



Oblates of St. Benedict

Saint Martin's Abbey

THOUGHTS

BY BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS O.S.B. OBLATE DIRECTOR

Oblate Sunday: May 3rd 2009

- **Mass at 11:00 AM in the Abbey Church.**
- **Brunch is available for purchase in the student cafeteria.**
- **Conference 1:30 PM in the Abbey Church**
- **Fr. Timothy will speak on Christian and Muslim Relations.**

I believe we are at the halfway mark in Lent. It is about now that we say, "I am eagerly looking forward to Easter." The eagerness may be due to the wish to get back to the normal way of doing things or perhaps because the change has renewed our spirit and opened us up to the new possibilities. I hope the eagerness is for the latter. This is what ought to take place in our faith. As we receive the ashes on Ash Wednesday. The words spoken on that day: "Turn away from sin and be faithful". In Chapter 49, of the



Rule, On the Observance of Lent, it states that "the life of a monk (Christian) ought to have about it all times the character of Lenten observance."

Of course as we all know, we aren't so steadfast about our faith year round and this is a perfect time to make a valiant effort to make amends and try again. Whatever our actions for Lent are, they ought to change us for the future; maybe not in grand ways but in small everyday moments that are filled with more compassion, conviction or desire to grow stronger in our spiritual life. This effort on our part will bring us a joyful and holy Easter.

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2009 Oblate Sunday Schedule

July 12th Br. Peter will speak on The Christian Way of Reading the Old Testament. Abbot Neal will give his presentation on AIM and Tanzania.

Aug 1st Retreat Day at Lambert lodge. 8:00 to 3:30. More as the time draws near.

September 6th Br. Vincent will speak on Gift of Self: "the other" in the Rule of St. Benedict.

December 6th Oblate Fr. Jim Lee will speak on Advent Holiness: Gabriel, Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, John and Jesus.

ABBOT'S REFECTION BY ABBOT NEAL ROTH O.S.B.

We have had a great deal of sickness in the monastery this winter – everything from the common sniffles to flu and very bad colds. Apparently, most of the campus here at Saint Martin's has been hit these last few weeks with illness. Illness presents us with opportunities to exercise charity and to assist and to serve Christ in our sisters and brothers. Certainly, such is very Benedictine. Benedict, in Chapter 36 of the Rule, writes: "Care of the sick must rank above and before all else, so that they may be truly served as Christ ..." Serving requires generosity. Lacordaire (1802-1861) said, "It is not genius, nor glory, nor love that reflects the greatness of the human soul; it is kindness."



All who are ill need kindness and patience. Illness can come in several forms. Sometimes the sick around us do not appear to be ill. Maybe they need someone to simply listen to them and to hear their worries. Maybe they just need a little compassion and sympathy. Maybe someone is simply needed to "stand" with them during a crisis. In physical illness, when someone is in the hospital or confined at home, a charitable but brief visit, a quiet prayer, maybe a book, or a card to indicate that the sick person is being thought about, is the best way to attend to a sick friend. The sick can be tyrants and tiresome. They have their own obligation to accept assistance with grace and gratitude. And the caregiver has ample opportunity to grow in patience! All of this demands a level of patience that does not come easily for both the ill person and those serving the sick. Keeping the image of the suffering Christ in the sick person can hold one on the mark

An excerpt from a 2002 treatise written by Fr. Neuhaus entitled "How I Became the Catholic I Was". Sent to us by Oblate Ernie Bianche.

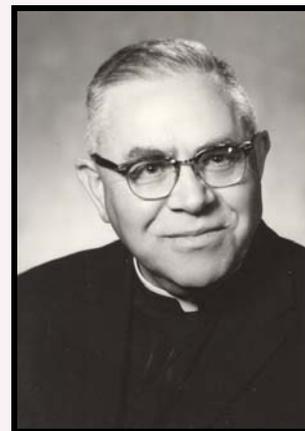


Mine was a decision mandated by conscience. I have never found it in his writings, but a St. Louis professor who had been his student told me that the great confessional Lutheran theologian Peter Brunner regularly said that a Lutheran who does not daily ask himself why he is not a Roman Catholic cannot know why he is a Lutheran. That impressed me very deeply. I was thirty years a Lutheran pastor, and after thirty years of asking myself why I was not a Roman Catholic I finally ran out of answers that were convincing either to me or to others. And so I discovered not so much that I had made the decision as that the decision was made, and I have never looked back, except to trace the marks of grace, of sola gratia, each step of the way.

