

2019 FREDERICK R. MCMANUS AWARD ABBOT PRIMATE GREGORY POLAN, OSB



Born in Berwyn, Illinois to the late Martha and Edward Polan, Abbot Gregory grew up in Riverside. He entered the novitiate in 1970 at Conception Abbey in Missouri. He professed vows as a monk on August 28, 1971. In the summer of 1984, he began teaching courses in Scripture, Hebrew, Liturgy, and Music. In 1996, while preparing to take on a new assignment - to teach at Sant' Anselmo in Rome -- he was elected the ninth abbot of Conception Abbey.

Every liturgical scholar appreciates the contributions of the Benedictine Order and their influence on the liturgical movement and liturgical scholarship. Abbot Gregory certainly manifests that tradition. On September 10, 2016, he was elected Abbot Primate of the 1500-year-old Benedictine Order at the Congress of Abbots meeting in Rome. As head of the Benedictine Confederation, Abbot Gregory is the head of the world's 7,000 Benedictine monks, is the abbot of the monastery Sant' Anselmo in Rome, and the head of the Benedictine University there. The office of Abbot Primate was created by Pope Leo XIII in 1886 to serve the Benedictine community as its liaison to the Vatican and civil authorities, to promote unity among the various autonomous Benedictine monasteries and congregations, and to represent the order at religious gatherings around the globe. He is the tenth Abbot Primate and the fourth American to be elected.

His former student, Father Daniel Merz noted, "He is a man devoted to prayer and to the Benedictine rhythm of *ora et labora*. He not only is faithful to the communal prayer (Eucharist and Liturgy of the Hours), but also to personal prayer in a variety of ways, including *lectio divina* on the Psalms."

THE TRANSLATION OF THE PSALMS

In 1998, he was asked by the USCCB to provide a revised translation of the 1963 Grail Psalms. That work came to fruition in 2010 when their translation was granted a recognitio from the CDWDS.

When the 2010 version was returned, Abbot Gregory and Fr. Merz of the BCDW Secretariat noticed that the Congregation had made a number of changes to the translation that had weakened the sprung rhythm and even made the translation inconsistent in a number of places. "Informally, we asked if a reconsideration of those changes would be possible, and the answer was "yes," but that we would need to go through the whole approval process again of getting the US Bishops' Conference to take a formal vote and send a revised translation to Rome for approval," recalls Father Merz. The work continued.

After further consultations with the USCCB committee of Bible translations, which had just approved a revised translation of the Old Testament for the NAB, the two translations were compared and the Revised Grail Psalms were modified again. The RGP also required a more literal translation and more extensive revisions. In general, the entire project required not only accuracy, but an adherence to Biblical scholarship and attentiveness to sprung rhythm.

As the project for the retranslation of the Liturgy of the Hours was also underway, the BCDW also adopted the Conception Abbey Canticles. These were granted approval from the CDWDS just last year and are now awaiting insertion in the revised Liturgy of the Hours, Lectionary, NAB and other ritual and catechetical texts. Because of Abbot Gregory's work on the Psalms, ICEL asked him to assist with base translation work for antiphons both in the Roman Missal and in the Liturgy of the Hours.

Abbot Gregory also serves as a consultant to the Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship. Not only is Abbot Gregory well known for his scholarship, he is also one of the kindest human beings I have ever been honored to know.

In recognition of his devotion to the Church's Liturgy, to the meticulous translation of the Psalms, and to the formation of liturgists around the world, the Federation is pleased to award the 2019 Frederick R. McManus Award to Abbot Primate Gregory Polan, OSB. ■ RT