated as novitiates and places of study. The Maurists usually did not undertake university studies but studied in their own houses of formation. The congregation made it a policy to locate and publish books suitable for monastic reading, particularly books by the writers of the early church, and books about monastic history and Scripture. Their efforts led to an enormous outflow of editions, such as the collected works of Saint Augustine and of Saint John Chrysostom. The most promising scholars in the con-

gregation were trained and dedicated to this undertaking. Many of the volumes of Jacques-Paul Migne's mid-nineteenth-century *Patrologia Latina* were reprints of editions of this small cadre of brilliant monks.

English Benedictines in France

English Benedictine men and women in exile in France had their own history. The English Congregation survived by a thread as its last living member handed on the congregation's title and privileges to Englishmen who had become monks on the continent. These English Benedictines seem to have been a contentious group, but that may be because they documented their disagreements so well. Most English Benedictines in exile were destined to be missionaries in England, at the risk of their lives. Others lived in community in English Benedictine monasteries in exile in France and Germany, celebrating the office and performing the tasks conventual life required.

The most famous of the recusant English monks in France was Augustine Baker († 1641). At times he served as a missionary, at other times he lived in a community in France, and he did scholarly research on behalf of the newly restored congregation. However, his main concern was prayer. In his capacity as spiritual director to English Benedictine nuns in exile on the continent he collected religious books like the *Cloud of Unknowing* and transcribed and annotated them for the sisters whose guide he was. Some of those nuns in their turn penned spiritual writings. His confrere Serenus Cressy made a compilation of Baker's religious writings, *Holy Wisdom*, that has been read ever since.

The Eighteenth Century: Monks, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution

Lambach and England

While English monks continued to serve as missionaries in England, during the eighteenth century their work gradually shifted from service to aristocratic Catholic families and their neighbors to pastoral work in urban settings. During this century, Christianity and religious orders were regarded unfavorably by Enlightenment

thinkers. The effects of this are visible in the history of the English Benedictines in exile in France, who could hardly escape the influence of the *philosophes*, which added another fault line to those already existing in the English Congregation. As the century went on, there were divisions among the English monks about what attitude to take to Enlightenment thought in both its philosophical and its political dimensions. The same tensions existed in German-speaking monasteries, which generally were prospering. One can sense these tensions at Lambach in Upper Austria when Marie Antoinette stopped there on her way to her wedding to Louis XVI of France.⁵

Baroque Benedictines

Larger monasteries and monastic congregations could, as the Maurists had done, provide special training and support for scholarly activities. We see this in the chapter on Martin Sarmiento († 1772). A native of Galicia, he spent much of his time in a monastery in Madrid and other places assisting various entities. However, he had the opportunity to do important studies in the language and flora of Galicia, as well as a book-length study of the origins and history of Castilian poetry. He was also interested in educational reform. In his botanical studies he was a contemporary of Carl Linnaeus; in his interest in his native tongue, a contemporary of Maurus Lindemayr, the first person to write a drama in Austrian dialect.

Examples of Baroque magnificence are not hard to find in Germany, Austria, and Spain. One is the abbey of Kremsmünster, located, like Lambach, in Upper Austria. Like most great Baroque Benedictine communities, it had an excellent collection of books and manuscripts, built up over the centuries and housed in an ornate library. It also had an astronomical observatory at the top of an eight-story

5. On German monasteries during the Enlightenment, see Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650–1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and Ulrich Lehner, *Enlightened Monks: The German Benedictines, 1740–1803* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

“Mathematical Tower,” built during the abbacy of the highly esteemed Alexander Fixlmillner (1731–1759).

The French Revolution

If the Protestant Reformation eliminated about half of the monasteries in Europe, the French Revolution and Napoleon put an end to almost all the others. The story of Abbot Prosper Guéranger’s effort to restart Benedictine monasticism in France in the 1830s shows how thoroughly Benedictine monasticism had been eradicated in France. It would be another hundred years before French monasteries could be relatively certain of a stable future without government confiscations and exile. The story of Cava during the same period is equally fraught. The causes of the French revolutionaries’ antipathy to monasteries were partly ideological; the radical revolutionaries saw no public utility in monasteries, whose confiscation promised to help solve France’s deep economic crisis. The monasteries were also seen as allied with the aristocracy. The antipathy felt toward monasteries was evident at Cluny:

Seen as an example of the excesses of the Ancien Régime, the monastic buildings and most of the church were destroyed in the French Revolution. Its extensive library and archives were burned in 1793 and the church was given up to plundering. The abbey’s estate was sold in 1798 for 2,140,000 francs. Over the next twenty years the Abbey’s immense walls were quarried for stone that was used in rebuilding the town.⁶

After the Revolution, Napoleon, sharing its disdain for monasteries, traveled through much of Europe pillaging monasteries and rousing local populations to embrace the anti-clericalism of the French. Since abbots were sometimes secular rulers, they had to abdicate their secular roles and often watch their monasteries be

6. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cluny_Abbey. Accessed September 17, 2020. For the French Revolution see Jeremy D. Popkin, *A New World Begins: The History of the French Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

destroyed. For example, the secular power of the abbot of the Swiss Abbey of Saint Gall was suppressed; the monks were expelled and moved into other abbeys. With the rise of Romanticism, the Enlightenment's contempt for the Middle Ages and Catholicism was countered by interest in and growing respect for both.⁷

Nineteenth-Century Restoration

In 2016 Edward L. Smither, a Protestant theologian, wrote a history and theology of missionary activities by Catholic religious orders. At the end, he concluded that the missionary monasticism was characterized by “a spirituality that led to mission, a willingness to suffer and persevere, preaching the gospel in word and deed, engaging and shaping culture, and a love for the church.”⁸ The missionary monks and sisters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had all five of those characteristics and more.

By that time the Benedictines had been in existence for more than thirteen hundred years, and ruins all around Europe were reminders of their achievements and inspirations. Like many others, John Henry Newman († 1890) admired the Benedictines' achievements. He wrote about them in several places. Members of his former communion, the Church of England, produced several proposals for restoring Benedictine monasticism in their church.

Solesmes and Beuron

Solesmes, led by Abbot Prosper Guéranger († 1875), pioneered the restoration of Benedictine monasticism in France. The monks of Solesmes also pioneered Benedictine contributions to liturgical study, with their study and editions of chant manuscripts. The founder of

7. For books reflecting this new attitude, see Charles Forbes de Montalembert, *Les moines d'occident depuis Saint Benoît jusqu'à Saint Bernard*, 7 vols. (Paris: Jacques Lecoffre, 1863–1867); Friedrich Hurter, *Geschichte Papst Innocenz des Dritten und seiner Zeitgenossen*, 4 vols. (Hamburg: Perthes, 1841–1844).

8. Edward L. Smither, *Missionary Monks: An Introduction to the History and Theology of Missionary Monasticism* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2016), 182.

Beuron in Germany, Abbot Maurus Wolter († 1890), drew many of his ideas from Solesmes, whose ideal was a fairly enclosed monastery dedicated to solemn liturgical prayer and study. Beuron was, however, more open to pastoral work at the monastery than was Solesmes. Both monasteries became heads of large congregations. Another abbey in the Beuronese Congregation, Maria Laach, was an important center of liturgical study. The periodic exile of Solesmes and other French monasteries led to the foundation of other monasteries in England and the Lowlands; Beuron founded Maredsous in Belgium, another center of liturgical renewal.

Benedictines Arrive in North America

Some monasteries of the Bavarian Congregation were restarted under King Ludwig I († 1868). The Abbey of Metten recovered quickly enough to send monks to the United States in 1846 to found Saint Vincent Abbey. The monks from Metten, led by the irrepressible Fr. Boniface Wimmer, settled in Pennsylvania, where Bishop John Carroll had earlier invited English monks to settle. They offered pastoral care and education to German-speaking immigrants. Saint Vincent in turn started many other monasteries. The Swiss monasteries of Einsiedeln and Engelberg, fearing suppression by a hostile central government, also sent monks to start monasteries in the United States. Their monasteries similarly ministered to German immigrants and did missionary work among Native Americans in the Dakotas and on Vancouver Island in Canada. Monks from the French Abbey of Pierrequi-Vire, founded in 1850 independently of Solesmes, sent monks to start a monastery in Louisiana in 1873. Two years later they moved to Oklahoma. Their monastery (now Saint Gregory's, at Shawnee, Oklahoma) played a major role in establishing the Catholic Church in that state, where much of their ministry was among Native Americans.

The monks of Saint Vincent's were soon joined by sisters from Saint Walburg at Eichstätt, whose monastery was restored in 1835. In allowing them to reopen, the local government had required them to teach, so the sisters at Eichstätt adapted to that ministry. They were thus not unprepared for the teaching ministries they were asked

to take up in the United States. In 1852 Sr. Benedicta Riepp led a band of Eichstätt sisters to Saint Marys, Elk County, Pennsylvania, where they established Saint Joseph's Monastery.⁹ As their numbers multiplied, they established many new convents, some of them near monasteries of men emanating from Saint Vincent's.

Australia

As the Catholic Church recovered from the devastations of the French Revolution, it experienced a remarkable interest in missionary activity. The German and Swiss foundations in North America were partially founded out of missionary zeal. Australia, then controlled by England, was a vast missionary field that attracted missionaries from different places, although before very long the majority of diocesan clergy were Irish. The English Benedictine congregation sent monks to serve there as missionaries, and some of the first bishops of the territory were English Benedictines. The story of one of the English missionaries, James Ambrose Cotham († 1883), would never have been known had an English researcher not been curious about the priest who had overseen the construction of her parish church in Cheltenham, England. His fifteen years of missionary work in Tasmania, followed by twenty-one years as a parish priest in Cheltenham, were typical of hundreds of Benedictine missionaries in Australia, North America, and elsewhere: monks and nuns who, while bound by vows and affection to a monastery, worked alone or in small groups pastoring and teaching native peoples and European settlers.

Not long after Fr. Cotham's work in Tasmania ended in 1841, two Spanish Benedictine missionaries arrived in Western Australia to minister to the First Australians there. The two had been together as young monks at a large and prosperous Benedictine monastery in Santiago de Compostela. Rosendo Salvado was a Galician and a talented musician; his older companion, José María Serra, was a

9. Saint Joseph's Monastery in Saint Marys, Elk Co., PA, closed in 2014. One of the contributors to this volume, Sr. Ephrem Hollerman, will soon be publishing a history of that community.

Catalan. Their lives and that of Rosendo's brother, Santos, also a monk, were upended when the monasteries of Spain were closed by the Spanish government in 1835.

Serra went to the ancient monastery of Cava near Naples in Italy, where, coincidentally, Fr. Cotham would spend some time after his retirement from his parish work in Cheltenham. Serra secured a place there for Salvado, who joined him in 1838. They seemed settled there, but then they felt a call to be missionaries. With some companions, Salvado and Serra arrived in Australia in 1844. For more than fifty years, through an enormous number of challenges, Salvado and the monks he was able to recruit, mostly from Spain, worked single-mindedly to better the lives of the First Australians of Western Australia and to evangelize them. Their work took place in difficult circumstances: settlers and governments did not share their love of the native inhabitants, Europeans brought with them diseases to which the natives had no immunity, and European settlements disrupted native life patterns and left the natives uprooted and destitute. Nevertheless, Salvado's monastery at New Norcia represented an enlightened, generous, adaptive, and respectful effort on behalf of the First Australians of Western Australia.

Saint Ottilien and Tutzing

The most widespread and long-lasting Benedictine missionary enterprise came later in the nineteenth century when Germany began to exercise control of some territory in East Africa through the German East Africa Company, which was founded in 1884. Andreas Amrhein, a Swiss, felt a call to Benedictine monasticism at Beuron and to missionary life. He was inspired by the example of the eighth-century Saint Boniface, the English Benedictine monk-missionary to Germany. In the face of many obstacles he eventually founded two missionary congregations, Saint Ottilien for men and Tutzing for women.

Shortly after their foundation, these two communities sent missionaries to what is now Tanzania. Some were martyred, but the mission grew in spite of that and the setbacks of two world wars. Today, the Ottilien congregation includes over 1000 members, and

the Tuting sisters have over 2000 members. Their monasteries are located in many parts of the world, and their membership includes people of many nationalities and ethnicities.

The Twentieth Century to 1930

Benedictine monasticism continued its remarkable recovery and growth up until 1965, but the scope of this book does not go beyond 1930. The year 1965 was the highpoint of the monastic revival that began after the French Revolution. Two persons represent Benedictines in the first part of the twentieth century.

Blessed Abbot Columba Marmion († 1923) grew up in Ireland, although his mother was French. After serving as a parish priest in Ireland, he entered Maredsous Abbey in Belgium. He became abbot there, and a very popular spiritual writer and guide. His tone was gentle; his teaching centered on a few key New Testament ideas. One of his many contributions was the founding of Glenstal Abbey in Ireland, where there was not much Benedictine presence before Glenstal.