My reception occasioned some little comment, including the observation that I and others who make this decision have a "felt need for authority." This is usually said in a condescending manner by people who believe that they are able to live with ambiguities and tensions that some of us cannot handle. Do I have a felt need for authority, for obedience, for submission? But of course. Obedience is the rightly ordered disposition toward truth, and submission is subordination of the self to that by which the self is claimed. Truth commands, and authority has to do with the authorship, the origins, of commanding truth. By what authority? By whose authority? There are no more important questions for the right ordering of our lives and ministries. Otherwise, in our preaching, teaching, and entire ministry we are just making it up as we go along, and, by acting in God's name, taking His name in vain.

IN THE BEGINNING... BY FATHER GERARD KIRSCH, O.S.B.

With the advent of the school year in September 1952, Father Gilbert Bulfer OSB of St Bede Abbey (Peru, Illinois) joined the chemistry staff of Saint Martin's College to assist **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-1982)** while Dr. Frank Horan was on a research assignment in the Midwest. While **Father Vincent Carey (1895-1967)** was conducting a series of retreats in Vancouver, B.C., Father William Dickerson, director of the abbey theatre, was working with **Father Michael Feeney (1919-2000)** on the production of a pageant of the Mass in connection with the National Convention of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women.



Reverend Meinrad Gaul O.S.B.

Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984) and his father, Oblate Peter Gaul, participated in a centennial celebration of the marriage of the first Gaul to settle in Iowa. As the only living priest descendant in the direct line, *Father Meinrad* celebrated a Solemn Mass on August 17th and preached the occasional homily as well as a Solemn Requiem on August 18th. Assisting were three cousins Fathers N.A.Gaul, Cornelius Gaul and Hilary Gaul. The Archbishop of Dubuque was present in the sanctuary and announced a papal blessing obtained for the occasion. On his return, *Father Meinrad* attended the social science section of the American Benedictine Academy, August 25-28, 1952, at Holy Cross Abbey in Colorado.

Already dean of instruction, *Father Meinrad* was appointed director of the alumni office and editor of "The Gone Goose", the alumni news organ, the first issue of which appeared in the fall of 1952. Former students-and those who knew such-were encouraged to get in touch with the alumni office. **Father Prior James Piotrkowski (1897-1974)** and several other monks went to Raymond, WA on September 16, 1952 to assist at the closing there of Forty Hours Devotion for which **Father Alphonse Fuchs (1904-1971)** delivered the homilies.

October 1-3, 1952 found **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** in Seattle. On October 1st he attended a conference for religious leaders sponsored by the combined army, navy and air force for the purpose of maintaining high personal standards in the military. On October 3, he attended the inauguration of President Henry Schmitz at the University of Washington. On September 19, Abbot Raphael also attended a special convocation at the University of Portland and, with **Brother Brendan Kelly (1897-1971)**, looked over the market for precious metals in connection with the work in the gold plating department at the abbey.

CONTRIBUTIONS



Your contributions for both events would be greatly appreciated. Please send your contribution to Brother Edmund for the Oblate Fund. Make checks payable to St. Martin's Abbey.

- **World Congress of Oblates** in Rome is scheduled for October; we are sending Oblate Patricia McClure to represent us.
- **North American Association of Oblate Directors** will take place in June in Pennsylvania at our grandmother house of St. Vincent's.

FROM THE HILL

BY BONIFACE V. LAZZARI, O.S.B.

