The Wimmer Fund

Supporting vocations and monastic life, education and formation, retired and infirm monks, missions and campus ministry.
Join our mission in Christ
METHODIST THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN OHIO

THE WIMMER FUND

Greetings from Saint Vincent! Our founder, Boniface Wimmer, was a man gifted with determination and vision. In 1846 he brought a small group of tenacious, European monks to southwest Pennsylvania. They built the buildings, worked the land, and served the people. The Benedictine Order in the United States rose from Latrobe, Pennsylvania, at Saint Vincent Archabbey. There are now 32 abbeys and priories, 11 colleges, 11 secondary schools, and 2 seminaries and dozens of parishes that operate today throughout America. It is in this spirit, as the twelfth Archabbot of Saint Vincent, that I introduce you to the inaugural year of The Wimmer Fund.

The lesson from our own history is very clear. The seeds of faith and courage yield the fruits of education, charity, and worship.

The Benedictines have educated and formed intellect through reason and instruction, elevated the spirit through worship and ministry, honored our home environment by cultivating and conserving the natural resources around us, promoted and preserved the creative and performing arts, and engaged local and world communities in fruitful dialogue. From this starting place, hundreds of thousands, possibly millions, of God’s people have had the opportunity to know Him through our works. I am very grateful for the Saint Vincent we have become.

Wimmer and all those who came after him, including me, the newest Archabbot of Saint Vincent, could not have done it without help. In every time, there are people who lent their support to monks, students, faculty, staff, parishioners, guests, and friends so that we could live out our beliefs and invite others in to encounter Christ through us. Our world, in every era, needs this witness. It is a tremendous gift, and The Wimmer Fund continues this charitable bond and spirit.

On behalf of the entire Monastic community, I thank you for recognizing our witness to the world and its importance. You, like Wimmer, like every Archabbot, monk, student, and parishioner share in this history and ongoing work through your prayers, time, and financial contributions. Today, I ask for you to join our efforts to continue our mission in Christ through your support of The Wimmer Fund. Please know you are always welcome here in love and friendship as we would welcome Christ himself.

Martin A. Barth, O.S.B.
Come, follow me
Vocations are the lifeblood of the Archabbey. The calling to serve is the beginning of monastic life. Men entering our community go on to sustain our mission to serve the People of God. Brothers and priests of the monastic community teach high school students, college students, and seminarians. The ordained monks baptize, marry, minister to the sick, and preside over funerals. Monks abroad help care for the poor and bring Christ to emerging nations hungering to hear the Good News. Monastic life is always in need of renewal. Our monks need sacred spaces to pray, live in community, and nourish and renew the body and soul. These resources focus their spirits and provide the fortitude to serve the challenging needs of God’s people.

Currently, our abbey is blessed with 157 Monks. In the last 5 years we have had 23 men discern monastic life. Each Novice who enters comes to us with enthusiasm and a love of Christ. They bring to us many gifts, but no one enters the monastic life with their talents and gifts completely perfected. Prayer, and the support of the Benedictine community and friends like you, helps us hone our talents to serve others.

“What dear brothers, is more delightful than the voice of the Lord calling to us?”

—Saint Benedict
I was sick and you visited me
CARING FOR OUR RETIRED AND INFIRM MONKS

Having the largest Benedictine community in the United States is a blessing. While our community continues to attract young men into our community, we also have many retired and infirm monks. As with many of us when we age or have been diagnosed with a disease, monks often require special care. There are more than 50 monks over the age of 70. These men hold the history of the monastery and are generational examples of the perseverance of the community.

Father Nathan Munsch was diagnosed with ALS in 2019. He was placed on extended medical leave from his Seminary and College teaching and formation duties at the end of that year. These days he lives in the infirmary, surrounded by his brother monks. He is very grateful for the care he receives, and he realizes that his situation is rare and a blessing. In his words, “people tell me I have a positive attitude; as a religious person, I find it is a luxury to live in an infirmary floor with a private chapel, daily mass, and the Blessed Sacrament on reservation. So when people tell me I have a positive attitude, I think to myself, that is true but it is much easier for me to maintain a positive attitude {because of what I am given} than it would be in secular life.”