Virgil Michel († 1938) of Saint John's Abbey in Minnesota began his teaching and writing in 1925. He brought back from his studies in Europe an awareness and knowledge of the liturgical movement there. Although he was a brilliant man, his primary aim was pastoral rather than theoretical. He was a man of many parts: sociologist, apostle of rural life, social-justice advocate, and liturgist. Through the periodical that he founded, *Orate Fratres* (now *Worship*), the National Liturgical Weeks, and countless publications and programs, he brought the liturgical renewal to American Catholics, and along with it a deeper understanding of the Bible and Catholic social teaching. It would not be inaccurate to say that his pastoral aim has been characteristic of American Benedictine men and women. His message was deeply Benedictine: celebrate and live the liturgy, the source and foundation of the Christian life.

Conclusion

When one reads the contributions to this book, one is astounded at the tenacity and patience of men like Salvado, Guéranger, Amrhein,

and Wimmer. They had to define their vision and then implement it in political situations that were very often not friendly to their plans.

A second impression is how interconnected the stories are. Solesmes influenced Beuron, which founded Maredsous, which founded Glenstal. At Saint Paul Outside the Walls in Rome the Wolter brothers first practiced monasticism, and there Rosendo Salvado died. At Cava, both Salvado and Cotham stayed, and there two of the first converts among the First Australians of Australia were taken to study.

A third impression is one of disaster and rebirth, after the Reformation, after the Wars of Religion and the Thirty Years War, after the French Revolution and the various suppressions of monastic life that followed in its train during the entire nineteenth century. By and large, the rebirths such as those at Beuron and Solesmes were restorations of what had been, although a changed political environment required adaptations of the medieval relationship of monasteries to political power. The post-modern world may require something more radical, though it is not easy to imagine what that might be.

A fourth impression is how pliable Benedictine spirituality is. It has a very solid, unencumbered core centered on the liturgy and the Bible. Whatever comes along is an addition that may come or go: eucharistic adoration, taking the discipline, added prayers, yoga exercises, and techniques for meditation may be appropriated insofar as they are helpful, but they are not essential. This flexibility of practice makes Benedictines attractive to people of other Christian bodies and invites tolerance of others' practices. Augustine Baker's cautions against overly prescriptive spiritual directors seem to arise from a deep Benedictine sensibility. Louis de Blois (Blosius) could be prescriptive about how to pray, particularly by meditation on Christ's last days, but he almost always added the coda—if it does not work for you, try something else.

Fifth, if liturgy is at the core of Benedictine life, it is noteworthy that even with the changes after Vatican II, the liturgy of the hours has remained a constant. One wonders what it was like in Saint Benedict's sixth-century monastery to say the psalms of the office from memory and listen to someone read from the Bible or the "orthodox Fathers."

Has the experience of the liturgy of the hours changed since then, or since 1530, and should it change more?

Over the fifty years after Vatican II, the long period of monastic growth that began around 1840 has reversed in Europe and North America. There Benedictine monasteries are shrinking and closing, even as sales of books about Benedictine spirituality are brisk. A third *Benedictine Reader: 1930–2080* will tell an interesting story. Whatever that story, for believers, it will be a story of God's work more than of human achievement.

Index of Subjects

- Abbess, abbesses, 81, 85, 104, 106, 107, 214
- Abbot, abbots, xviii, xix, xxv, xxvi, 3, 125, 137, 144, 214, 218, 233, 237–39, 251–52, 263, 293–96, 299, 300, 405
- Aboriginal people, 305, 320, 329, 345; see also First Australians
- Abstinence, 49, 50, 84, 86, 94, 96, 182, 313
- Abushiri Revolt, 426
- Adoration, xxi, xxii, xxxi, 44, 136, 150–52, 154, 155, 160; perpetual, 148–49, 154
- Advent, 273, 275, 278–79
- Albigenses, 10, 20–22
- Alms, 80, 86, 240, 395–96, 412
- Altar, 91, 103, 115, 156, 160, 176, 280, 327
- American Cassinese Congregation, 355, 367
- Amor ordinem nescit*, 59, 63
- Anéantisement*, 150–51, 158–59; see also Annihilation
- Angel(s), 114, 116, 154, 182, 275, 279, 301, 443, 456
- Angelology, 169
- Anger, 143, 299, 449
- Annihilation, xxii, 83, 133, see also *Anéantisement*
- Animals, 170, 279, 334, 338, 426
- Anti-clerical(ism), xxv, 287, 295, 341
- Apostles, 65, 155, 200, 275, 392
- Arabs, 426; uprising/rebellion, 433–34, 436
- Archive(s), xxv, 93, 168, 173–75, 180–81, 211, 233–36, 242–47, 250, 258–61, 263, 368, 377; Grand Archive of Naples, 258
- Ark, 157, 158, 297
- Art(s), 182, 235, 240, 366
- Asceticism, 41, 188, 294; see also Abstinence
- Atheists, xviii, 19
- Australia, xxviii, xxix, xxxi, xxxiv, 195, 247, 305, 307–12, 314, 319–22, 329–30, 333, 337, 339–42, 344, 421–22
- Austria, xxiv, 111, 112, 210, 211, 212, 214, 223, 224, 284, 287, 288, 295, 302, 446
- Authority, 294
- Baptism, 195, 196, 198, 203, 256
- Baroque, xxiv, 121
- Beauty, 143, 413, 455
- Beer, 225, 355, 439
- Belgium, 271, 286, 287, 289, 318, 382
- Benedict, Rule of, see Rules

- Benedictines, xi, xii, xvii, xxi,
 xxvi, xxvii, xxxi, xxxiii,
 27–28, 41–43, 46, 102–3,
 114, 123, 124, 148, 153, 186,
 188, 189, 192, 194, 248,
 269–70, 272, 284–85, 293,
 296, 305–6, 308, 317, 320,
 343, 351, 355, 356, 364, 369,
 383, 401, 404, 406–8, 411,
 419, 421, 430, 432; English
 Benedictines, xxiii, xxiv,
 xxviii, 187–90, 194–95, 272,
 305, 309, 317, 354; see also
 Religious orders
 Benedictinism, xii, 383, 385, 386
 Belgian Congregation, 446
 Bible, see Scripture(s)
 Biblical studies, xxi, 342
 Bishops, xx, xxi, xxviii, 82, 126,
 186, 190, 194, 212, 268, 271,
 305, 308, 367, 382, 389, 390;
 see also Clergy
 Blessed sacrament; see Eucharist,
 Sacrament(s)
 Blood, 434; Christ's, 67, 143, 255,
 256; in the Eucharist, 155,
 157–58, 198–99, 200–203
 Boarding school, see School(s)
 Body, 19, 53, 67, 118, 144, 202,
 203, 204, 377, 443, 464
 Books, xxii, xxiii, xxiv, xxxii, 23,
 40, 45, 47–48, 105, 127–28,
 162, 167–68, 172, 183, 189,
 212, 241, 242, 244–45, 247,
 249, 266, 269, 271–72, 291,
 296, 315, 342, 354, 357, 412,
 414, 446–47
 Boys, see Children
 Breviary, 95, 107, 114, 173, 267
 Bride, 213–15, 218, 220, 226, 228,
 230, 280; the church, 274,
 280; heavenly, 120
 Bridegroom, see Groom
 British Empire, 305
 Brothers, see Monks
 Bush, the, 323, 329, 334, 345–46,
 348, 441, 442
 Business, 17, 319, 395, 396
 Capuchins, see Religious orders
 Carmelites, see Religious orders
 Carthusians, see Religious orders
 Cassinese congregation, 241, 339,
 343
 Catechesis, 212, 435, 458
 Catechism, 195, 219, 266
 Catholic Church, xxvii, xxviii,
 10, 20, 42, 108, 186, 271,
 287, 307, 308, 310, 316, 360,
 361, 371, 384, 386, 390, 392,
 403, 409–10, 446, 458, 459;
 Catholicism, xx, xxvi, 19, 80,
 385, 386–88; Catholics, xx,
 xxx, 19, 22, 44, 47, 81, 108,
 185–88, 190, 268–69, 272,
 289, 309, 312–13, 316–17,
 320, 322, 324–25, 343, 364,
 402, 458, 461, 463
 Catholic Committee, 190, 193, 311
 Catholic Defense Association, 316
 Catholic League, 81, 85
 Catholic Worker Movement,
 459–60
 Celibacy, 391–92
 Cell(s), xviii, 91, 139, 299, 315
 Cellarer, 58, 85, 94, 152, 160,
 160–61, 332
 Celtic people, 330

- Chaplain(s), 109, 186, 191, 193, 196, 314
- Chapter, chapter meeting, 93–94, 137, 139–41; General chapter, xxiv, 58, 95, 124, 126–28, 241, 288–89, 433
- Chapter room, 5, 6, 106
- Charism, 149, 407
- Charity, 10, 45, 48, 64, 145, 152, 161–62, 205, 242, 258, 276, 292–93, 298, 300, 308, 375, 395–96, 452
- Chastity, 133, 292, 378, 379, 381, 388, 391
- Children, 16, 21, 107, 143, 168, 186, 191, 195–97, 204–6, 270, 279, 309, 315, 317, 319, 324–26, 341, 349, 351, 364, 367, 373, 392–93, 413, 426, 435, 437, 438; boys, xxii, 38, 209, 213, 217, 247, 318, 336, 339, 347, 350, 435–36, 438; girls, 96, 112, 217, 318, 339, 347, 363, 366, 374, 377
- Chippewa community, see Native American
- Christianity, xxiii, 41, 189, 271, 390, 393, 395, 409
- Christians, 18, 20, 23–24, 27, 132, 151, 158, 279, 346, 348, 390–391, 399, 435–36, 439
- Church of England, xxvi, 41, 381–82, 384, 386–87, 389–90, 393, 398, 401–2
- Cistercians, see Religious orders
- Classics, 183, 402
- Clergy, xxvi, xxviii, 10–12, 25, 90, 92, 126, 148, 192, 219, 265, 278, 307, 309, 317, 322, 331, 390; Anglican, 186, 382; clerics, 246–48, 358, 376, 445
- Clothes, 99, 224, 229, 349, 396, 425; Clothing, 25, 56, 218, 228, 347, 357, 358
- Codex, codices, 173, 176–78, 180, 243, 250; see also Parchments
- Colonists, 262, 311, 334, 341, 366
- Commandments, 20, 116, 195, 206
- Compassion, 308, 375
- Compline, see Monastic offices
- Compunction, 275, 447, 449, 450
- Confession(s), 58, 61, 95, 105, 132, 137, 138, 315, 325
- Confessions (of Dame Gertrude), 59, 63
- Confessional, 149, 162, 324–25
- Confessor(s), 84, 110, 138, 267, 275
- Confraternities, xxi, 81, 106, 318
- Congregation of Saint Maur, xxii, 95, 123, 125, 126, 130, 270
- Congregation of the Daughters of the Cross of Liège, 318
- Constitution(s), 46, 82, 86, 96–97, 126–28, 149–50, 152–54, 160, 162–63, 188, 192, 265, 269, 286, 288, 293, 363, 367–70, 374, 376–77, 378, 384, 430, 431
- Contemplation, 40, 42, 44–47, 52, 59–60, 62–63, 132, 294, 410, 448, 455
- Contemplative life, 45, 47–48, 58, 63, 384
- Contempt(s), 67, 143, 159
- Conversae*, 86, 89
- Conversatio*, 61, 301
- Conversion, 133, 302, 378, 380, 448

- Converts, 42, 316–17, 404
 Convicts, 305–7, 311, 313–16, 322
 Council(s): of Basil, 104; of
 Mainz, 105; of Trent, xx, 9,
 10, 12, 82, 86, 124, 271; of
 Vienna, 302; on the Riches of
 America, 169
 Cross, 4, 71, 88
 Crusade(s), 20–21, 25, 177
 Customs, 15, 18, 170, 183, 262,
 290, 350, 370, 374, 378, 383,
 419, 440

 Deaf, the, xx, 27, 30–35
 Death, 21, 22, 25, 117, 142, 150,
 159, 197, 199, 200, 253, 258,
 297, 360, 371, 397
 Desert Fathers, 84
 Devil, 63, 66, 258, 327
Devotio Moderna, xix, 129
 Diplomats, 245, 258, 261–63
 Disciples, 198, 202, 299, 300, 371
 Discipline, xxxi, 45, 50, 80, 106,
 111, 235, 238, 240, 288, 302,
 337, 359, 364, 369, 370, 373,
 377, 428
 Discretion, 64, 405, 421
 Dissolution, 55, 360, 381, 388,
 396
 Dominicans, see Religious orders
 Dormitory, 6, 95, 109–10, 163,
 242, 245

