



OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

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I WAS THINKING... by Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

The other morning as I was getting Fr. Urban, one of our elder monks, up for morning prayers, he commented on the fact that it was a new day. His memory having been affected by many small strokes over the years makes almost every experience new to him. That isn't necessarily a bad thing, each day is a refreshing new start. For us monks who remember yesterday, it is more of a challenge as we guide him through his day. The routine is same for us but for Fr. Urban it is new and although he's always ready to go and do things he can become impatient. Fortune for us, he has kept his great sense of humor and finds laughable moments throughout his day.

Before long, we will be heading into Advent. The days are growing shorter and the nights longer and time seems to be passing, at least for me, more quickly. It is a change in the liturgical calendar, an opportunity for personal change. The first advent was filled with people who were expecting the savior, a time of high hopes and excitement. When He arrived, few recognized the moment, and many are still waiting. Some people just could not believe or accept what they heard and saw. The believers, on the other hand were filled with JOY, bursting at the seams. Modern believers have a great advantage over the first believers, we had heard the good news all our lives. But I wonder if we experience the joy or recognize the wonders of God in our lives.

The time is now, the moment is now, and the wonder is today. Fr. Urban recognizes it and so must we. Today is a new day, a fresh start to work on inner transformation through acceptance and sacrifice. When I say sacrifice I don't mean extraordinary measures but instead by doing the ordinary things with discipline and prayers. Sometimes this means putting our personal wants on hold for a higher good.

Many of us are older in years and what have we contributed? Have we hoarded our talents or spent them. Many scriptural passages speak to us about action and using the gifts God has bestowed upon us. Even in modern terms there the saying "Use it or lose it". The challenge of Advent is to find and use it. Will I be a believer who uses my talents to see the goodness of God in the world around me, to give praise to God who has given me the very best gift of all: His son? It is the season to look for change, to dust off our talents and take up the challenge of a new day, a new season, a time to grow spiritually by investing in the hope and joy of the season.

ABBOT'S REFLECTION by Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.

Lectio Divina Part 1

I think it was St. Jerome who said "to be ignorant of scripture is not to know Christ." St. Pius X said, "The more we read the gospel, the stronger our faith becomes." Blessed Abbot Columba Marmion, OSB wrote: "The principal source of prayer is to be found in holy Scripture read with devotion and reverence and laid up in the heart."

If one is going to obtain even more from scripture, there must be Lectio Divina, or, as we understand this term today, prayerful reading, inspired reading, and meditation on the scriptural text and other writings that embody the faith of the Church. St. Isidore, bishop in the 600's wrote: "Prayer purifies us, reading instructs us. Both are good when both are possible. Otherwise, prayer is better than reading." (In St. Isidore's time, the majority of people could not read). At Christmas 2005, Pope Benedict XVI encouraged the Church to read and pray with Holy Scripture. He wrote: "The Church lives on the Word of God and the Word of God echoes through the Church, in her teaching and throughout her life ... I would like in particular to recommend the ancient tradition of Lectio Divina: the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to Him with trusting openness of heart. Lectio Divina should therefore be increasingly encouraged, also through the use of new methods, carefully thought through and in step with the times. It should never be forgotten that the Word of God is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path." (Voices Online Edition- VOICES- Vol. XX No.3).

With these quotations, we can readily see that lectio naturally flows into prayer. We don't often hear the term "Lectio Divina" today, but it is a most Christian practice and an ancient practice. It is interesting to note that it originally referred to the reading of scripture during the liturgy. As literacy and the printed word became more available, lectio was not done in common but privately with one's own book. We see this in the Rule of Benedict, because he orders that each monk is to be given a book to read during Lent. Today, lectio is very much a Benedictine practice but monks are not the only ones who claim lectio. Several religious orders use lectio and many lay people practice Lectio Divina regularly. Lectio is a wonderful method of prayer that is a great complement to the liturgy.

