



Oblates of St. Benedict

Oblate Sunday September 6th

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Mass in the Abbey Church at 11:00.

Purchase lunch in student cafeteria and socialize with others.

Conference at 1:30 in the Abbey Church where Br. Vincent will speak on gift of self "the other" in the Rule of St. Benedict.

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



Planning ahead: 2010 Oblate dates

March 7th will included Investitures and Oblations

May 2nd

July 11th picnic

August 7th Oblate retreat

September 5th Investitures and Oblations

December 5th

Dear Oblate Brothers and Sisters:

Needs
Vs
Wants

I have selected Chapter 55 of the Holy Rule, "On the Clothes and Shoes of the Brethren", to write some thoughts for you to ponder. It seems our culture is caught up in a craze called, "fashion consciousness". I really believe St. Benedict would think that it is all but a bunch of nonsense. We seem to extend the word "fashion" from clothing to automobiles, homes, food, computers, cell phones and numerous other gadgets that we want to acquire or seem to think are necessary for our well being.



Upon reading this chapter one sees the monks and nuns of centuries past had very little, not only in the way of clothes but other personal items. It seems monks and nuns had no such thing as a personal item. We know that St. Benedict wanted to "root out" the concept of ownership by individuals. "All things are to be held in common for the common good." St. Benedict no doubt knew personal possessions would bind the one and they would not have the freedom to work and worship God as they ought. Do we not see this or experience it for ourselves these days? Most monastics today have taken on some sort of ownership, be it a valid one or not. We buy into possessions or ownership because we think we must have it to be productive, presentable, acceptable, or knowledgeable. Have we all gone too far buying into the false assumptions that we need for all the things? Have our needs become our wants?

St. Benedict did realize that each person has different needs and that things should be doled out according to the needs of the individual. There have been reports circulating for years that the USA consumes vast amounts of the earth's resources, more than any other nation. When we consume and toss aside our wastes are we aware of the consequences?

I believe there is a spiritual dimension here that God has gifted us with everything and after the "plenty" is used up we will discover the "drought" that follows. I am reminded of the Hebrew people exiting Egypt, where they had sufficient for life but once in the desert they barely had enough for their needs to be met. I believe this is a good analogy for possessions. Perhaps now is the time to practice prudence and resourcefulness.

The Abbot or superior has the final say on new acquisitions in the monastery. Oblates must have to make this decision on their own and the key word to consider in discerning a new item is this something I *need* or is it something I *want*. If it is the latter then maybe my life would be richer without it.

Yours in St. Benedict, **Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.**

Abbot's Reflection by Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.

A few days back, at Mass, we had the gospel account from Matthew 11:28-30 where Jesus says "Come to me...and I will give you rest." It is a wonderful invitation to relax in his presence and to allow him to free one of things that weigh the soul down in some way. In my mind, this kind of rest must surely be in silence.

Each fall I am a guest speaker at several of our first year students' special seminars. Invariably I am asked, "Why do the monks take a vow of silence?" I, then, with a smile, inform the students that we do not take a vow of silence but that we make an effort to keep a certain amount of silence, especially in church, during the early hours of the day and during the night hours. When observed, this means that our abbey building is quiet most of the time. One of the early desert monastics, Abba Andrew, wrote: "These three things are appropriate for a monk: exile, poverty, and endurance in silence." And a modern Trappist monk, Thomas Merton wrote: "It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am the more affection I have for them." As Oblates, I am not suggesting that you must follow desert or Trappist silence. What I am suggesting is that some daily silence with the Lord can be most beneficial. We all need rest from our burdens-family problems, job problems, and health problems-you name it.

Some people have trouble with silence. The first thing they do in the morning is to turn on the television or radio while one is preparing for the day. We live in such a world of noise! If we wish to sit with Jesus, we need time, space and quiet. Perhaps you can find a quiet place to sit, spend a few minutes thinking of Jesus, and spend that time talking quietly with him about those burdens you carry in your life. He is concerned for each one of us. If we allow him to direct us we will find great solace. Remember his comforting words, "For my yoke is easy and my burden light."



It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am the more affection I have for them.

Thomas Merton

Nourishment for Our Souls

By Bill Lagreid, Obl.S.B.

Recently there have been articles in periodicals and on television regarding brain development research with particular emphasis on childhood education. We have known for a long time that the years from zero to five are critical for a child's future developmental and school success. The same findings apply to our spiritual growth and development.