 Ecclesiastical Tithes Act, 316
 Edict of, 1548, 18; Nantes, 81;
 Restitution, 108
 Education, xxvii, 27, 31, 170, 186,
 189–90, 196, 309–11, 319,
 323, 339, 341, 344, 346–47,
 355, 363, 374, 403, 407, 409,
 459, 460, 465
 England, xvii, xxiii, xxvii, xxviii,
 39–43, 46, 55, 83, 102, 108,
 185–92, 270–71, 289, 305–9,
 312, 315–16, 320, 333, 336,
 339, 341, 344, 381–82, 385,
 393, 397, 403, 421; see also
 Church of England
 Enlightenment, xxiii, xxiv, xxvi,
 167, 188, 189–90, 211, 359
 Estates General, 8–9, 14, 16, 21,
 26; First Estate, 8–9, 11–13,
 24–25; Second Estate, 8;
 Third Estate 8, 9
 Eucharist, xxii, 80, 156, 195,
 197–98, 202–3; Holy
 Communion, 105, 159, 197,
 198, 203, 273, 327
 Europe, xvii, xviii, xx, xxi, xxv,
 xxvi, xxx, xxxii, 27, 82, 107,
 244, 248, 263, 270, 295, 330,
 332, 335–37, 341, 343, 359,
 361, 415, 433, 457
 Excommunication, 20–21, 242
 Extreme Unction, 195

 Families, xxiii, 24, 82, 186, 212,
 342, 345, 347–48
 Farmers, 106, 212, 216, 218, 329,
 338, 342
 Fasting, 84, 117, 149, 294
 Fear, 16, 141–42, 275, 280, 376
 Feudal system, 211
 First Australians, xxviii, xxix,
 xxxi, 247, 308, 329–30,
 334–38, 340–43, 345; see also
 Aboriginal people
 Flexibility, xii, xxxi

- Food(s), 37, 111, 162, 218, 333,
345, 358, 396, 423, 425, 446,
464
- Formation, monastic, 128, 383,
427, 447
- France, xviii, xxvi, 3, 8–17, 19, 24,
79–82, 87, 92, 98, 108, 112,
123, 124, 125, 126, 147, 148,
149, 185, 188, 190, 191, 192,
213, 214, 215, 218, 230, 245,
269, 271, 295, 315, 319, 331,
337, 342, 360, 446
- Franciscans, *see* Religious orders
- French Revolution, xxiii, xxv,
xviii, xxx, xxxi, 87, 123, 194,
239, 245, 265, 295, 305, 309,
359–60, 364, 419
- Friendships, 45, 144, 379, 460
- Galiccia, xxiv, 167, 170, 330, 331;
Galician, xxviii, 168, 170
- Gallicanism, 124, 267
- Garden, 163, 349, 414, 423, 437,
441
- General chapter, *see* Chapter
- Gentiles, 18, 452, 453
- Geography, 168, 183
- Germans, 426, 438, 441
- Germany, xvii, xix, xxi, xxiii,
xxiv, xxvii, xxix, 102, 108,
116, 121, 185, 250, 284, 285,
288, 290, 295, 318, 354, 360,
364, 419, 422, 424, 428, 437,
446, 459
- Girls, *see* Children
- Gold, 162, 308
- Gospels, *see* Scripture(s)
- Grand prior, 238
- Groom, 213–14, 218, 226
- Guests, 6, 57, 216, 247; guest
house, 110, 238–39; *see also*
Hospitality
- Habit, monastic, 29, 56, 83–84,
86–87, 91, 94, 96, 98, 132,
139, 172, 246, 286–87, 302,
357, 378, 382, 394, 396, 424
- Hapsburg Empire, 107
- Harvest, harvesting, 97, 335, 427,
428
- Heilbronn League, 108
- Heretics, 10, 13, 18, 19, 20, 22, 158
- Hermit, 50, 234
- History, 42, 130, 168, 183, 189,
249
- Holy Land, 177
- Holy Roman Empire, 81, 284
- Holy Spirit, 40, 45, 47–52, 60,
134–35, 140, 142, 160, 179,
180, 254–55, 274–76, 295,
449, 452, 454–55
- Horarium, xxi, 57, 92, 134, 186
- Hospital(s), 29, 238, 315, 396, 424,
427, 431
- Hospitality, 111, 148, 240, 242,
340, 445; *see also* Guests
- Huguenots, xx, 8, 10, 265
- Humanism, xix, 27
- Humility, 45, 60, 81, 133, 152,
161, 292, 300, 413
- Husbands, 228, 435
- Ignorance, 18, 65, 70, 169, 206,
370, 410, 414
- Illnesses, 128, 170
- Immaculate Conception, 189, 287
- Immigrants, xxvii, 307, 316, 364,
366, 459

- In commendam*, xviii, xix, 7, 124, 125, 127, 239, 240
- Incarnation, 150, 199, 200, 237
- Indigenous people, 308
- Infallibility, see Papacy
- Interdict, 20, 21, 104, 312
- Ireland, xxx, 269, 305, 307–8, 315, 319, 333, 403, 406, 445
- Italy, xxix, 23, 81–92, 233, 236, 248, 285, 320, 331–32, 338–39
- Jacobites, 187
- Jansenists, xxii, 82, 84, 127
- Jesuits, see Religious orders
- Jews, xix, 22, 24, 256, 279, 451
- Judges, 19, 253
- Justice, 13, 16, 19, 341
- Kappel, Battle of, xvii
- Kitchen, 5, 161, 423, 431
- Knowledge, 78, 128, 374, 414–15, 450, 451
- Laity (lay people), 12, 119, 124, 133–34, 253, 390, 458; brothers, 137, 237, 247, 288, 315, 337–38, 340–41, 398–99, 423–27, 432, 438, 443; lay brothers, 286, 287, 349, 350, 355, 357; lay sisters, 58, 105, 112, 161, 162, 372, 373, 424; see also *Conversae*
- Land, 4, 7, 194, 308, 312–13, 334, 335, 338, 341–42, 349, 393, 398–99, 424, 430
- Language(s), 18, 167–70, 183, 273, 334, 342, 403, 446; sign language, xx, 27, 30; Greek, 9, 33, 128, 168, 402, 416; Latin, 9, 33, 39, 127–28, 131, 168–69, 172, 179–80, 183, 190, 212, 217, 241–42, 244, 250, 273, 279, 342, 402; Swahili, 424, 433, 438
- Law(s), 9–11, 15, 17, 22, 33, 41, 176, 185, 194, 245–46, 248, 257, 265, 287, 335, 394; canon law, 8, 128, 218, 432; Kulturkampf, 422; Law of Association, 270; Lombard Laws, 238, 243; see also Legislation, Statutes
- Learning, 28, 242, 354, 416, 451
- Lectio*, xii, xxi, 44
- Legislation, 11, 16, 25–26, 340; see also Law(s)
- Library, libraries, xxiv, xxv, 42, 105, 111–12, 127–28, 167, 168–69, 176, 189, 235, 239–42, 244–45, 247, 267, 269, 342, 354, 396, 458
- Libretto, 213, 216–17; booklet(s), 12, 213, 432, 458
- Litany, litanies, 22, 113–15, 118
- Literature, xix, 127, 267, 342, 397, 407, 412, 420
- Liturgical awakening, 458, 461, 463
- Liturgical Movement, 446, 457–58, 461, 464
- Liturgy/liturgies, xii, xxi, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, 91, 106–7, 111, 119–20, 125, 130, 196, 250, 267, 271–77, 283, 289, 293–94, 313, 318, 335, 340, 420, 454, 455–64
- Love, 40, 44, 47–48, 52–54, 58, 61, 64, 66, 68, 76, 116–17,

- 143–45, 150, 156–60, 196,
198–99, 204, 299, 300, 372,
374–75, 377, 391, 394–97,
411, 416, 427, 429, 448–50,
455–56
- Maji-Maji Rebellion, 440–42
- Man, 69, 77, 150, 157, 200–201,
203, 254–56, 276, 297, 299,
391–92, 394, 415–16
- Manual labor, work, 105, 128, 132,
141
- Marriage, 209, 214–15, 217–18,
220, 341, 347
- Martyr(s), 91, 95, 275, 389, 425,
434, 436; martyrdom, 426;
martyred, xxix, 57
- Mass, Masses, 22, 29, 91, 93–94,
114–15, 174, 176, 186, 195,
197, 265, 267, 273, 277, 280,
311–13, 315, 318, 320–21,
324, 386, 424, 438, 442,
458–59
- Mathematics, 169, 189, 250, 309,
346, 420
- Matins, *see* Monastic offices
- Maurist(s), *see* Religious orders
- Meat, 22, 49, 86, 96, 199, 224
- Meditation(s), xxxi, 44–45, 53, 61,
97, 105, 125, 132–36, 196,
296, 358
- Melk Reform, 104
- Memory, 37, 44
- Middle Ages, xxvi, 29, 174, 277,
278, 331, 353
- Mill, 4, 252, 338
- Mill Hill Fathers, 422, 427
- Miracle(s), 86, 92–93, 116,
172–73, 178, 350, 421
- Mission(s), xxi, xxvi, xxix, 46,
185, 189, 191, 247, 305,
316, 320–21, 341–42, 345,
347–48, 356, 362, 384, 399,
406, 421, 424–27, 430–31,
433, 435–37, 439, 451
- Missionaries, xxiii, xxviii, xxix,
43, 102, 121, 185–87, 191,
247, 305, 307, 310, 333,
341, 346, 356, 419, 422–23,
425–26, 430, 432–33, 437,
439, 444
- Modesty, 140, 204
- Molesworth Committee, 307
- Monasteries, xii, xvii–xxv, xxvi–
xxxii, 27–29, 39, 55, 60,
80–83, 88, 101, 105–6, 109,
120, 124–28, 137, 180, 185,
187–88, 190–92, 209, 210–11,
233–35, 238–39, 241, 259–61,
265, 270–71, 283, 285,
287, 289–90, 293, 295–96,
302, 321, 331, 339, 354–56,
359–61, 366–68, 374, 378,
381–82, 388–90, 393, 395–96,
422, 429, 432, 446
- Monasticism, xvii, xxv, xxvi, xxix,
xxx, xxxi, 3, 4, 27, 29, 42,
56, 132, 283, 289–91, 293,
295–96, 300, 355, 381–82,
384, 387–88, 391, 460
- Monastic life, 29, 55, 57, 60, 62,
83, 123, 124, 132, 268, 271,
292, 294, 296, 298, 299, 301,
321, 355, 361, 374, 375, 377,
386, 387, 388, 390, 393, 397,
445, 447; *see also* Monks
- Monastic offices: Compline, 91,
177, 196, 273, 398; Matins,

- 132, 277, 278–79, 367, 423;
Night Office, 273, 278; Vespers,
86, 114, 196, 273, 277, 385,
398; Vigils, 84, 86, 92
- Money, 16, 17, 26, 90, 109, 185,
236, 239, 269, 312, 314, 319,
321, 339, 346, 357, 366, 385,
389, 396–97
- Monks, xvii, xviii, xxiii, xix, xxii,
xxiii, xxiv, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii,
xxix, 5, 7–8, 27–28, 39,
42–43, 46, 82, 92, 125–28,
134, 172, 173, 185–92, 195,
236, 238, 240–43, 246–49,
251–52, 266, 269–72,
285–91, 294–96, 299, 305,
307, 309–10, 320–21,
330–31, 337, 340–41, 343,
346–47, 353–55, 364, 366,
382, 384, 386–88, 390,
393–96, 398, 400, 409,
412, 414–16, 419, 421–22,
430–31, 433, 446, 450, 460
- Morals, 163, 195, 212, 217, 219,
301–2
- Music, 110, 177, 209–10, 249,
309, 312, 318, 330–32, 335,
342–43; see also Organ,
Songs
- Muslim(s), 27, 434, 436, 442
- Mute, 27, 32, 36–37
- Mysticism, xix, 188
- Mythology, 168
- National Assembly, 265
- Native Americans, xvii, 308;
Chippewa community, 459
- Natives, native people(s), xxviii,
xxix, 24, 329, 345–48, 434
- Neighbors, xxiii, 102, 110, 143,
180, 248, 255, 334, 340, 342,
415
- Nepotism, xix, 7
- New Testament, see Scriptures
- Night Office, see Monastic offices
- Nobility, xx, 8, 85, 88, 111, 127,
143, 216, 218, 239, 290
- Noongar people, 329
- North America, xxvii, xxviii,
xxxii, 270, 353, 354–55, 359,
363–64, 367–68
- Novice(s), 56, 61, 86, 96, 112, 128,
132, 248, 286, 332, 336–37,
372, 374, 378, 432
- Novice master, 46, 128, 306, 318,
338, 432
- Nuns, xxii, xxiii, xxviii, xxxiv, 39,
40, 42, 44, 46, 55–56, 58–59,
61, 80, 84, 86, 94, 102, 104–7,
110, 119, 147, 153–57, 161,
270–72, 290, 306, 309–10,
359–62, 365–66, 368–69,
384–85, 390, 393, 396, 419,
424, 430
- Obedience, 44–45, 47, 60, 80, 97,
99, 117, 133, 152, 160–61,
199, 238, 292, 294, 299,
337, 378, 380–81, 383, 388,
391–93, 457
- Old Testament, see Scripture(s)
- Oracles, 156–57
- Orate Fratres*, xxx, 458–62, 464,
466
- Order of Fontevrault, see Religious
orders
- Organ, 242, 247, 331–32, 429
- Ottilien congregation, xxix, 432

