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St. Benedict at Marmion Abbey

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Obsculta Prize

The following essay by Brian VanderHeiden is the winner of our Obsculta theological essay contest for undergraduate juniors and seniors. In addition to having his essay published, Mr. VanderHeiden receives a \$500 cash prize and a half-tuition scholarship.

The Obsculta Prize is meant to encourage young theologians to think, discuss, and write in the spirit of the Rule of Benedict. The name of the prize, like this journal, is the first word in the prologue of the Rule of Benedict. The full phrase translates as “Listen with the ear of your heart.” This simple admonition shapes not only the life of the monastic community at Saint John’s but also the way we seek to do our theology and preparation for ministry. In a world where people too often speak first and ask questions later, we seek to listen for the voice of the Spirit in Scripture, tradition, each other, and the world. Out of this listening we speak that Word of God in a way we hope can be heard and even inspire the world in which we live.

We hope the Obsculta Prize might encourage undergraduate students to think seriously about vocations in theology and ministry. If you know anyone who might be interested in submitting an essay to this contest next year, please encourage them to look into it. Contest essays can be on any topic of Christian theology, including comparative studies of other religions and pastoral or practical theology, as well as disciplines such as scripture, history, or systematics. The deadline for next year’s essay submissions will be March 1, 2014.

For more information about The Obsculta Essay Contest, email obscultaprize@csbsju.edu.

William J. Cahoy, Dean

Saint John’s University School of Theology·Seminary



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