As children we learn about prayer, love, trust, care, concern, compassion, goodness and kindness from the people around us and family members from birth to five. We learn very quickly by the actions of people around us from the sounds of voices and the touch and care we received. According to researchers, as infants we learn more and faster than any other period in our lives. Each family culture has its own values it transmits to its children twenty-four hours a day seven days a week.

At school and home we meet a new set of children and adults. We have learned to walk, talk, eat and we learn that we are not all alike. We also have learned the basics of our church community, how to act in church, church rituals, prayers and a few things that we are told are right and wrong.

School of the Lord's service.

As we grow older our environment expands and changes when we meet people who are not like those we experienced in our home or church who have different ideas about, good and bad, right and wrong. Depending upon where we went to school our exposure to church teachings varies. By the time we reach our teens we have the basics from our family and religion and unfortunately sometimes during this time begins the end of the nourishment of our souls.

Our body needs to be fed regularly with good food to keep it strong and healthy and allow it's self to heal and fight infections and diseases. To stop eating healthy food is a formula for disaster. To stop feeding our souls with good spiritual food is equally dangerous.

Unfortunately there are many of us who stopped developing our spiritual life believing that all we needed was learned in childhood. St. Benedict would disagree with us for he suggests that we all need to study and learn in the school of the Lord's service. That being said will be C students or A students?

"Capturing the Stories of Monks"

One Rule, Many Men.
By Brother Luke Devine O.S.B.

Recently, a project related to the abbey has come to completion at Saint Martin's University. One of the professors in the English department, Olivia Archibald, offered creative writing classes where the students interviewed the monks of Saint Martin's and wrote short essays about them. The stories have been self-published under the title, *One Rule, Many Men*. I have been involved in this project almost from the beginning. It has been a worthwhile endeavor for at least two reasons.

First, the book has been an inspiring expression of the Benedictine presence in the university at a time when Catholic universities across the country are looking for ways of asserting Catholic identity. There was a time when the Catholic identity of Catholic universities was obvious because most of the teachers and staff were monks, priests, sisters. That is no longer the case. It takes a lot of trust for religious communities to leave their apostolate to lay people and to people of other Christian traditions and other religions. A few years ago, a group was formed, the Catholic Benedictine Leadership Team, to guide discussions related to the Catholic identity of the university. I became a member of this group. At one of our campus-wide discussions, Dr. Archibald stood up and described her idea of a book on the lives of the monks. That was the point where I became interested. Later, I came to her to tell her about a similar book that had been published, *The Wisdom of the Benedictine Elders*. I took on the role of connecting the students with the monks, among other tasks with the project. *One Rule, Many Men* has been one small bridge between the university and the abbey. The student writers got to know the monks in ways that they would not have otherwise. The book stands as a record for others to share in those connections.

Second, the book may have a lot of potential as a vocational promotion tool. At the time that I got involved with *One Rule, Many Men*, a few years ago, I was also a member of the abbey's vocation team. This was before we had a monk able to take on the role of vocation director. We thought a lot about ways that we could start raising awareness about Benedictine life in a society where religious life is generally on the fringes. I was raised Catholic myself, but had no idea about monasticism until my mid 20s. After coming into the monastery and talking to people discerning vocations, I realized that a collection of stories of men's lives before becoming monks, including their discernments, could be really helpful. One of the common themes you'll find in *One Rule, Many Men* is the writer thinking before an interview with a monk how bizarre this is going to be and coming away astonished that the monk is actually a fairly normal person. This reflects a genuine feeling that a lot of people have. We live in a Protestant-influenced and secularized society wherein religious life has typically been viewed as abnormal, and in a way it is; but once people make the effort to learn about it, it also makes sense. Members of religious orders have not really done as much as they could to let the world know who we are, what we do. No one knows a secret formula for attracting vocations; if we did we would be using it. Who knows what good a book like this will do in the tangible benefits of attracting vocations, but it is certainly a strong expression of Benedictine life in a format that could be of widespread appeal.



**connecting
the
students
with the
monks**

The book is available at the Saint Martin's University bookstore for \$16.50.

It features illustrations of the participating monks by Br. Luke Devine and photos from various sources.

Responding to Leadership According to the Rule.

The ongoing series of talks presented at the August 2007 Benedictine Oblates Directors' Meeting held at Saint Martin's Abbey

By: Mary Randall, Obl. S. B.