- Oxford Movement, 316, 401, 403
- Pamphlet(s), 126, 213, 307, 315, 382, 388, 403, 458; see also Libretto
- Papacy, 20, 124, 191, 242, 267; papal infallibility, 190, 404; papal schism, 124, 239
- Parchments, 246–47, 259–63; see also Codex, codices
- Parents, 193, 195–96, 197, 205–7, 350, 357, 373, 376
- Paris Accord, 112
- Parlement*, xviii, 11, 12, 17
- Passion, Christ's, 90, 105, 197, 199, 200, 253, 257, 275
- Passions, 53, 63, 280
- Pastoral work, xxiii, xxvii, 287
- Patience, 45, 77, 133, 350
- Penance, 99, 145, 152, 195
- Perfection, 48–51, 66, 73, 138, 157, 193–94, 198, 301, 370, 391–93, 449–50
- Performance(s), 209–11, 213–15, 219, 351
- Pharmacy, 110, 247, 310, 344
- Philosophy, 33, 128–29, 131, 188, 191, 242–43, 275, 284, 290, 416, 420, 445, 460, 464
- Piety, xxi, xxii, 60, 82, 84, 120, 128, 160, 188, 196, 199, 206, 298, 415
- Pilgrimage(s), 87, 99, 102–3, 111, 178, 301, 331, 421–22, 433, 435; pilgrims, 102, 174, 177, 234
- Plague, 9, 10, 110, 148, 243, 257
- Poetry, poem(s), xxiv, 40, 55, 59, 63, 113, 169, 172, 174–84, 241, 243, 276–77, 407, 409–11, 440; see also Verses
- Poor, the, 24, 111, 116, 161, 234, 238, 258, 391, 395–96, 412
- Portugal, 28, 289–90, 330, 429
- Postulants, 132, 386, 427
- Poverty, 83, 97, 104, 110, 117, 125, 133, 292, 358, 378, 379, 381, 388, 391, 398; see also Poor, the
- Prayer(s), xxiii, xxvii, xxxi, 10, 39–40, 42–46, 49, 51, 53, 56–63, 70, 76, 83, 86–87, 91, 99, 102, 110, 113, 118, 121, 132–36, 157–60, 195–96, 204–6, 273–78, 289, 294–95, 300, 307, 311, 315, 324, 358, 375, 393–94, 396–98, 423, 435, 448, 452
- Preaching, xxvi, 358, 385, 399, 451
- Pride, 140, 258
- Priest(s), 7, 41, 90, 110, 126, 138, 152, 154, 158, 172, 196, 219, 258, 265, 283, 305, 307–11, 316, 318–19, 325, 327, 340, 415, 422, 458; priesthood, 128, 152
- Prison, 84, 88, 314–15, 334, 341, 451; prisoners, 246, 307, 311, 313–15, 426
- Propaganda Fide*, 330, 332–33, 336, 338–39, 343–45, 348, 422, 425, 427–28, 430–31
- Property, xx, 104, 108, 186, 192, 214, 236, 245, 265, 268, 302, 317, 331, 360–61, 379, 388, 398, 430
- Prose, 55, 63, 173, 277, 410

- Protestants, xvii, xviii, xx, 10, 13,
 17, 81, 108, 148, 346, 390;
 Protestantism, xvii, 11, 13, 81
- Quatrains, Alexandrine, see Verses,
 Alexandrine
- Recruits, monastic, 188, 190, 307,
 310, 330, 333, 337, 339, 341,
 423, 425, 427
- Refectory, 6, 91, 244
- Reformation, xvii–xix, xxi, xxv,
 xxxi, xxxiii, 3, 108, 186, 331,
 383, 409, 422
- Reforms, xx, 81–82, 84, 104–5,
 126, 129–30, 188, 353, 460
- Relic(s), 79, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95,
 103, 115, 119, 240
- Relief Act of 1778, 188, 190
- Religious orders, xix, xxiii, xxvi,
 82, 87, 154–55, 186, 258,
 265, 287, 308, 320, 370,
 409, 416; Capuchin, xxi,
 124; Carmelite, xxi, 409;
 Carthusian, xi, 97; Cistercian,
 xi, 138, 269, 315; Dominican,
 406–7; Fontevault, 80–81;
 Franciscan, 409; Jesuit, xxi,
 60, 82, 84, 107, 124, 130,
 269, 289, 309–10, 406–8;
 Maurist, xxii, xxiv, 82, 123,
 125–31, 137, 269, 296;
 Vincentian, xxi; see also
 Benedictines
- Romans, 262, 330
- Romanticism, xxvi
- Rosary, 90, 188, 312, 318, 396
- Rules: Benedictine/of Benedict/
 Holy ix, xii, xxi, xxxiii, 4,
 42, 48–51, 80, 83–87, 90,
 92, 94, 96, 100, 105, 107,
 116, 123–25, 129–33, 137,
 138, 140, 144, 150, 152–53,
 160, 162–63, 270, 286, 292,
 295–96, 301–3, 354, 356–58,
 363, 368–71, 378–80,
 382–83, 385, 398, 405, 447;
 for Novices, 293; Mixed, 79;
 of Saint Augustine, 109
- Rural life, 210, 459, 464–65
- Sacrament(s), 61, 186, 195–96,
 198, 257, 315, 317, 322,
 324–26, 402; Blessed
 sacrament, 113, 148–49,
 154–59, 198–99, 398,
 437; see also Baptism,
 Confession(s), Eucharist,
 Penance, Extreme unction
- Safari, 439, 441–43
- Saint Joseph Total Abstinence
 Society, 313
- Sancta Sophia*, 39–40, 44–47, 59
- Schism, see Papacy
- School(s), 25, 186, 190–91,
 247–48, 305, 318, 339, 346,
 349–50, 367, 374, 377–78,
 397, 406–7, 409–11, 414–16,
 438, 445; boarding school, 41,
 148, 267, 319, 348
- Science, 28, 167–68, 188–89, 276,
 309, 397, 410–11, 416, 420
- Scotland, xvii, 319
- Scriptorium, 235, 238
- Scripture(s), 128, 135, 197, 389,
 390–91, 413–15, 446; Bible,
 xxx, xxxi, 168, 196, 390, 446;
 Gospels, 390–91, 454; New

- Testament, xxx, 157, 390,
391; Old Testament, 20, 176,
274
- Second Vatican Council, see
Vatican Council
- Secularization, 101, 110, 295,
353–54, 360, 362–63, 422
- Seminary, 189, 242, 247, 267, 284,
308, 310, 331, 344, 353, 411,
422, 431, 433
- Sermon(s), 9, 21, 91, 97, 105, 177,
315–17, 403, 406, 438
- Servants, 90, 119, 163, 205, 396,
435
- Settlers, xxviii, xxix, 305, 307–8,
311, 314, 334, 338, 341, 344
- Sheep, xxxiv, 334–35, 339–40,
348; sheep ranch, 344
- Ship(s), 233, 235–36, 311, 313–14,
433
- Shrines, 397, 413, 415
- Sick, the, 152, 161, 238, 287, 302,
396, 415, 454
- Sign language, see Language(s)
- Silence, 43, 45–46, 50, 51, 86, 106,
141, 144, 293–94, 298, 453
- Silver, 97
- Sisters, xxi, xxii, xxiii, xxvi, xxvii,
xxviii, xxx, 94, 96, 101–2,
106–7, 109–10, 112–14, 119,
121, 147–54, 160, 318–19,
330, 355, 361, 363–64,
366–67, 368, 374–80, 398,
420, 423, 425, 427, 429–32,
438, 441–42, 444–45; lay
sisters, 58, 105, 112, 161, 163,
372–73, 424
- Slaves, 319
- Social justice, 457–59
- Solitude, 43, 45, 50, 51, 168, 293,
299, 301–2
- Songs, 213, 276, 343, 349; see also
Music
- Soul/souls, the, xxii, 19, 29, 40, 47,
52–53, 62–63, 67, 77, 133,
151, 158, 197, 199–200, 298,
447–50, 456
- Spain, xix, xx, xxiv, xxix, 27–30,
81, 98, 108, 126, 174, 179,
238, 247, 329, 330–31, 339,
341–42; Spanish succession,
111
- Spiritual Exercises* (of Ignatius of
Loyola), 44, 129, 291
- Spiritual guide, 43, 56, 60, 75, 445
- Stability, 53, 116, 133, 288, 293,
299, 302, 345, 378–79, 388,
450
- Statutes, 12, 80–81, 298, 367,
370–73, 374; see also Laws
- Students, 33, 107, 190–91, 284,
309–10, 336, 343, 354–56,
366, 373, 446
- Study, xxvi, xxvii, 127, 238, 272,
291, 294, 358, 452
- Superior general (of a
congregation), xxii, 125–28,
430
- Superiors, xxii, 25, 43, 66, 80, 127,
241, 356, 370, 380, 392
- Suppression (of monasteries),
xxvii, xxxi, 39, 109, 258–59,
331, 338
- Swahili, see Language(s)
- Swedes, 108–9, 119, 147
- Swiss-American congregation, 432
- Switzerland, xvii, 295, 420, 427,
446

- Sword, 18, 19, 21–22, 109, 226
- Tax(es), 24–25, 106, 112, 236, 251–52, 366, 440
- Teacher(s), 32–33, 35, 37–38, 47, 49–50, 60, 128, 168, 179, 249, 265, 300, 332, 364–65, 373, 377, 405, 409, 424, 433–34, 445, 466
- Temperance, 45, 313
- Temptation(s), 6, 67, 78, 133, 297, 375, 449
- Theater, 169, 210, 214, 216–17, 229–30
- Theology, 128, 131, 150, 188–89, 210, 242–43, 245–46, 249, 290, 342, 388, 402, 410, 420, 460
- Thinking, 206, 273, 408, 464
- Tolerance, xxxi, 11, 13, 20, 23, 24; toleration, 3, 10, 189
- Transportation Act (Australia), 307
- Trees, 251, 348–49, 413–14, 436, 438–40
- Trinity, 251, 258, 391
- Troops, 107, 109–12, 118, 266, 285
- UNESCO World Heritage Site, 180, 246
- United States, xxvii, xxviii, 101, 192–93, 295, 353–54, 359, 364–68, 374, 377, 378–79, 457
- Vatican Council: First Vatican Council/Vatican I, 306–7, 340, 404; Second Vatican Council/Vatican II, xxxi, xxxii, 170, 273, 287, 460
- Verses, Alexandrine, 171, 173, 176, 178–79, 182; see also Poetry
- Vespers, see Monastic offices
- Vice(s), 135, 196, 254, 394, 413, 449
- Vigils, see Monastic offices
- Vincentians, see Religious orders
- Virginity, 270, 391, 394
- Virtues, 13, 45, 48, 60, 62, 64, 116, 120, 135, 160, 196, 298, 302, 374, 377, 405, 455
- Visitation, 106–7, 111, 248, 386, 411
- Visitor, 29, 80–83, 107, 125, 290, 428–29, 438
- Vocabulary, 168, 183, 243, 250
- Vocation(s), 7, 84, 152, 154, 157, 159, 187–88, 242, 245, 297, 299, 332, 357, 365, 376, 413, 428
- Vow(s), xxviii, 57, 70, 84, 116, 133, 151, 160, 179, 182, 270, 302–3, 310, 367, 370, 374, 378–81, 383, 388, 391, 421, 425, 433, 436–37
- Wales, xvii, 383, 385
- War(s), xx, xxi, xxix, 19–24, 89, 98, 110, 115, 120, 148, 192, 240, 245, 302, 442–43; Austrian succession, 111; Crimean War, 406; First Coalition War, 111; Franco-Prussian War, 284; Hundred Years War, 6, 80, 124; Schmalkaldic Wars, 107; Seven Years War, 111; Spanish Succession, 111; Third Coalition War, 112;

- Thirty Years War, xxi, xxxi,
 81, 101–2, 107–9, 112, 127,
 147, 353; Wars of Religion,
 xviii, xx, xxxi, 7, 81, 85, 128,
 270; World War I, 233, 249,
 283, 386, 431, 436, 437, 446;
 World War II, 246
 Water(s), 103, 170, 252, 255–57,
 295, 358, 438, 441, 456, 463
 Wealth, 235, 321, 414
 Weddings, 214, 217–19
 Wheat, 98, 162, 221, 223, 228
 Wine, 97, 162, 181, 225, 326, 340,
 402
 Wisdom, see *Sancta Sophia*
 Witch, 219, 228
 Withdrawal, 289, 291
 Women, xviii, xxi, xxiii, xxix, xxx,
 4, 21, 39, 56–57, 80, 82–83,
 94, 98, 109, 116, 170, 270,
 285, 290, 305, 315, 319, 347,
 359, 360, 366–69, 393, 423,
 424, 442; wives, 119, 238, 435
 Wood, 162, 252, 260
 Word, 32, 37, 128, 298, 351
 Words, 18, 32–33, 37, 44, 135,
 138–39, 157, 176, 183, 205,
 207, 300, 408, 449, 461
 Work-houses, workhouse, 49,
 395–97

Index of Persons

Names with non-English particles such as *d'*, *de*, and *von* are alphabetized by the principal element in the name (e.g., Gonzalo de Berceo is listed as Berceo, Gonzalo de).