We all have bad days, days we would rather forget. Maybe all the kids have the flu, you just had a car accident and dented up the new car, or you are just tired and a bit overwhelmed by life. When we feel like this, it is hard to feel very religious or God oriented. Yet there is something God does for us, and that is found in Holy Scripture. Scripture can lift us up and change our perspective. It helps us transform the lemons of our life into lemonade. God's word is key to developing our faith. Scripture is kind of a love letter from God. It is for all of us. Don't let your Bible collect a lot of dust and simply remain a decoration for the coffee table. What can we do? We can do lectio or sacred reading. I will explain a little further in the next newsletter article.

Which wolf do
you feed?

One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, "The battle is between two wolves inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is The Great Spirit. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith."

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf wins?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."



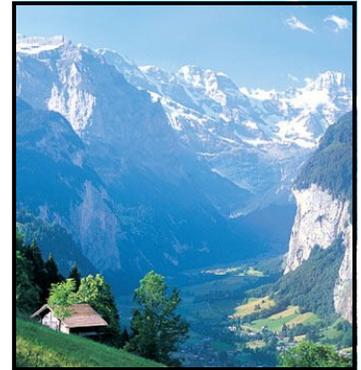
Wolf Haven, Tenino WA

In the Beginning... by Fr. Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

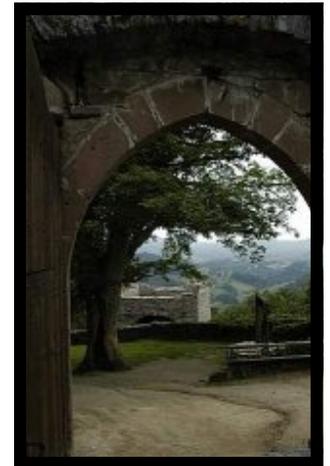
The annual retreat for the monks of Saint Martin's Abbey began at 8 AM on Monday, June 1, 1953, and ended on Friday morning, June 5. The retreat director was Abbot Aidan Williams OSB, of the English Congregation of Benedictines. On the evening of June 5, the order of tonsure was conferred on **Fraters Urban Feucht, Christopher Abair (1924-1988)** and **Ambrose Turner**, followed by the minor orders of porter and lector on June 7 and the minor orders of exorcist and acolyte on June 12, at a Mass closing the retreat of the Benedictine Sisters. Jubilees that summer included the silver jubilees of priesthood for **Rev. Denis Purcell (1902-1967)** and **Rev. Pascal Merola (1902-1977)** and the golden jubilee of profession of **Rev. Sebastian Ruth (1875-1958)**.

Summer assignments found **Rev. Marian Esterman (1874-1957)** at Pomeroy, WA; **Rev. Martin Toner (1895--1953)** at Riverton; and **Rev. Philip Bagan (1905-1992)** at Holy Cross, Tacoma; with many others assigned to shorter-term replacements. **Rev. Anselm Lenzlinger (1899-1960)** spent several weeks in Switzerland visiting his brother. **Rev. Eugene Kellenbenz (1917-1982)** spent several weeks in New York City to acquire music for the college's choral program. He traveled east with **Rev. Jerome Toner (1899-1977)**, who was spending the summer at Saints Simon and Jude in Brooklyn. On May 7, **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** addressed the seminarians at Saint Edward's Seminary, Kenmore. On May 31, **Rev. Damian Glenn (1907-1986)** gave the commencement address at Bellarmine High School in Tacoma.

Recent acquisitions to equipment at Saint Martin's were intended to expedite the work in several areas. (*Despite the statue pictured in the previous issue of our Oblate Newsletter, the jury is still out as to whether Saint Expedite ever existed!*) A folding machine was acquired on May 25 to assist in the work of the print shop. It had a capacity of 4,000-5,000 pieces per hour, being hand fed. On May 27, the demonstration of a large power lawnmower convinced the administration that it was a satisfactory piece of equipment to be added for the purpose of maintaining the abbey grounds. Both items, it was felt, would make it possible (given the shortage of manpower) to take care of necessary chores at a time (1953) when there were nearly thrice as many monks, many of them young, as there are now (2010).