The Rule of Saint Benedict demands of the follower: obedience and support.

Abbot Peter Eberle, O.S.B. from Mount Angel's Abbey, Oregon offered his third and final conference talk entitled: "Responding to Leadership According to the Rule." Abbot Peter begins with an observation, "That generally speaking we are unaccustomed to considering the role of followers when speaking of leadership. Everything falls on the leader and that he or she is either successful or unsuccessful." An example Abbot Peter gives is "When President Truman shot himself in the foot because he called a spade a spade regardless of whom he offended. Many times his approval rating sank way below 50% because the electorate he was leading was so fickle. He didn't change, they did."

"Of course," Abbot Peter continues, "there are other issues that make for discontent among followers, and any leader has to recognize that followers can be capricious. They might applaud decisions but complain about the consequences those decisions necessarily entail, as if a leader could choose the one without the other."

At other times followers are just plain unfair. Abbot Peter contends that this happens in Church circles as much as in the secular sphere. "Of course," he continues, "any new leader whether secular or ecclesiastical, is given a "honeymoon" period, but if there is an undercurrent of resentment, it doesn't last very long, and is a rather uneasy period right from the beginning." His point is that followers also have a role to play in the dynamics of leadership.

"Quite possibly," Abbot Peter says, "a monastic who isn't an abbot or prioress is convinced that Saint Benedict doesn't have much to say about a follower because he gives all the power to the abbot." "...on the other hand seen from a superior's point of view, it might appear that the follower gets off Scot free in the Rule. We have noted in past lectures how the superior has to bend over backwards to accommodate his brethren. How she has to treat everyone equally, avoiding all favoritism in the monastery (2:16); in her teaching she is to "vary with circumstances, (2:24), sometimes coaxing, sometimes exercising stronger measures; she must gloss over the errors of her flock (2:26). In addition, if one is severely punished she has the responsibility of seeking her out by a whole series of techniques (cf. Chh. 27-28). And she has to order all things so that her sisters never have cause for justifiable murmuring. (41:5 "The time for Brothers' Meals). Then, if that were not enough (the abbot thinks) he has to realize that he is responsible before God for his flock!" Abbot Peter then sites several excerpts from the Rule to validate this statement.

Abbot Peter suggests that there are at least two things in the Rule that Saint Benedict demands of the follower: obedience and support. This is the other side of the coin in Benedict's teaching on the abbot. Just as the abbot has huge responsibilities placed on him, but he has almost total authority, it being understood that he also is under a Rule. This demand of the follower is stated unequivocally in (Ch 5: 1-5):

“The first step of humility is unhesitating obedience, which comes naturally to those who cherish Christ above all. Because of this holy service they have professed, or because of dread of hell and glory of everlasting life, they carry out the superior’s orders as promptly as if the command came from God himself. The Lord says of men like this: ‘No sooner did he hear than he obeyed me’ (Ps.17(18):45); again, he tells teachers, ‘Whoever listens to you, listens to me’ (Luke 10:16).”

“Significant here is the Scriptural foundation upon which this is based, namely the passage of Luke,” yet Abbot Peter contends, “many contemporary religious no longer invoke this passage when speaking of religious obedience. In Benedict’s perspective, the abbot does take the place of Christ in the monastery. Thus, to listen to him is to hear Christ.”

Abbot Peter continues, “So insistent is Saint Benedict on this obligation to obey that he demands it even if the abbot is unjust in his dealings. Thus, not only does a monk reject his own will (second degree of humility), and submits to the superior in all obedience (third degree of humility), but ‘in this obedience under difficult, unfavorable, and even unjust conditions, his heart quietly embraces suffering and endures it without weakening or escape’ (7:35-36). After all, as the Psalmist says, ‘You have placed men over our heads’ (Ps. 65(66):12) (7:41). A monk has come, ‘not to do his own will, but the will of the one who sent him’ (Jn. 6:38, cf RB 5:13). Even if a task is impossible, and the abbot insists that the monk carry on despite his properly presented objections, the monk must carry on. (cf. Ch. 68).”

“Obedience to the abbot is a big responsibility to the monk. Even if the abbot can abuse his power (for which he has to give an account) the fact remains that the monk has to obey,” states Abbot Peter. He then goes on to explain how obedience is positive when, “The monastic obeys willingly: ‘the disciples’ obedience must be given gladly, ‘for God loves a cheerful giver’ (2 Cor. 9:7) (5:16). In similar manner when a monastic or sister offers her view of something under discussion it should have a positive note of humility, patience, and certainly deference. To express the obligations of obedience negatively, the monk is to refrain from murmuring.”