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Absbert, Walburga von, OSB
(abbess), 106 | Antoine of Bois-Aubry, 7 |
| Achard of Saint Victor, xi | Antoinette, Marie, xxiv, 211,
213–19 |
| Achery, Luc d', OSB, 127, 128,
130, 131 | Antonio, Nicolás, 172–73, 181 |
| Adam, 6, 253, 256 | Antony (saint), 414–15 |
| Adam of Saint Victor, 276 | Apréa, Antonio d', 246, 258,
262–63 |
| Agnes (saint), 106 | Aquinas, Thomas, 458 |
| Albert, Sigrid C., 432–33 | Arbouze, Jacques d', 125 |
| Albrizio, Marino, 244 | Arbouze, Marguerite d', OSB,
84–85 |
| Alexander III (pope), 265 | Arcy, Greult d', OSB, 269 |
| Alexander VI (pope), 28, 240–41 | Argáiz, Gregorio de, OSB, 34 |
| Alferio (saint), 234, 250–53 | Arnauld, Agnes, OCist (abbess), 97 |
| Alfonso VI (king of León and
Castile), 172, 173, 175 | Augustine (saint), xxii, 48, 65, 129,
256, 294, 389, 454, 458 |
| Alfonso VII of Castile, 28 | |
| Amrhein, Andreas, OSB (abbot),
xxix, xxx, 419–26, 430 | Baker, Augustine, OSB, xxiii, xxxi,
39–47, 50, 56–57, 59, 62,
75–76, 133–34, 188, 205 |
| Anacletus / Peter Pierleoni
(antipope), 236 | Balde, Jakob, SJ, 113 |
| André, Luise, OSB, 92 | Balsamo / Balsamon, OSB (abbot),
236–38 |
| Angoitia, Antonio Eguiluz, OSF,
32, 34 | Bar, Mechtilde Catherine de, OSB,
xxii, 82, 147–54 |
| Anne (saint), 95 | Barberi, Dominic, 403 |
| Anne of Austria, 85 | |
| Anson, Peter F., 382 | |

- Barbo, Ludovico / Louis, 81,
240–41
- Barker, L., see Broome, Mary
Anne Stewart
- Barker, Robert, 344
- Barlow, Rudisind, OSB, 42, 43, 55
- Barrière, Jean de la, OCist, xviii, 82
- Basil (saint), 9, 128, 294, 389, 414
- Beauduin, Lambert, OSB, 457–58
- Beauvilliers, Françoise de, OSB,
84–85
- Beauvilliers, Marie de, OSB,
83–84
- Bede, the Venerable, 246, 256
- Beltrán, Ildephonse, OSB, 338
- Bénard, Laurence, OSB, 82, 84,
124–25
- Benedetto of Bari, 237, 253
- Benedict (saint), xii, xxxi, 48, 86,
89, 91, 97, 116, 121, 132, 135,
137, 144, 152–53, 240, 292–
93, 301, 333, 371, 378, 383,
389, 404, 406–15, 447–49
- Benedict XIII (pope), 240
- Berceo, Gonzalo de, 171–84
- Bérengier, Théophile, OSB, 336,
342
- Bernard of Clairvaux (saint), 105,
129, 154–55, 174, 294, 450
- Bernard of Ponthieu (or
d'Abbeville, or of Tiron), 3, 4
- Bernardo of Rome, 240
- Bernhard of Weimar, 108, 119
- Bérulle, Pierre de (cardinal), xx,
xxii, 82, 150
- Bienassis, Jacques, xviii–xx, 3,
7–9, 12–13, 17, 20, 24
- Blois, Louis de / Blosius, OSB
(abbot), xxxi, 83
- Blount, Henry Benedict, OSB, 317,
318
- Bluhme, Friedrich, 246
- Boleyn, Anne, 388–89
- Bonaparte, Joseph, 245
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, 245
- Bonet, Juan Pablo, 32
- Boniface (saint), xxix, 102, 116,
419, 423, 437
- Boniface VIII (pope), 248
- Bourbon, Eleanor de, 88–89, 94
- Bourbon, Jeanne de (abbess), 94
- Bourbon, Louise de, 85
- Bourbons, 245, 246, 258
- Bouyer, Louis, 401
- Brady, John (bishop), 308, 333–37
- Brewer, John Bede, OSB, 189, 191,
306
- Broome, Frederick Napier, 342, 344
- Broome, Mary Anne Stewart / L.
Barker, 344, 348
- Bruyère, Jenny / Sister Cécile,
OSB, 270
- Burgundofar, 79, see also Fare
(saint)
- Burkhard, Marianne, OSB, 368
- Buschmann, Johanna, 283, 294
- Buz, Jean de (bishop), 85
- Caloen, Josef Gerard van, OSB
(abbot), 421, 425, 430
- Canfield, Benet / Benedict,
OFMCap, 52, 83
- Carafa, Oliviero (archbishop), 240
- Carlyle, Aelred / Benjamin
Fearnley Carlyle, 384
- Carrión, Manuel Ramírez de, 32
- Carroll, John (bishop), xxvii, 194,
354

- Casaretto (abbot), 337, 339
 Cassidy, John, 311–12
 Castañiza, Juan de, OSB, 33
 Catherine [of Alexandria] (saint), 93
 Ceva Grimaldi Pisanelli, Giuseppe, 246–47, 258
 Chantelou, Claude, OSB, 129
 Charlemagne, 20, 25, 79, 416
 Charles V (emperor), 350
 Charles V / the Wise (king of France), 16
 Charles VI (king of France), 24
 Charles VII (king of France), 13, 16
 Charles VII (emperor), 111
 Charles VIII (king of France), 25
 Charles IX (king of France), 8
 Charles X (king of France), 268
 Charles of Anjou, 238
 Charles of Bourbon, 244, 262
 Charles the Simple, 103
 Chartier, William (bishop), 80
 Châtre, Anne de la (abbess), OSB, 85, 88
 Châtre, Françoise de la, OSB (abbess), xxii, 85–87, 89, 90, 92, 99, 100
 Chaussy, Yves, OSB, 87, 93, 123
 Chetardye, Louise, de la, OSB (prioress), 92
 Chiramone, Gregorio Barnaba (Pope Pius VII), 245
 Christ, 24, 71, 82–83, 86, 138–39, 144, 150–52, 155–58, 161, 174, 175, 195, 197, 198–204, 253, 255–56, 274–76, 299–300, 370–71, 392, 395–97, 402, 448, 450, 451–56, 458, 466
 Christian IV (king of Denmark), 108
 Chrysostom, John, xxii, 130, 294, 315, 412
 Cisneros, Francisco Jiménez de, OFM (cardinal), xix
 Claret, Antony, 339–40
 Clark, John, 39, 47, 63
 Clement V (pope), 238–39
 Clement VII (pope), 28
 Clement VIII (pope), 242
 Clement XIV (pope), 301
 Cockshoot, Anselm, OSB, 46, 317
 Coll, Millan, OSB, 339
 Collett, Martin (abbot), 387
 Collier, William Bernard, OSB (bishop), 310, 319, 320
 Columban (saint), 79
 Condulmer, Gabriele (Pope Eugene IV), 240–41
 Conolly, Philip, 311–12, 322, 324, 327–28
 Corker, Maurus, OSB (abbot), 188
 Cornu, Marie (abbess), 81
 Correr, Antonio, 240
 Costabile (saint), 235–36
 Cotham, James Ambrose, OSB, xxviii, xxix, xxxi, 247, 305–6, 309–23, 328
 Cotham, Lawrence, 309–11, 321
 Cour, Didier de la, OSB, 124, 126
 Cressy, Serenus, OSB, xxiii, 39, 41
 Crevant, Antoine de, 6, 7
 Crevant, Louis de, 6
 Cromwell, Thomas, 381
 Dattilo, Alferio Gaetano, OSB (abbot), 244
 David, 254, 276
 Day, Dorothy, 459–60, 466
 Delatte, Paul, OSB (abbot), 270

- Denis the Areopagite, 53
 Deutsch, Alcuin, OSB (abbot), 457–58
 Dietrich, Walburga, OSB, 365
 Dinkel, Pankratius von (bishop), 424, 428
 Dominguez, Fulgentius, OSB (abbot), 343
 Dominic (saint), 406, 407, 409, 410, 414
 Dominic of Silos, OSB (saint), 172, 180, 182
 Droste zu Vischering, Maria of the Divine Heart, 429
 Durandus, William, 239
 Duset, Benedict, OSB (cardinal), 296

 Ebrand, Antoinette, OSB, 92
 Eder, Albert, OSB (abbot), 296
 Ehrling, Joseph, 423
 Ennius, 183
 Ephrem (saint), 277
 Erre, Pellegrino del', OSB, 242
 Ettinger, Angelo Maria, OSB (abbot), 250
 Eugene III (pope), 5
 Eugene IV, OSB (abbot), see Condulmer, Gabriele
 Eustasius, 79
 Eve, 6
 Eyck, John von (bishop), 104–6

 Falcinelli, Mariano, 285
 Fare (saint), 79, 86–87, 89–90, 92–93, 98
 Feijoo Montenegro, Benito Jerónimo, OSB, 32, 34, 168–70
 Feiss, Hugh, OSB, xi, xxxiv
 Felipe II (king of Spain), 34
 Felipe III (king of Spain), 34
 Felipe V (king of Spain), 169
 Fenwick, Laurence, OSB, 187
 Ferdinand II (Holy Roman emperor), 108
 Ferdinand II of Aragon, xix
 Ferdinand IV (king of Bohemia), 246
 Ferdinand VI / Fernando VI (king of Spain), 169
 Ferdinand of Tuscany, 112
 Fink, Louis Mary, OSB, 368, 377
 Fixlmiller, Alexander, OSB (abbot), xxv
 Flieger, Maura, OSB, 365–66
 Francis (pope), 333
 Francis (saint), 51, 86, 97
 Francis I / François I (king of France), 18, 23
 François, Claude, OSB, 124
 Frederick II (Holy Roman emperor), 237–38
 Froude, Richard Hurrell, 402
 Fusco, Angelo, OSB (abbot), 239–40

 Gabriel de Saint-Marie, see Gifford, William
 Garibaldi, 245, 246, 248, 285, 340
 Garrido, Venancio, OSB, 338, 340
 Gascoigne, Catherine, OSB (abbess), 55, 58–59
 Gascoigne, Francis, OSB, 59, 63
 Gasquet, Aidan, OSB (cardinal), 321
 Gelmírez, Diego (bishop), 331
 Geoffrey le Gros, 4