Monks like Father Nathan remain active in monastic life through prayer, reflections like these, and the friendships he shares with his fellow monks. Having resources to keep and care for monks like Father Nathan on campus gives them great comfort they richly deserve for a life of service.

“Before all, and above all, attention shall be paid to the care of the sick, so that they shall be served as if they were Christ Himself.”

—Saint Benedict
The ear of the wise seeks knowledge
Providing Education and Formation

From the copying of manuscripts in the middle ages to preserving western culture in Europe, to the time reserved for reading and study found in the Rule of Saint Benedict, education and formation have long been bedrocks of the Benedictine Order.

Saint Vincent Archabbey prepares our monastic community to go out into the world armed with knowledge and imbued with a spirit of giving to bring people closer to Christ.

Saint Vincent Archabbey has been blessed with many talented and intelligent monks who have entered the Benedictine Order. The Archabbey dedicates significant resources to education and formation—including enabling monks to pursue advanced studies. Monks serve as professors and scholars in our college, seminary, and in education and formation leadership roles throughout the United States and abroad.

Father Matthew Lambert, O.S.B. follows in the tradition of Benedictine service and commitment to education. After graduating magna cum laude from Saint Vincent Seminary, Father Matthew was sent to Sant’ Anselmo, the Benedictine university in Rome for studies in Sacred Scripture. He is now continuing his studies at the University of Notre Dame. Like monks before him, with God’s grace, he will complete his degree to serve the Benedictines’ educational mission to teach and form future priests, monks, and men and women at Saint Vincent College and Seminary for generations to come.

“Listen carefully, my son, to the master’s instructions, and attend to them with the ear of your heart. This is advice from the Father who loves you; welcome it, and faithfully put it into practice.”

—Saint Benedict
The Poor will always be with you
How important is Saint Vincent’s campus ministry and the service opportunities that are available through our mission work? A study by the Catholic Volunteer Network (CVN) with the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University proves it is essential.

Volunteer service work with those who lack, either spiritually or materially, forms the heart of a young volunteer for a lifetime. The CVN/CARA study found that those who volunteered in college feel like that experience made them better people (nearly 80%). Former volunteers attend religious services more regularly (46% percent compared with 27% percent for the general U.S. population). Finally, almost 40% of these former volunteers considered a vocation to ordained ministry or religious life. Clearly, service matters.

Our campus ministry at Saint Vincent College, Penn State University, and our chaplaincy at Benedictine High School in Savannah, Georgia, provide young people the spiritual and service opportunities they need for a mature faith.

Gabby Kohl, SVC ’18, in her junior year taught English to physically and mentally challenged orphans near our priory in Taiwan. Today, she is living and working in China doing much of the same work. In her words, “These trips change lives for the better. Both for the students on the trip, and those we help. Mission trips provide people with an insight into themselves that they never had before. I never thought I would ACTUALLY be living in another country teaching English. After visiting China with the mission trip, I felt confident enough to journey over here and make a life for myself here, helping others.”

Our world needs more charitable hearts, like Gabby’s. We need more young people living lives of faithful service.

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No one is to pursue what he judges better for himself, but instead, what he judges better for someone else.

—Saint Benedict
The Archabbey is our home. It is a place of rest, renewal of spirit, kinship, and scholarship that sustains our monks for our work in the world. We continue to spread the Gospel message of Christ in all we do.

The message of Christ remains revolutionary. Be the forgiver. Strive for peace. Love one another as Christ loved us. Be humble. Be selfless. To live out these virtues is to live lives of faith. To strengthen our faith requires a community. We need each other. Monks, faculty and staff, guests, and young people walking together along the same journey.

Those before us who have walked the path of faith have worn down the trail to help us find our way. Saint Vincent Archabbey invites you to continue that tradition to help pave the way for those who follow us.

Please consider a gift to the Wimmer Fund. Support Father Nathan Munsch, Gabby Kohl, Father Matthew Lambert and our current and future vocations by making a gift to the Wimmer Fund.

To make your gift to the Wimmer fund please use the enclosed envelope or visit www.saintvincentarchabbey.org.

To make a gift of stock or to leave the Archabbey or the Wimmer Fund in your will, please contact: Shannon J. Jordan, Director of Development for the Seminary and Archabbey.