Abbot Peter claims, that “Saint Benedict is so adamant with the fault of murmuring that he equates it with the major vices of stubbornness, disobedience, and pride (cf 23:1), and if it is not amended after two warnings, the grumbler is to be excommunicated. By and large, the burden of controlling this vice lies with the monk rather than the abbot. After all, obedience is to be from the heart, and if it is not, it is not obedience at all.”



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The second way a monastic can applaud leadership is through support. Saint Benedict’s Rule states: “To their abbot (they ought to show) unfeigned and humble love” (72:10).

As is often the case when a bishop is elected he never again hears the truth. “To gently offer ‘correction’ or at least to honestly air the complaint, is doing an abbot or superior a favor. And it forestalls the alternate course of action that is often taken: to murmur bitterly,” says Abbot Peter.

In conclusion, Abbot Peter notes, “I think I can speak for most superiors when I say that if they had their druthers, they probably would run from the office they have been elected to. So treat them fairly, maybe even gently, be patient, and support them with your prayers.”

From The Hill by *Boniface V. Lazzari, O.S.B.*

“Sustain me, oh Lord, according to your promise...” sings the monk at his profession of vows. This is then echoed by the monastic community. It is sung three times, each time at a higher pitch. **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE** was the cantor on 11th July, as he made his first profession of monastic vows in the presence of **ABBOT NEAL ROTH**, the monastic community, his parents, family and friends. **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** recently returned from his sabbatical, delivered the occasional sermon. A festive luncheon followed the Mass of Profession, and the following weekend **BROTHER MARK** was once more feted, at a surprise reception given for him by the members of the parish he formerly attended in Vancouver, Washington.

It was a weekend of commitment. On the previous evening, **POSTULANT DEREK DELGADO** was received into the novitiate by **ABBOT NEAL**. He was given the religious name **DAMIEN**. **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** is our vacation director, **FATHER BENEDICT AUER** was **BROTHER DAMIEN'S** postulant director, and **FATHER EDWARD RECECONI** is newly-appointed novice master.

FATHER PAUL and **FATHER THADDAEUS ARLEDGE** represented the Saint Martin's community at the blessing of the new Saint Edward Church, Shelton, by the Archbishop of Seattle. **FATHER EDWARD**, one of the former Benedictine pastors of Saint Edward, was also in attendance. Saint Martin's has had a long history with Saint Edward Church. **FATHER EDWARD** was pastor there for several years.

FATHER BEDE CLASSICK exercised his priestly ministry in Sitka, Alaska, for part of the summer... **ABBOT NEAL** took some vacation time and traveled with family members in Montana... **BROTHER RAMON NEWELL**, in addition to running the Saint Martin's mail room and doing some weekend barbering, found some time for practicing for the Dragon Boat Races... **ABBOT NEAL** and **FATHER EDWARD** will represent Saint Martin's at the centennial celebration of the Benedictine Sisters in Cottonwood, Idaho this summer...

Sustain me, oh Lord, according to your promise

On the evening of 11th July, **BROTHERS VINCENT FRANCIS, NICOLAUS WILSON, AND IGNATIUS KELLY** renewed their monastic vows in the presence of the monastic community. Earlier in the summer, **BROTHERS VINCENT, NICOLAUS** and **IGNATIUS** had traveled to St. Benedict Abbey, in Kansas to attend the annual Juniorate Formation Workshop. **BROTHER VINCENT** later spearheaded the preparations for the monastic celebrations of the “glorious 4th” at Lambert Lodge on the Sound.

Do you know that the late Queen Mary of Teck, widow of George V of England and **FATHER CLEMENT PANGRATZ** have in common? **FATHER CLEMENT** eliminates ivy that may cause damage to our trees. During the Second World War, Queen Mary, not in her first youth, was known to take an ax to ivy at the country estates where she stayed out of harm's way of the bombs.

Enjoy the summer and the little summer of Saint Martin" – summer-- like fall days-- should we be blessed with one!