- George I (king of England), 187
 Germain, Michel, OSB, 243
 Gertrud of Helfta, OSB or OCist, 291–92
 Giacomo, OSB (abbot), 238
 Gibney, Matthew (bishop), 342–43
 Gifford, William / Gabriel de Saint-Marie, OSB, 82, 84
 González, Fernán, 179, 181
 Gore, Charles (bishop), 385–86
 Grafton, Charles (bishop), 385
 Gregory I (the Great) (pope), 72, 254, 278, 294
 Gregory XII (pope), 241
 Gregory XV (pope), 125, 234
 Gregory XVI (pope), 268, 307, 333
 Gregory, Henry Gregory, OSB, 308, 310, 314
 Gregory Nazianzen (saint), 128
 Grillo, Angelo, OSB, 241
 Grimaldo, 172–73, 175
 Griver y Cuni, Martin, OSB (bishop), 341–42
 Guaimaro III, 234
 Guaimaro IV, 234
 Guéranger, Prosper, OSB (abbot), xxv, xxvi, xxx, 46, 265–73, 279, 281, 283, 286–87, 290, 291, 293, 296, 333
 Guillaume, Paul, 249
 Guise, Henry de, 81
 Guise, René de, OSB, 95
 Haeften, Benedict, OSB, 302
 Hansom, Charles Francis, 317
 Hartmann, Maurus, OSB, 427, 429, 439
 Haya, John de, 238–39
 Hemptinne, Hildebrand de, OSB (abbot), 288–90, 385, 421, 429
 Henry I (duke of Guise), 81
 Henry II (king of France), 7, 23, 24
 Henry II of Navarre, 81
 Henry III (king of France), 81, 87
 Henry IV (king of France), 81, 90
 Henry VIII (king of England), 39, 55, 57, 381, 388–89, 396
 Heptonstall, Thomas, OSB, 342
 Heribert (bishop), 103–4
 Herrieden, Wolfhard von, 113
 Hervás, Lorenzo, 34
 Hooke, Luke Joseph, OSB, 189
 Hôpital, Michel de l', 9–10, 16, 18–19, 23–24
 Hötzl, Petrus von (bishop), 428–29
 Hugh of Balma, xix
 Hughes, Marion, 381
 Hugo, Victor, 268, 272
 Hull, Francis, OSB, 42, 58
 Hutt, John, 334
 Ignatius of Loyola (saint), xix, 44, 60, 129, 406–10
 Ildefonso (saint), 178
 Imma (abbess), 103
 Incarnation, Marie de l', 131
 Innocent II (pope), 5
 Innocent III (pope), 236
 Innocent IV (pope), 238
 Innocent VIII (pope), 28
 Jäger, Thomas, 106
 James (apostle), 302
 James II (king of England), 187
 Janssen, Arnold, SVD, 422
 Jeroche (saint), 92

- Jerome (saint), 128, 177, 294,
 301–2, 389
 Jesus, *see* Christ
 John II (king of France), 26
 John XXII (pope), 239
 Jones, Benet, OSB, 57
 Joseph (saint), 86
 Joseph I (Holy Roman emperor), 302
 Juan I (king of Spain), 27
 Juan de Mena, 183–84

 Keble, John, 403
 Kendall, Peter, OSB, 192
 Kenny, John, 311–12, 325
 Knowles, Gilbert, OSB, 188
 Knox, John, xvii
 Korff, M. Birgitta, OSB (superior),
 427, 430
 Kröhling, Maurus, OSB, 437

 Lamennais, Hugues Felicité Robert
 de, 267–69
 Lang, Leo, OSB, 437–39
 Langley, Gilbert, 190
 Latz, Dorothy, 59
 Laurence (saint), 191
 Le Bret, Charlotte, OSB, 91–92
 Ledochowski, Miescelaus
 (cardinal), 430
 Leo (saint), 128, 234
 Leo XIII (pope), 249, 289, 296,
 402, 404
 Leodegar (count), 103–4
 León, Pedro Ponce de, OSB, xx,
 27–35, 38
 Leuthner, Franciscus, OSB, 440
 Leyva, Andrés de, OSB, 29
 Lindemayr, Maurus, OSB, xxiv,
 209–13, 216–19

 Lioba (saint), 102, 419
 Liot, OP, 90
 Livingstone, David, 421
 Lodenmayrin, Susanna, OSB
 (abbess), 107
 Longley, Charles Thomas
 (archbishop), 382
 Lopez, Juan, OSB, 331
 Lorraine, Jeanne de, OSB (abbess),
 94, 98
 Louis I (abbot), 7
 Louis II (abbot), 7
 Louis VII (king of France), 265
 Louis XVI (king of France), xxiv,
 211
 Louis IX (saint; king of France),
 13, 16, 22, 25
 Louis XI (king of France), 24
 Louis XII (king of France), 13, 17
 Louis XIII (king of France), 81,
 89, 95
 Louis of Bourbon, 8
 Louis the Pious, 24–25
 Louis-Philippe I (king of France),
 268
 Lucienne (abbess), 80
 Ludwig I (king of Bavaria), xxvii,
 361–63
 Lyne, Ignatius / Joseph Leycester,
 381–85, 387–88, 391

 Mabillon, Jean, OSB, 129–31, 188,
 243, 258
 Mai, Angelo (cardinal), 246–47
 Maier, Ambrosius, OSB, 434
 Maillé, Simon de, OCist (bishop), 9
 Mangin, Toussaints, 92
 Manning, Henry Edward
 (cardinal), 404

- Mannock, John Anselm, OSB, 191
 Marguerite of Valois, 90
 Marie Antoinette (queen), xxiv, 211, 213–19
 Marie of Brittany (abbess), 80
 Marincola di Contanzero, OSB, 246–47, 260, 261–62
 Marmion, Columba, OSB (abbot), xxx, 445–47, 457
 Marquand II (prince-bishop), 120
 Martène, Edmond, OSB, 127, 129–30
 Martin V (pope), 239
 Martin, Claude, OSB, 129–31, 133–34, 136, 137
 Marx, Joseph, OSB, 286
 Mary, xxi, 72, 86, 95, 175, 234, 267, 402
 Massaro, Camillo, 243
 Matteis, Paolo de, 244
 Maurin, Peter, 466
 Maximilian I (king of Bavaria), 360–61
 Mazzacane, Carlo, OSB (abbot), 245–46
 Mechthild of Österreich, 106
 Mecolaeta, Diego de, OSB (abbot), 173
 Medici, Marguerite de, 99
 Medici, Marie de, 93, 125–26
 Mena, Juan de, 183–84
 Michel, Virgil, OSB, xxx, 355, 457, 459–61, 464
 Migne, Jacques-Paul, xxiii, 123, 342
 Millán (saint), 172, 179, 180, 181
 Moll, Paul von, 421
 Montfaucon, Bernard de, OSB, 130
 Morasch, Michaela, OSB (abbess), 112, 360–61
 Morcaldi, Gabriele, OSB, 247
 Morcaldi, Michaela, OSB, 248–49
 More, Cresacre, 57
 More, Gertrude / Helen, OSB, 44, 55–58, 60–63, 65
 More, Thomas (saint), 44, 48, 57
 Morell, Andrés, SJ, 34
 Moses, 22, 133, 156, 257
 Muench, Aloisius (cardinal), 459, 464
 Murphy, Francis (bishop), 314
 Musset, René, OSB, 129
 Nájera, Pedro de (abbot), 28
 Napoleon, xxv, 245, 266, 295, 360–61
 Naylor, Placid, OSB, 193
 Newman, John Henry, xii, xxvi, 381, 401–8, 410
 Nickes, John Peter (Anselm), OSB, 284–85
 Normanton, Leander, OSB, 40
 Olier, Jean-Jacques, 148–51
 O'Malley, John W., SJ, 407–8
 O'Neill, Peter Austin, OSB, 318
 Oria (saint), 178–79, 182
 Pace, Filippo de, OSB (abbot), 244
 Palma, Giulio Andreas de, OSB (abbot), 244
 Pappalettere, Simplicius, OSB (abbot), 285–86
 Paul (saint), 78, 89, 151, 255, 392, 447, 448, 450, 451, 453–54
 Peisserin, Scholastica, OSB, 109
 Pellegrino, Camillo, 243
 Pembridge, Benedict Michael, OSB, 185, 192–98, 202, 203

- Percy, Mary, 56
 Perrin, Antoine, SJ, 96
 Peter (saint), 89, 235, 392
 Peter II, OSB (abbot), 236
 Peter of Poitiers, OSV, 138
 Peters, Carl, 425
 Pettenkoferin, Aldegundis, OSB (abbess), 111
 Philip I (king of France), 79
 Philip II / Augustus (king of France), 20–21
 Philip II / the Bold (duke of Burgundy), 25
 Philip IV / the Fair (king of France), 16, 26
 Pidoux, Elizabeth, OSB (prioress), 99
 Pius II (pope), 80
 Pius V (pope), 90
 Pius VI (pope), 188
 Pius VII (pope), 245
 Pius IX (Giulio Ruggiero) (pope), 248, 287, 337, 339
 Pius X (pope), 249, 461–62
 Pius XI (pope), 461
 Plas, Jeanne-Anne-Françoise-Fare de, OSB (abbess), 86, 89, 98–99
 Polding, John Bede, OSB (bishop), 305–8, 310–14, 320, 321–23, 333, 337
 Poncher, François (bishop), 83
 Pope, Alexander, 187
 Pothier, Joseph, OSB, 272, 291
 Potier, Matthias, OSB, 84
 Power, Edmund, OSB (abbot), 44
 Prideaux, Denys, OSB (abbot), 386–87
 Pugin, Augustus, 313
 Pusey, E. B., 381–83
 Quintanilla, Juan de, OSB, 29
 Quintin, Jean, 9, 10, 12, 19–20
 Ragosa, Arcangelo, OSB (abbot), 244
 Ramsay, Andrew Michael, 189
 Rancé, Armand-Jean de, OCSO (abbot), xviii, 130
 Rasher, Claus von, 118
 Raymond (count of Toulouse), 21
 Reinkens, Wilhelm, 284
 Reisach, Karl August von (bishop), 363, 368–69
 Resch, Christoph (bishop), 114
 Richard of Wessex (king of Wessex), 101, 115
 Richelieu / Armand Jean du Plessis (cardinal), xviii, 81, 98, 125–26
 Riepp, Benedicta, OSB (prioress), xxviii, 365–66
 Ringseis sisters, 423–24
 Robert of Arbrissel, 4
 Robert the Wise (king of Naples), 239
 Rode, John, OSB, 105
 Roger II (king of Sicily and Africa), 236, 262
 Ronsard, Charles de (abbot), 7
 Ronsard, Renaud de (abbot), 7
 Rothilde (abbess), 79
 Rozan, Jean de, 245
 Saint-Paul Asseine, Feuillant Eustache de, OCist, 82, 85
 Sales, Francis de (saint), xx, 83
 Salinas, Diego de, OSB, 29

- Salvado, Rosendo, OSB, xxviii–
xxxi, 247, 320, 329–30, 332–
45, 421–22
- Sans de Sainte-Catherine, OSB, 82
- Sarmiento, Martin, OSB, xxiv,
167–72, 174, 177, 184
- Sause, Bernard A., OSB, 294
- Sauter, Benedict, OSB (abbot), 286
- Scarlsbrick, Benedict, OSB
(bishop), 318–20
- Scheyns, Katharina, OSB, 423, 427
- Schmaussin, Barbara, OSB
(abbess), 111
- Schmittner, Willibalda, OSB
(prioress), 362
- Schnitzer, Edwarda, OSB
(prioress), 364–65
- Schober, Ildefons, OSB (abbot),
290, 419–20, 428, 431
- Scholastica (saint), 240
- Sebastian (saint), 95
- Sebastian of Vergara, OSB, 172
- Seckendorf, Margaret von, OSB
(abbess), 106
- Sédride (abbess), 79
- Serra, José María, OSB (bishop),
xxviii, xxix, 247, 320, 331–38,
340
- Sharrock, Gregory, OSB, 191
- Shepherd, Laurence, OSB, 46,
272–73, 318
- Shepherd, Richard, 309
- Shepherd, William, SJ, 309
- Simon, Jean (bishop), 81
- Smither, Edward L., xxvi
- Solomon, 14
- Sonntag, Gabriel, OSB, 436
- Sorgente, Luigi, 260
- Southcott, John, OSB, 187–88
- Spearritt, Placid, OSB (abbot), 43,
272, 405
- Sperreuth, Claus Dietrich von, 119
- Spiss, Cassian, OSB (bishop), 433,
436, 440
- Spreiter, Thomas, OSB, 436
- Staiger, Clara, OSB (prioress), 113,
114, 118–20
- Stuart, James Francis Edward, 187
- Sumner, Joseph Bede, OSB, 310,
314
- Suso, Heinrich, OP, 51, 105
- Sweeney, Norbert, OSB (abbot),
40, 46, 317
- Tarrisse, Gregory (John), OSB,
125–27
- Tasso, Bernardo, 241
- Tasso, Torquato, 241, 248
- Tauler, John, OP, 106
- Temple, William (archbishop),
385
- Tesnière, Jean Martin, OSB, 125
- Therry J. J., 308, 312–14, 328
- Thomas à Kempis, 129
- Torres, Fulgentius, OSB (abbot),
343
- Tosantos, Mauro de, OSB (abbot),
34
- Tosti, Luigi, OSB, 248
- Trevisano, Luigi (cardinal), 240
- Trevor, Meriol, 402, 404
- Trithemius, John, OSB (abbot),
294
- Tudert, Jeanne, OSB, 99
- Ullathorne, William Bernard, OSB,
306–7, 312, 326, 328, 333
- Urban II (pope), 234–35

