

schwäbischen Mundartdichtung“⁵ und zugleich ein „Meister der ‚geistlichen Wohlredenheit‘ in Schwaben“⁶, würde wohl glücklich schmunzeln, wenn er – bei aller Bescheidenheit doch immer von seinen eigenen Fähigkeiten überzeugt – diese Neuentdeckung seiner Predigtkunst noch erleben würde. Setzt sich doch damit fort, was er selbst schon 1769 am Beginn seiner Vorrede zum dritten Band seiner „Geistlichen Reden“ formuliert hat: *Fort in die offene Welt mit euch, schuechterne Kinder meiner Arbeit! Furchtsame Geburten meiner Lesung! Fort mit euch unter die Augen eurer Goenner! Gehet zu Freunden hin, die euch eine Herberge nicht verweigern, und eine guetige Aufnahme zusagen werden*⁷.

Fakultät f. Kath. Theologie
Universitätsstraße 31
D-93053 Regensburg

Alfons KNOLL

Jean VAN STRATUM., *Bernard Henry Pennings (1861-1955). Founder of the Norbertine Order in the USA. The Man behind the Image*. Paisa (Alt) Publishing Co., De Pere (Wisconsin), 2010, xix-450 pp. Copies may be obtained from: St. Norbert Abbey, 1016 North Broadway, De Pere, WI 54115-2610, USA.

More than fifty years have passed since the death of Bernard Henry Pennings who founded in 1898 St. Norbert Abbey in De Pere, Wisconsin. Who was Bernard Henry Pennings? Why was he important? There are legends and stories. But do they correspond to the man behind them?

Dr. John van Stratum, no stranger to the Norbertine Order and the Abbey of Berne in Heeswijk, Netherlands, took up the challenge to seek out the man behind the image. He was well prepared for this task, having studied at the school of Berne Abbey in his youth and having written two previous books on the abbey¹. Now Dr. van Stratum was asked to take his work one step further and research the man who was chosen to head up this mission to the USA. The author begins by giving the background of the Pennings family and giving flesh and blood to the man known as Abbot Pennings.

As source material Dr. van Stratum used the archives of Berne Abbey, St. Norbert Abbey, St. Norbert College and the Generalate in Rome. And if that was not sufficient, he read through hundreds, if not thousands, of

⁵ So Konstantin MAIER in seinem *Nachwort*, S. 370.

⁶ So im Titel des Nachworts: Chorherr Sebastian Sailer (1714-1777). Prämonstratenser in Marchtal, Meister der ‚geistlichen Wohlredenheit‘ in Schwaben, S. 365.

⁷ S. 21.

¹ *Berna ut Lucerna. De Abdij van Berne 1857-2007*, Heeswijk, 2007 and *Prepared for Every Good Work. Berne Abbey in The Netherlands 1134-2007, St. Norbert Abbey in DePere, Wisconsin 1893, De Pere, 2008*.

extant letters and newspaper clippings coming from other sources. Periodically van Stratum mentions the absence of correspondence for a number of years. Nevertheless he manages to pull the narrative together in a remarkable and believable way.

As we read through the years, decade by decade, we encounter some of Pennings' difficulties in attempting to assert his authority with some of the confreres who knew him previously in Berne Abbey. The author does not present the hero of this book as perfect but rather brings out the negative side of the man as well as the positive. Pennings learned by his mistakes but he seemed to have an innate sense of management.

We also encounter Pennings in this book from an international viewpoint as well as local. In other words his involvement with the Norbertine Order as a whole. While there were financial difficulties on the home front he still made efforts to send money abroad in the form of Mass stipends. This was the case especially during and after World War II.

The later years of Pennings' life were not so easy. As he grew older some confreres thought he needed a coadjutor to assist him with running the community. As people grow older they are not apt to accept the criticism of others in this regard. They presume that they are still as capable as they were before. And so as the book and Pennings' life draw to a close we hear of the difficulties and bad feelings between Pennings and Hubert Noots, the Abbot General at that time. This is especially the case in 1947 when Fr. Sylvester M. Killeen was elected as coadjutor abbot to Pennings. It is to Killeen's credit, however, that he took a pacifist approach in dealing with Abbot Pennings.

The book is very well written, very readable and holds one's interest. The numerous photographs of individuals and places help to make the story come alive. The reader is not burdened with a series of names and no faces to help bring the individuals to life. The arrangement of the book is not totally chronological but rather by chronologically arranged themes.

Daylesford Abbey
220 South Valley Road
Paoli, Pennsylvania 19301-1900
USA

Theodore J. ANTRY O.Praem.

Wolfgang GRASSL, *Culture of Place: an Intellectual Profile of the Premonstratensian Order*, 2 vol., Nordhausen, Verlag Traugott GmbH, 2012, vi-658 pp. ISBN 978-3-88309-691-9.

Wolfgang Grassl, autrichien de naissance, enseigne depuis huit ans au *Saint Norbert College*, un des fleurons de l'abbaye prémontrée de De Pere aux États-Unis. Dans une lettre qu'il m'adressait voici un an, ce spécialiste du monde des affaires et de l'économie, de la doctrine sociale