In The Beginning...

by Fr. Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

On December 8, 1952, **FRATERS TIMOTHY LAMM** and **PLACIDUS REISCHMAN (1926-2000)** were ordained sub-deacons (the first of the major orders) at Mount Angel Abbey On Sunday, November 30, **BROTHER ANTHONY (HAROLD) HANSON** pronounced his first vows at a quasi-Pontifical Mass at 10AM. Student participation in the ceremony was limited because of their absence during Thanksgiving vacation. **BROTHER ANTHONY** was employed in the business office.

A new lathe added to the plating shop of **BROTHER BRENDAN KELLY (1897-1971)** made it possible for him to perform many procedures in which he had been previously limited by the lack of proper equipment. Also new was the addition of nine cows and two heifers to the abbey farm. It was expected that this would bring the herd to such a point that most of the needs of the school and monastery could be easily satisfied.

In November, there was a meeting in Portland, Oregon of the alumni of Saint Martin's College and High School. Present for the gathering were **ABBOT RAPHAEL HEIDER (1903-1971)**, **FATHERS BEDE ERNSDORFF (1909-1982)**, **MARCEL BERTHON (1899-1975)** and **MEINRAD GAUL (1907-1984)**. Two of the Saint Martin's clerics journeyed from Mount Angel for the meeting: **FRATERS PLACIDUS REISCHMAN** and **URBAN FEUCHT**. **FATHER MEINRAD** returned to the abbey after the alumni gathering, but the 3 other priests remained in Portland for several days more to attend educational meetings.

During Christmas vacation, **FATHER JEROME TONER (1899-1977)** attended meetings in Chicago of the American Economic Association and of the Catholic Economic Association. He assisted in a Chicago parish during the holydays and returned to Saint Martin's on January 5, 1953. **FATHER VINCENT CAREY (1895-1967)** had returned on December 13 from a retreat in Denver, Colorado. His retreat and mission schedule for the months ahead was already fairly full. **FATHER SEBASTIAN RUTH (1875-1958)** received notice that he had been made a member of the Quarter Century Wireless Association-an honor of which he was eminently worthy since he had been involved in wireless telegraphy since 1914—38 years!



Good works

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

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. October 3rd. Br. Edmund plans to go out earlier in the morning. If you need directions please contact him in advance. Mark your 2010 calendar for Lodge work April 24th and Oct. 2nd.



FYI

The Priory Spirituality Center, operated by the Benedictine Sisters of St. Placid, offers a peaceful and contemplative setting for personal retreats. You are welcome to call 360-438-2595 and set up a personal retreat for a day, a week-end or whatever amount of time might be helpful for you. Benedictine Sisters are available for spiritual direction both for retreat and as a regular practice. "Lectio Divina and Contemporary Expressions of Lectio" will be offered on Thursdays 9am-noon on Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec. 10, 2009 and Jan. 14, Feb. 11, and Mar 11, 2010. For further information go to their website at www.stplacid.org or call 360-438-2595.

Books



Camaldolese Spirituality essential sources, by Peter-Damian Belisle.

The Eremitic Life, by Fr. Cornelius Wencel, Er. Cam.

Finding Sanctuary, Monastic steps for Everyday Life, by Abbot Christopher Jamison.

Benedict in The World, Portraits of Monastic Oblates, by Linda Kulzer, O.S.B. and Roberta Bondi.

Remember in your prayers the recently deceased Oblates:

Deacon Larry Sullivan (June 5)

Ted Nichols (July 6)

Also those who are sick and aging especially the parents of Br. Peter Tynon, O.S.B. whose father and mother both struggle with cancer.

A FRESH BEGINNING

By Father Benedict Auer O.S.B.

"Abba Poemen said about Abba Pior that every single day he made a fresh beginning."

Benedictine monks

Take a vow entitled "Conversion of Life."

In simple words that means

Every day is a new beginning.

When the feet hit the floor,

a monk begins not only a new day,

but a new chance at starting over

His monastic life, the slate is blank,

and he can write or live a completely

different story than he has been living.

A monk by nature is a story teller,

not necessarily with words, but by who he is.

Monks attempt to balance their lives,

Ora et Labora, prayer and work.

St. Benedict knew that this might be hard 1400 years ago,

and monks keep struggling with that concept

as the world and monasticism

become more complex.

Years ago, most monks came from farms

and entered often what they had done

their entire lives up to that point:

milking the cows gathering the eggs,

planting the corn, pulling the carrots.

Times have changed, now a Ph.D. is required

to teach in the University

and cows long ago went the way of the monastic chickens.

This is not what St. Benedict ever envisioned,

but he always stressed adaptability.