During my time teaching at Woodside Priory School in California, I was a member of the church choir in San Mateo. Each Wednesday a lay colleague and I drove together for choir practice: on Sunday I drove in on my own. We had an excellent music director who selected beautiful music for us to sing. My colleague and I fell out over one of his selections, however. It was a piece we practiced for Easter. The music was from Mascagni's opera "Cavalleria Rusticana," though the words may have been changed. The theme was spring and new life. It "sang" the message of Easter, and the Eastertide: "The Lord is the giver of life to all."

I thought it was lovely but my colleague thought it cloyingly sweet. That was some years ago now, but I still think of the message most Easters. As the writer of the 'Song of Songs' suggests to us, "winter is past... the flowers appear on the earth, the season of glad songs has come..." new life via Christ resurrected.

At the Abbey cemetery, there oft times are flowers on the graves of one or the other of the monks. On a recent visit to the cemetery, there were primroses on the graves of **ABBOT DUNSTAN CURTIS** and **FATHER VALERIAN GRUBB**. On the grave of **BROTHER WOLFGANG LUTZENBERG**, there was a nosegay of ivory-colored blooms.



The headstones of **FATHER HARVEY WINGFIELD** and **BROTHER KENNETH MALLOY** are now in place.

We all rejoice that hopefully 'winter is past' as it has been an unusually hard one with respect to the weather and the monks' health. Many of the monks were 'hit' with a 'bug' of one kind or another. **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** had a great deal to do to shake his.

The Lord is the giver of life to all. Joyous Spring.

BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON did yeoman service singing at liturgical services, as both **BROTHERS AELRED WOODARD** and **VINCENT FRANCIS** were hard hit, and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** continues on sabbatical in Europe researching a book.



There was some travel by members of the community. **FATHER BENEDICT AUER** participated in Campus Ministry's annual Spring Break tour of Europe. This year the destinations were Spain and Portugal...**FATHER PAUL WECKERT**, vocation director and guest master, flew twice north to Alaska. The first time it was to assist in a parish and to do vocation work and work for the university's admission's department. He was asked to come back to conduct a retreat...**FATHER TIMONTY LAMM** flew south for a bit of vacation in Southern California - a good way to deal with the north-west's unusually heavy winter snows.



ON THE BOOK SHELF

Bread and Wine Readings for Lent and Easter. By Orbis

Cross-Shattered Christ Meditations on the Seven Last Words. By Stanley Hauerwas.

Lent and Easter Wisdom from Henri J.M. Nouwen , compiled by Judy Bauer.

Benedictine Daily Prayer A short breviary. Editor Maxwell Johnson, with the monks of St. John's

Lenten Reflection from the Sisters of Mercy

Fast from worry and feast on divine order by trusting in God.

Fast from complaining and feast on appreciation.

Fast from negatives and feast on affirmatives.

Fast from unrelenting pressures and feast on unceasing prayer.

Fast from hostility and feast on non-resistance.

Fast from bitterness and feast on forgiveness.

Fast from self-concern and feast on compassion for others.

Fast from shadows of sorrow and feast on the sunlight of serenity.

Fast from idle gossip and feast on purposeful silence.

Fast from judging others and feast on the Christ within them.

Fast from emphasis on difference and feast on the unity of life.

Fast from apparent darkness and feast on the reality of life.

Fast from thoughts of illness and feast on the healing power of God.

Fast from words that pollute and feast on phrases that purify.

Fast from discontent and feast on gratitude.

Fast from anger and feast on optimism.

Fast from personal anxiety and feast on eternal truth.

Fast from discouragement and feast on hope.

Fast from facts that depress and feast on what uplifts.

Fast from lethargy and feast on enthusiasm.

Fast from suspicion and feast on truth.

Fast from thoughts that weaken and feast on promises that inspire.

Fast from problems that overwhelm and feast on prayer that undergirds.

GOOD WORKS



Rosary Work : Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm Meet in the Guest dining room in Old Main.

March 21st, April 18th, May 16th, July 18th, August 15th, September 19th, October 17th, November 21st.

Gardening : Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session and the weather permits. Please call Br. Edmund if you plan to join us but can't make it at 1:00.