Alps



Father Thaddaeus Arledge O.S.B. Shares

For many years Hildegard and Alfred Birsching, Oblates in Germany, worked, saved their money, and then bought a new RV and had it shipped from Europe to New York. Their dream was a motor trip across the United States to visit American Benedictine Abbeys and Oblates. This summer they arrived at St. Martin's Abbey and visited with Abbot Neal. Then they headed to Canada visiting Canadian Benedictine monasteries and arriving on the Eastern seaboard, where they shipped their RV to Europe. They are now visiting Benedictine Abbeys throughout Europe. If you would like to communicate with them about their wondrous journey their current address is:

Alfred and Hildegard Birsching -Klauskand 13, 4721 Haltern am See, Germany.



Editors ancestral town in Germany

From the Hill... by Boniface V. Lazzari, O.S.B.



Many years ago, the late Father Tom (Patrick) Dahlquist, then a member of our monastic community, used to refer to some of the work that we monks did as “in house services” to distinguish it from work assignments we might have outside the cloister. Most monks, then and now, have one or the other “in house services” that they perform for their confreres. These things make for the smooth running of our life together in community. **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON** cares for our fleet of vehicles. When we need to go off campus, our vehicles are always in good condition and have gas in the tank. **FATHER PAUL WECKERT**, Vocation Director, and Guest Master, among other assignments, makes certain that the small commissary in the monastery is well-stocked with basic supplies. **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE** spent part of a recent Saturday morning treating the hand-carved Abbey church doors. The doors, by Minnesota artist Joe O’Connell, were a gift of the family of the late **ABBOT DUNSTAN CURTIS**. This writer inherited two “in house services” from Father Tom, the weekly arrangement of flowers in the Abbey Church, which he did faithfully for years, and the annual production of an Abbey Christmas card, a service which we performed together for many years. For years, Junior Master **FATHER EDWARD RECECONI** managed the Abbey snack bar and a crew of volunteer workers.



FATHER EDWARD and the junior monks, **BROTHER VINCENT FRANCIS**, **BROTHER NICOLAUS**, and **BROTHER MARK**, took a break from studies and spent the mid-term recess at Lambert Lodge. There, they were able to share their cooking skills: **BROTHER NICOLAUS**, his delicious meatloaf; **FATHER EDWARD**, grilled chicken; and **BROTHER VINCENT**, chocolate truffles (the later “practice” for the University’s ‘Taster of Culture’). Congratulations are in order to **FATHER EDWARD**, who has been elected to the Saint Martin’s University Board of Trustees. He replaces **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** on the Board.



In mid-October, **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** re-blessed the recently renovated Trautman Union Building (the T.U.B.). It is named in honor of our late confrere **FATHER BERTRAND TRAUTMAN**, a political scientist, and advisor to student government on campus. It was with his collaboration that students of another era built the T.U.B. with their own student government funds...**ABBOT NEAL** traveled much this fall: to a board meeting of A.I.M., on whose board he serves; to visit the Benedictine nuns on Shaw Island in his role as their extraordinary confessor; and to San Antonio, Texas for a training workshop for religious superiors. He was accompanied on his Shaw Island trip

by **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS...FATHER PAUL** traveled to Mt. Angel Abbey, for a workshop on Immigration, and while there enjoyed a visit with **BROTHER PETER TYNAN...FATHER TIMOTHY LAMM** is volunteering in the university's learning and Writing center, putting many years of teaching experience to work for the benefit of our students...on the feast of our patrons, the Guardian Angels, the monks gathered in the new Japanese gardens of the Abbey Church and partook of **ABBOT NEAL's** formal blessing of the gardens.