- Vallés, Francisco de, 33
 Vasa, Gustavus Adolphus, 108, 113
 Vatan, M. de, 88
 Vaughn, Roger Bede, OSB
 (bishop), 319
 Velasco, Pedro de, 29, 34, 38
 Ver, Charles de, OSB (abbot), 296
 Vials, Joanna, 321
 Vincent of Beauvais, 239
- Waging, Bernhard von, 104
 Walbert, 79
 Walburga (saint), 101–4, 107,
 110–18, 121, 359, 362
 Walgrave, Francis, OSB, 97
 Walmsley, Charles, OSB, 189–90,
 193–94
 Walter, Augustine, OSB, 189
 Warmoll, Bernard, OSB, 191
 Waters, Placid, OSB, 189
 Watkins, James, 312
 Weber, Norbert / Josef, OSB
 (abbot), 419–20, 431–32,
 434–35, 438–39, 441–44
 Wehrmeister, Cyrillus, OSB, 433,
 441, 443–44
 Weld, Frederick, 340
 Weldon, Benet, OSB, 188
 Wert, Hans von, 109
 Westerstetten, Christoph von
 (bishop), 107
- Wilhelm (kaiser), 448
 Wilhelm of Reichenau, 109
 Wilkinson, Robert Aloysius, OSB,
 319–20
 Wilks, Joseph Cuthbert, OSB,
 189–90, 193–94
 William I (king of Sicily), 236
 William II (king of Sicily), 236
 Williams, Rowan (archbishop), ix
 Willibald (saint, bishop), 101–2,
 113–15, 120
 Willson, Robert William (bishop),
 308, 313–15
 Wimmer, Boniface, OSB (abbot),
 xxvii, xxxi, 338, 353–56,
 364–65, 367
 Wolter, Carl Walter / Hildebrand,
 OSB, 285
 Wolter, Ernst / Placidus, OSB
 (abbot), 284, 285, 287, 288,
 290, 291
 Wolter, Maurus / Rudolph, OSB
 (abbot), xxvii, 283–88, 291–
 96, 420–22, 425, 445
 Wunibald (saint), 102, 115, 121
- Yepes, Antonio de, OSB, 34
 Yves de Chartres (bishop), 80
- Zelli, Leopold, OSB (abbot), 293,
 296, 340

Index of Locations

Towns and regions are identified by name and country. Benedictine monasteries (male or female) are given by name. Communities of other religious groups (e.g., Cistercians, Trappists, Catholic Worker Movement) are specified. Other institutions in a place are designated (e.g., universities or dioceses). Country names are those of the present day, except for the use of Lorraine, which was an independent duchy until the eighteenth century. Abbreviations: f. = founded; FR = French Revolution.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Abergavenny, Wales, 41 | Aquileia, Italy, 240 |
| Abu Ghosh, Israel: Abbaye Sainte-Marie de la Resurrection (1976–), 446 n3 | Augsburg, Germany: St. Stephen's Abbey (1834–), 354; diocese, 424, 428, 432 |
| Adelaide, Australia: diocese, 307, 314 | Aurora, IL: Marmion Abbey (1933–), xv |
| Afflighem, Belgium: Abbey of St. Peter and Paul (1082–1796; 1887–), 302, 421 | Avignon, France, 20, 24, 124, 148 n3, 239 |
| Albi, France: diocese, 20 | Badonvillers, France: Monastery of Sisters of the Annunciation, 147 |
| Ampleforth, England: Abbey of St. Laurence, Dieulouard, Lorraine (1615–1792), Ampleforth (1802–), 46, 59, 185, 272, 310, 339 | Bamberg, Germany, 105, 119 n31 |
| Anagni, Italy, 239 | Barcelona, Spain, 336 |
| Angers, France, 9 n9, 267 | Bath, England, 190, 193; Saint Gregory's Benedictine College, 306 |
| Anguiano, Spain: Monastery of Nuestra Señora de Valvanera (10 th cent.–2017), 28 | Beaumont, France: Abbey of Saint-Pierre (ca. 670–1792), 83, 84, 131 n18 |

- Beira, Mozambique, 444
- Belmont, England: Abbey of St. Michael and All Angels (1859–), 46, 317, 319, 321, 339, 382
- Benevento, Italy: archdiocese, 249
- Bergen, Germany: abbey, 106
- Berry, France: Glatigny priory, 87, 89
- Beuron, Germany: St. Martin's Abbey (1863–), xxvi–xxvii, xxix, xxxi, 283, 285–91, 293, 295, 419–28, 431, 457; and Solesmes, 283, 290–93, 440 n36, 445 n1
- Bigorre, France, 20
- Biola University, see La Mirada, CA
- Birmingham, England: 402, 403; diocese, 307; English Oratory (1848–), 403, 404; see also Edgbaston, England; Maryvale, England
- Blois, France: Abbey of St. John, 97; Saint-Laumer Abbey (ca. 875–1791), 92
- Bohemia, 107–8, 224
- Bois-Aubry, see Luzé, France
- Bonham, England: parish, 320
- Boppard, Germany: monastery of Marienberg, 105
- Boulogne, France, 320
- Bourges, France: St. Stephen's cathedral, 87, 88
- Brazil, xvii, 289, 430; see also Olinda, Brazil
- Broadway, England: Passionists, 317
- Brussels, Belgium, 34 n20; English Benedictines (f. 1598), 56, 61
- Bruyères, France: Monastery of Sisters of the Annunciation, 147
- Buckfast, England: St. Mary's Abbey (1882–), 384
- Burgos, Spain: Abbey of San Juan de Burgos, 28; Abbey of Santa María de Las Huelgas, Cistercian (f. 1187), xiii; university, xiii
- Bursfeld, Germany: Benedictine Congregation, xix; abbey (1093–1579), 129
- Cahors, France, 20
- Caldey Island, Wales: Anglican Benedictine community (1906–1913), 384 n12, 385–86, 446, 448; monks from Scourmont, Trappists (1929–), 446 n2
- Cambrai, France: Abbey of Our Lady of Consolation (1625–1793; Stanbrook 1838–2009; Wass 2009–), 40, 42, 44, 56, 59, 61, 189, 310
- Cardena, Spain: Abbey of San Pedro (ca. 889–1835), Trappist monastery (1942–), 28
- Cava dei Terreni, Italy: La Trinità della Cava Abbey, xxv, xxix, xxxi, 233–63, 320, 332, 333, 343
- Champeaux, France, 90–91
- Chelles, France: Abbey of Notre-Dame (ca. 660–1790), 81, 82, 88 n13
- Chelsea, England: Daughters of the Cross of Liège, 319

- Cheltenham, England: Daughters of the Cross of Liège, 318–19, 322; parish, xxviii, xxix, 247, 310, 315–20
- Chevetogne, Belgium: Abbey of the Holy Cross (1926–), 457 n1
- Chicago, IL: St. Scholastica Monastery (1861–), 368, 404
- Cilento, Italy: Saint Archangel Monastery, 235, 236
- Cîteaux, France: Cistercian abbey (1098–1791, 1898–), xviii, 21, 125
- Cluny, France: Abbey of St. Peter and Paul (910–1790), and Congregation, xviii, xxii, xxv, 28, 29, 82, 125–26, 233–36
- Clyde, MO: Benedictine Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, xiv, 432
- Collegeville, MN: Saint John's Abbey (1856–), 355 n4, 457–62, 464
- Colwich, England: Abbey of Our Lady of Good Hope (Paris, 1652–1795; Colwich, 1836–2020), 46, 58
- Commercy, France, 148
- Coventry, England: parish, 307
- Covington, KY: St. Walburg Monastery (1859–), 366
- Cucujães, Portugal: monastery, 289
- Dar es-Salaam, Tanzania: St. Ottilien Mission, 424, 426, 431, 433–36, 444
- Dieulouard, France, 185; see also Ampleforth, England
- Dorking, England: parish, 193, 194
- Dormition Abbey, see Jerusalem
- Douai, France, see Downside, England
- Downside, England: Monastery of St. Gregory (Douai, France, 1607–1795; Acton Burnell, Shropshire, England, 1795–1814; Downside Abbey, 1814–2022; at Buckfast Abbey, 2022–), 59, 185 n1, 191–93, 196, 306–10, 317–23, 333, 339, 342, 383
- Dublin, Ireland: Catholic University of Dublin, 403; diocese, 445; Milltown Institute, xiii; Trinity College, xiii; University College, xiii
- Edgbaston, England: English Oratory, 403; see also Birmingham, England
- Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary (829 [934]–), xxvii, 286, 295 n14
- Elizabeth, NJ: St. Walburga Monastery (1864–), 367 n20
- Elmore, England, see Pershore, England
- El Pueyo, Spain: abbey, 336 n15
- Engelberg, Switzerland: abbey (1122–), xxvii, 233, 295 n14
- Erdington, England: monastery (1887–1922), 288, 427
- Erie, PA: Mount Saint Benedict Monastery (1856–), 366
- Faremoutiers, France: abbey (620–1790; 1930–), xviii, xxi–xxii, 79–81, 85–100

- Farnborough, England:
 St. Michael's Abbey (1895–),
 271
- Fischingen, Switzerland:
 monastery of the Blessed
 Virgin Mary and Saint Idda
 (1130–1848; 1977–), xvii
- Florence, Italy, 240, 420
- Fontevrault, France: Abbey of the
 Order of Fontevrault (1101–
 1792), 80–89, 94 n29
- Forlì, Italy: diocese, 285
- Fremantle, Australia, 332, 333,
 334, 337
- Galicia, Spain: province, xxiv,
 167–70, 330–31
- Gif, France: priory, 99
- Greystock, England, 193
- Gunzwil, Switzerland, 420
- Gy, France: priory of Faremoutiers,
 80
- Heidenheim, Germany: abbey
 (735–1537), 102–3, 115, 359
- Heiligenkreuz, Austria: Cistercian
 abbey (1133–), xv
- Hobart (Tasmania), Australia:
 diocese, 307, 308, 314; parish,
 311–14, 324–28; town, 311–
 15, 322, 324, 327
- Holme Lacy, England, 193
- Hortigüela, Spain: Abbey of San
 Pedro de Arlanza (912–1841),
 28, 181
- Ingolstadt, Germany, 109–11, 113,
 119, 120; diocese, 114
- Isle of Wight, England, 270, 383
- Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 425
- Jerome, ID: Monastery of the
 Ascension (1965–), xiii
- Jerusalem, Israel: Dormition Abbey
 (1906–), 279, 446
- Jouarre, France: abbey of Notre-
 Dame (ca. 635–1792; 1837–),
 85, 94, 98, 99
- Jumièges, France: abbey (ca. 650–
 FR), 131
- Karlsruhe, Germany, 420
- Kigonsera, Tanzania, 437 nn29 and
 30, 441–44
- Kilwa, Tanzania, 442, 443
- Kremsmünster, Austria: abbey
 (777–), xxiv–xxv
- La Capelle-en-Thiérach, France, 98
- Lambach, Austria: abbey (1040–),
 xxiv, 210–21, 229, 230, 286,
 296
- Lambspring, Germany: English
 Benedictine Abbey (ca.
 1640–1803), 185, 188, 190,
 192, 310
- La Mirada, CA: Biola University,
 xv
- Languedoc, France: region, 20
- La Rochelle, France, 95, 96
- La Trappe, France: Trappist
 Cistercian abbey (1140–1790,
 1815–), xviii, 130
- Latrobe, PA: St. Vincent Archabbey
 (1846–), xxvii, 338, 353, 354,
 364
- Launceston (Tasmania), Australia:
 parish, 312–14, 322, 323, 325
- Le Mans, France, 266, 267

- Les Feuillants, France: abbey
(f. 1145; Cistercian, 1169–ca.
1590; Order of Les Feuillants,
ca. 1590–1791), 82
- Ligugé, France: Abbey of
St. Martin (f. 361; 1853–), 293
- Lindi, Tanzania, 436
- Linz, Austria, 210
- Littlemore, England, 402, 403, 405
- Llanthony, Wales: Anglican
(f. 1869), 383, 384, 399
- Louvain (Leuven), Belgium:
Keizersberg Abbey (Mont
César) (1899), 290, 445, 457,
459 n3
- Lukuledi, Tanzania, 431, 436, 439;
river, 436, 437
- Luxeuil, France: Abbey of St. Peter
(590–FR), 79
- Luzé, France: Abbey of Saint-
Michel de Bois-Aubry, xviii,
xix, xxi, 3–7
- Madrid, Spain: Abbey of St. Martin
(12th cent.–1835), 168–72;
Archivo Histórico Nacional,
32; city, 331
- Mainz, Germany, 110; diocese,
104, 105, 116
- Mantua, Italy: San Benedetto
Monastery, 241, 245
- Maredret, Belgium: abbey (1892–),
289, 445
- Maredsous, Belgium: abbey (1872–),
xxvii, xxx, xxxi, 286–89, 421,
422, 427, 445–46, 457
- Maria Laach, Germany: abbey
(1093–1802; 1892–), xxvii,
284, 289–90, 457
- Marmoutier, France, see Tours,
France
- Mauritius: diocese, 306, 310, 319,
320
- Melleray, France: Trappist
Cistercian abbey (1134–2016),
269
- Metten, Germany: St. Michael's
Abbey (755–1803; 1830–),
xxvii, 195, 286, 295, 353, 354,
364
- Meudon, France, 98
- Monheim, Germany, 103
- Monreale, Italy: monastery
(f. 1174), 236
- Montecassino, Italy: archabbey of
St. Benedict (6th cent.–), 240,
241, 245, 248 n22, 250, 260,
296
- Montevergine, Italy: abbey (1124–),
240, 245
- Montserrat, Spain: abbey of Santa
María (1082–), xix, 28, 129,
238, 341, 343, 344, 457
- Mount Saint Bernard, England:
Trappist abbey (1835–), 269
n8, 315
- Munich, Germany, 356, 365 n16,
422; St. Boniface Abbey
(1835–), 286; university, 353,
354, 420
- Murroe, Ireland: Glenstal Abbey
(1927–), xxx, xxxi
- Mwaya, Tanzania, 444
- Naples, Italy, xxix, 233, 239,
244, 245, 262 n41, 320, 332,
336 n15, 343; archdiocese,
240, 249; archives, 258, 265;