Lambert Lodge: 1pm to 3:30pm. Br. Edmund plans to go out earlier in the morning. If you need directions please contact him in advance. The Lodge needs a general cleaning inside and out. Wood can be split for the fire place and gathered from the woods. May 2nd and October 3rd.

Leadership in the Rule of Benedict By Mary Randall Obl.S.B.

(This is an ongoing series of talks presented at the 2007 Benedictine Oblates Directors' Meeting held at Saint Martin's Abbey)

Abbot Peter Eberle, O.S.B. is a monk of Mount Angel Abbey in Mount Angel, Oregon and currently serves as Abbot President of the Swiss American Benedictine Congregation and formation Director at Mount Angel Seminary. Abbot Peter holds an STL from St. Paul's University in Ottawa and a STD in Moral Theology from Academia Alfonsiana in Rome.

In his talk "Leadership in the Rule of Benedict," Abbot Peter turns to the abbot's leadership role as envisioned by Saint Benedict in his Rule. He states, "When a monastic leader looks to Saint Benedict for instruction on leadership they are still under the pull of a form of rhetorical leadership." Rhetorical leadership, if you recall, means that a leader moves the members by rhetoric. But Abbot Peter goes on to say, "That if a superior is to be convincing ultimately they will have to integrate the teaching of the entire Rule into their life. Without that commitment all efforts to lead the community to the desired goal will fail."

With the help of the Thematic Index in the RB 1980, Peter Abbot approached the perspective of an abbot's leadership through titles. Under the entry ABBOT in the Thematic Index is found a section called "Titles of Abbot." "There are eleven titles listed: the abbot as Father, Healer, Judge, Master, New Moses, Servant, Shepherd, Spiritual Father, Wise Physician, Steward and Teacher. Initially when these titles are skimmed over they seem to be a disjointed hodgepodge, and on the face of it, not very helpful," notes Abbot Peter. And he contends that several of them could be combined without any significant loss. "For example, Healer and Wise Physician seem to Abbot Peter to be almost the same. Yet, Saint Benedict isolates two passages for the Wise Physician (27:2 and 28:2) whereas the citations under the title healer refer largely to the

THE ABBOT TEACHES BY EXAMPLE AS MUCH AS DEED.

Abbot Peter explains, "The title 'New Moses' is really an allusion drawn from a single verse, 21:1: 'If the community is rather large, some brothers chosen for their good repute and holy life should be made deans' (21:1 (The Deans of the Monastery)). This of course could be considered to hearken back to the time when Moses chose several men, at the suggestion of his father-in-law to help him in the task of governance (cf. Deut.1:13-15; Exodus. 18: 21-22, alluded to both in 21: 1 and in 21:3). But how helpful is this in ascertaining the role of an abbot?"

And what about the title Judge? Abbot Peter notes that there are eight separate verses cited in this section, yet they almost all refer to the abbot deciding something on the basis of judgment.

So Abbot Peter decided to turn to the title of Father. Yet, he found that Saint Benedict does not call the abbot father very often. In fact only two cites are found (2:24 and 33:3). Yet, Abbot Peter did discover that the word abbas in the Concordance of RB 1980 is used well over one hundred times.

"So bingo!" he states. "Abbas means father, of course, but perhaps the most significant use of the word abbas is found in Chapter 2:1-3:

"To be worthy of the task of governing a monastery, the abbot must always remember what his title signifies and act as a superior should. He is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery, since he is addressed by a title of Christ, as the Apostle indicates: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons by which we exclaim, abba, father" (Rom, 8: 15).

LEADERSHIP IN THE RULE OF BENEDICT CONTINUED:

"Quite clearly for Saint Benedict," Abbot Peter reflects, "the word abba indicates the abbot takes the place of Christ in the monastery. Or more precisely, the abbot is believed to hold the place of Christ in the monastery. This being the case, the abbot must always be Christ-like." And he pointed out that all the titles demand that the abbot be, above all, Christ-like in his every word and deed.