- Monastery of Saints Severino and Sossio (10th cent.–1835), 241, 243; university, 245
- Nashdom, England, see Pershore, England
- Ndanda, Tanzania, 437 n30
- Neukirchen, Austria, 210
- New Norcia, Australia: Holy Trinity Abbey (1847–), 335–51
- New York, NY, 354; Catholic Worker Movement (1933–), 459–60
- Norfolk Island, Australia: prison, 313, 315
- Noyers, France: Abbey of Notre Dame (11th cent.–1791), 5, 8
- Nyangao, Tanzania: Ottilien and Tutzing Missions, 437
- Olinda, Brazil: priory of the Sacred Heart (1903–), 430
- Oña, Spain: abbey of San Salvador (11th–19th cent.), xx, 29–35
- Orléans, France, 130; diocese, 272
- Oviedo, Spain: Abbey of St. James, 331
- Oxford, England: 40, 59, 193, 402, 403; Christ Church cathedral, 381; diocese, 385; Oxford Movement, 316, 401, 403; St. Mary the Virgin church, 381; university, 41, 193, 381, 402, 405, 416
- Padua, Italy: Santa Justina Abbey (971–1797; 1917–), 42, 81, 129, 240–41
- Padula, Italy: San Lorenzo della Padula (Carthusian monastery) (f. 1304), 246, 261; university, 9
- Paris, France, 17, 21, 34, 44, 56, 59, 91, 98, 99, 148, 149, 188, 259, 268, 269, 270, 315, 333, 336 n15, 420; Abbey of Saint Denis (now cathedral), 126, 131, 269; bishops of, 80, 81, 83, 84, 265, 267; Collège de Cluny, 82, 84; La Ville-l'Évêque, priory, 84–85; Les Blancs Manteaux, monastery, 124; Montmartre, Saint-Pierre de Dames (1134–1790), 81–84, 98, 148; Notre-Dame Cathedral, 265–68; Our Lady of Good Hope monastery (1652–1795), see Colwich, England; Saint-Germain-des-Prés, abbey (558–FR), xxii 123, 126, 127 n9, 129 n11, 130 n13, 149; Saint-Maur-des-Fosses, priory (638–1535), 148; Saint-Sulpice, 148, 149; St. Edmunds (1615–1793), 185, 187, 189, 192; *Parlement*, 11, 12; Saint-Geneviève, Augustinian Canons, 124; Sorbonne, 9, 84, 188, 189; theaters, 216; university, 25; Val-de-Grace monastery (1634–1790), 82–85
- Parma, Italy: San Giovanni Evangelista Abbey (10th cent.–; refounded 1920–), 46, 243, 421 n3
- Peramiho, Tanzania: Ottilien Abbey and Tutzing Monastery (1889–), 433 n17, 437 n29, 439, 440, 442

- Pershore, England: Anglican
 Benedictines (f. 1914–1926;
 Elmore, 1987–2011;
 Nashdom, 1926–1987;
 Salisbury, 2011–), 386–87
- Perth, Australia, 323, 334–38, 342,
 344, 348; diocese, 308, 336,
 337 n17, 338, 339, 341, 342
- Perugia, Italy: San Pietro
 monastery (996–), 284–85
- Pfäfers, Switzerland:
 St. Pirminsberg Abbey (731–
 1838), xvii
- Pierre-qui-Vire, France: Abbey of
 St. Mary (1850–), xxvii
- Poitiers, France: *Parlement*, 17;
 Saint-Croix monastery, 88
 n13; Saint-Cyprien Abbey
 (857–; 1058–FR), 4
- Pontevedra, Spain: 168, 330 n3;
 San Salvador (San Benito) de
 Lerez (10th cent.–1835), 168
- Port Arthur, Australia: prison, 313
- Port Victoria (now Darwin),
 Australia: diocese, 336, 340
- Portland, OR: archdiocese, 309
- Portsmouth, RI: abbey (1949–), 195
- Prague, Czech Republic, 34 n20,
 107; Emmaus Abbey (1347–),
 286, 288, 290 n7
- Provence, France: convent, 90;
 region, 20–22
- Pugu, Tanzania, 433–35; Ottilien
 and Tutzing Missions (1887–
 1889; 1999–), 425, 427, 430,
 433–35
- Rambervillers, France: Benedictine
 priory, 148
- Ramsgate, England:
 St. Augustine's Abbey (1876–
 2009; moved to Chilsworth,
 England), 336 n15
- Regensburg, Germany:
 St. Emmeram (739–1803),
 110
- Reichenbach, Germany: monastery
 (1118–1553, 1669–1803,
 1883–1886), 422, 423, 436
 n25
- Rennes, France, 130
- Rheims, France: Saint-Remi (11th
 cent.–FR), 129 n11, 130 n13
- Richmond (Tasmania), Australia,
 311, 312, 325
- Rock Island, IL: St. Mary
 Monastery (f. 1874; at
 Nauvoo, IL, until 2001), 368
- Rome, Italy: city and papacy, 20,
 24, 95, 153 n21, 186, 187,
 189, 240, 266, 285, 287, 291,
 316, 320, 329, 332, 333, 335,
 336, 338, 339, 340, 343, 367,
 383, 386, 401, 403, 404, 416,
 422, 425, 427, 428, 447, 458;
 College of the Propaganda of
 the Faith, 445; Greek college,
 290; Saint John Lateran,
 basilica, 239; Saint Mary
 Major, basilica, 278; St. Paul's
 Outside the Walls, xxxi, 248,
 284–85, 293, 296, 340, 343;
 Sant' Anselmo (1893–), xiii,
 xv, 245, 249, 289, 290 n8,
 343, 457 n1
- Rottenberg, Germany: diocese, 420
- Rottneist Island, Australia: prison,
 334, 341

- Rouen, France: Bonne-Nouvelle Abbey, 130–31; Monastery of the Immaculate Conception, 147 n1
- Sablé-sur-Sarthe, France, 266, 269; see also Solesmes (in Sablé)
- Sahagún, Spain: Monastery of Sts. Facundus and Primitivus (San Benito el Real), xx, 28–30, 34 n24
- Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, Lorraine, 147
- Saint Marys, PA: St. Joseph's Monastery (1852–2014), xiv, xxviii, 365–66
- Saint-Mihiel, France: monastery (f. 708), 148
- Saint-Savin-sur-Gartemps, France: abbey (ca. 800–FR), 4
- Saint-Vanne, France, see Verdun, France
- Salamanca, Spain, 169
- Salerno, Italy, 233–34, 241, 250, 251; diocese, 240; Monastery of St. Benedict, 238; Monastery of Santa Sophia, 236
- Salisbury, England: Anglican priory; see Pershore, England
- Salzburg, Austria: St. Peter's Abbey (7th cent.–), xv, 295, 296; territory and town, 112, 217, 293;
- university, 210, 211, 212
- Samos, Spain: monastery of St. Julian (7th cent.–1936, 1880–), 341
- San Millán de la Cogolla, Spain: abbey (6th cent.–1835), 28, 171–80, 182
- Sant' Ambrogio di Torino, Italy: monastery of St. Michael di Chiusa (10th cent.–1622), 234
- Santiago de Compostela, Spain: 179, 330 n3; Abbey of San Martiño Pinario (899–1835), xxviii, 247, 330, 331, 332, 338; Camino, 28; cathedral, 331
- Savigny-le-Vieu, France: abbey (1122–FR; Cistercian from 1147), 4
- Seckau, Austria: abbey (Augustinian Canons, 1142–1783; Beuronese Benedictine 1883–), 288, 290 n7, 420, 428, 429, 431
- Shawnee, OK: St. Gregory's Abbey (1875–), xxvii
- Silos, Spain: Abbey of Santo Domingo (7th cent.–1835, 1880–), 28, 171, 172, 175, 180, 182, 341
- Solesmes, France: Abbey of Sainte-Cécile (1866–), 270–71; Abbey of Saint-Pierre (1010–1791, 1833–), xxvi, xxvii, xxxi, 250, 265–69, 270–73, 283, 286–87, 290–91, 293, 295–96, 333, 419; see also Beuron
- Songea, Tanzania, 439–40, 442
- St. Benedict, OR: Mount Angel Abbey, xv; Mount Angel Seminary, xiii
- St. Cloud, MN, 366; university, xiv

- St. Gallen, Switzerland: Abbey of Saint Gall (747–1805), xvii, xxvi
- St. Joseph, MN (St. Cloud, until 1863): St. Benedict's Monastery, xiii, 368
- St. Louis, MO: Abbey of St. Mary and St. Louis (1955–), 195
- St. Ottilien, Germany: abbey (1884–), xxix, 420, 424–44
- Stanbrook, England: monastery, see Cambrai, France
- Subiaco, Italy: abbey (6th cent.–), 337, 338, 339, 405; Missionary College, 337, 339
- Sweden, 108
- Sydney, Australia, 311, 312, 327, 328, 333; diocese, 305, 306, 307, 308, 320, 322, 333
- Tanzania, xxix, xxxiv, 443; see also Dar es-Salaam, Kigonsera, Kilwa, Lindi, Lukuledi, Mwaya, Ndanda, Nyangao, Peramiho, Pugu, Songea, Uhehe
- Tauberbischofsheim, Germany: Saint Lioba abbey, 102
- Three Rivers, MI: St. Gregory's Abbey (1939–), Anglican, 387
- Tiron, France: Abbey of Tiron (1006–FR), xviii, 3–7
- Tixal, England, 193
- Toledo, Spain, xix, 169
- Tours, France: archdiocese, xviii, 5, 7 n6, 8, 9 n9, 267; cathedral of Saint-Gatien, 8; Marmoutier Abbey (372–1792), 79, 131, 148, 267
- Tübingen, Germany: university, 420
- Tui, Spain, 330, 341
- Tunis: kingdom, 22–23
- Tutzing, Germany: Tutzing Benedictine Sisters Monastery (1885–), xxix–xxx, 420, 423, 424, 429–44
- Uhehe, Tanzania, 442
- Urspring, Germany: priory, 106
- Valencia, Spain, 343
- Valladolid, Spain, 169; Abbey of San Benito el Real (ca. 1387–1835), xix, 27, 29, 171 n4, 331 n5
- Venice, Italy, 241; monastery of San Giorgio (f. 982), 240
- Verdôme, France: La Trinité Abbey (1035–FR), 127 n9, 131
- Verdun, Lorraine: abbey of Saint-Vanne (952–1792), xxii, 82, 84, 124, 127 n9
- Verona, Italy: abbey of San Giovanni, 239
- Versailles, France, 210, 213, 214, 215, 219
- Vienna, Austria, 210, 213, 214, 215, 219, 302
- Vietri, Italy: port, 235
- Villafranca del Bierzo, Spain, 167
- Volders, Austria, 287, 288
- Warrington, England, 309, 316

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Washington, DC: St. Anselm's
 abbey (1924–), 195</p> <p>Wass, England: Our Lady of
 Consolation; see Cambrai,
 France</p> <p>West Malling, England: Anglican
 nuns, Malling Abbey (1916–),
 384, 385</p> <p>Wimborne, England: abbey (705–
 ca. 900), 102</p> | <p>Wincanton, England: parish, 320–21</p> <p>Woolhampton, England:
 St. Edmund's Abbey (1615–,
 Paris; 1818–, Douai, France;
 1903–, Woolhampton), 320,
 321</p> <p>Woolton, England: Benedictine
 school (f. 1781), 191</p> <p>Zanzibar, 426, 433; vicariate, 425</p> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|