Abbot Peter in mentioning the title of Shepherd says, "One of the Rule's most beautiful verses invokes this title:

"He is to imitate the loving example of the Good Shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep in the mountains and went in search of the one sheep that had strayed. So great was his compassion for its weakness that he mercifully placed it upon his shoulders and so carried it back to the flock," (Luke 125:5), (27:8-9 "The Abbot's Concern for the Excommunicated"). Here the Abbot is to act like Christ the Good Shepherd."

Let us all hold our own Abbot Neal Roth, O. S. B. in deepest prayer as he shepherds us as Oblates and directs our paths in the way of Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

In the passage listed in the Thematic Index under abbot as Servant he emphasizes the point:

"He must know what a difficult and demanding burden he has undertaken: directing souls and serving a variety of temperaments, coaxing, reproofing and encouraging them as appropriate (2:31). Let him recognize that his goal must be profit for the monks, not preeminence for himself (64:8)."

As Teacher, Abbot Peter notes how again the abbot teaches by example as much as deed.

In summary, Abbot Peter noted, "Some elected superior are quite energetic and assertive while others are hesitant and shy. Some are imaginative and have a flair for administration. Others do not. But any superior should be aware of the great axiom, "Know thyself." And in knowing their weaknesses can compensate to some extent by collaboration, which is by capitalizing on the strengths of the leadership team."

In the next Oblate Newsletter we will explore Sister Jacquelyn's talk on "Qualities of Leadership: Discernment and Building Community."



Poetry by Fr. Benedict Hueter, O.S.B.



Fireflies

“As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame....”

Gerard Manley Hopkins, S.J.

Tonight I only wanted to watch fireflies play in the grass,
 Catch them in a jam jar,
 And put them under my T – shirt
 So they would make Van Gogh explosions of fire and light making me into a canvas of delight.
 But there are no fireflies in the Pacific Northwest,
 so my dreams of becoming a tone poem tinted in a starry, starry night did not occur,
 but then maybe it did.
 At eight o'clock,
 I got a phone call in distress,
 an “I need to talk” emergency accompanied by tears.
 So I went over as the air turned cool,
 and stars diamonded the sky,
 and sat and listened
 to someone recount the story
 of her mother who tried to kill herself
 twice in the last ten days.
 I thought of Vincent that artist who painted Arles,
 and the rest of France,
 in primary colors so bright they burst into your eyes
 and blinded the beholder from seeing the artist's soul.
 How do you explain to someone how desperate a person is
 when hope is all gone and love evaporates into a mesmerizing fog.



You can't.
 I didn't.
 I only listened with my soul
 and counted imaginary fireflies
 as they glistened in the tears that ran down her face.

WE HOLD IN PRAYER



RIP Wife of Obl.S.B. Pete McDougall.
 RIP mother of Obl.S.B. Marge Hayden.
 Obl.S.B. Donna Nichols successful hand surgery, April 9th.
 Obl.S.B. Larry Sullivan health needs.
 Obl.S.B. Anitalane Blair kidney transplant.
 Obl.S.B. David Blair health needs.
 Jack Hayden, a complete recovery from stroke.

St. Martin's Abbey 'Oblate Manual'

To purchase go to the web site: <http://stores.lulu.com/pilgrimagehouse>
 Or write Lulu Enterprises, 860 Aviation Parkway, Suite 300, Morrisville, NC 27560, United States.
 Paper backs sell for \$15 each and hardbacks are \$25 each.
 About \$5 of each copy sold will go to the Oblate Fund.
 Brother Edmund will have a limited number of paperbacks for sale at the next Oblate meeting.

Oblation Renewal Form

Mail or bring to the Abbey to be blessed on Oblate Sunday.

RENEWAL of OBLATION

I renew my oblation as an Oblate of St. Benedict for the community of St. Martin's Abbey and promise again to serve God and all people according to the Rule of St. Benedict.

Let us Pray:

God, most compassionate and loving, strengthen me in my commitment to follow you in the way of St. Benedict. Through my daily prayer and work may I be inspired to live in Christ and to bring His love to the world and His peace to all hearts. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

(Oblate) _____