Prayer Requests

Let us pray for the following Oblates:

Oblate Jeanne Wittman - Cancer

Oblate Candidate James Mahood -Cancer

Oblate Bill Lagreid - health issues

Oblate Michael Roberts - Recovering from stroke and health issues

And all our unnamed Oblate brothers and sisters who maybe ill.

For those who have recently passed away:

Oblate. Joseph Ordos - Oct. 5



On the book shelf...

Oblate Paul Spencer recommends:

Monastic Wisdom Series by Cistercian Press one in particular that he found good is The Way of Simplicity.

Monks Alphabet by Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., a monk of Mt. Angel Abbey.

What Happens at Mass by Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B.

Thank you Paul for sharing your latest read. If you have read a good Spiritual/Theological book and would like to share please send the title, author and brief summary to the editor or Br. Edmund.



Respect

by Oblate Bill Lagreid



Respect, by definition, has several meanings but for this piece it means,

- a. *Avoid interfering with, harming, degrading, insulting, injuring, or interrupting.*
- b. *Treating with consideration.*

During the first weeks of September, the press covered the story of a Christian pastor who was threatening to burn copies of the Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam. In addition, there were protests planned in New York over the planned location of a mosque, a Muslim house of worship. Along with these stories and others in the local and national press there were several other stories from around the world about treating all people of faith and places of worship with respect.

At the same time, our granddaughter was on a mission of compassion from her church to sick and needy people in Africa. Their purpose was to aid the young and old people who were sick regardless of their religion, in the belief that it was what Jesus did, and what they were called to do as his followers. They brought them love and respect from churches in the United States.

Young members of our parish are sent to help migrant workers families in the fields during the harvest season in the Northwest and other groups go to Mexico to help build housing for the homeless. Is this unusual? No, it is the usual response of Christians of all faiths to treat people with respect and compassion.

It is that unifying call to people of faith that binds all people to treat each other with compassion and respect. Make no mistake, there are now, as always have been, those few people of every faith who find it difficult if not impossible to answer that call. Some individuals and groups have chosen, on their own, to strike out and terrorize even their own people. They do not speak for or represent people of any faith community. We as Benediction Oblates are called to follow The Rule, Chapter 4, *The Instruments of Good Works* and scripture Matt 7:12 and Luke 6: 27-36. We are called to reach out and respect all people regardless of their faith. It is our long time tradition to respect all people because God created us all.

In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the prophets.

E-Mail notices



E-mail notifications are up and running. If you have not received any in the last few months then we don't have a working e-mail address for you. If you would like to receive notices for prayer requests, date changes etc. then please e-mail the Brother Edmund at br_edmund@stmartin.edu or the editor, Patricia McClure, at Ravenwings@comcast.net

A letter from Oblate J.J. Nugent

I wrote this e-mail several months ago to a fellow Oblate and my Pastor at Saint Michael's in Olympia. It struck me that the task of an Oblate is to try to apply the principles of Saint Benedict and Jesus outside the protective holy ground of the monastery. Truly, this task needs to be done under the protection of God. I'm pleased to report that God is faithful and intimately involved in all our lives and I can now praise God, rich or poor. I thought I might share the letter with all our Oblates.

I just wanted to share just a little more about what I meant this morning at the 7:30 mass, when I said, "I have been blessed." I haven't had a permanent job since June 2006. I have multiple degrees, teaching endorsements, and a school counseling endorsement. I'm a highly trained and skilled educator but I haven't been able to get a job. It turns out that my being unemployed or at least under-employed has been one of the best things that have ever happened to my wife and me. No matter how many times I applied, I was unable to land a job. In desperation, I began to plead and beg God for a job. The answer I received was that I needed an attitude change. Therefore, I started on a four-year quest to figure out what God wanted for us. Slowly, painfully, God began to teach me to stop relying on my prideful intelligence and start trusting Him to provide for us. Over time we learned that we were wasteful and even unappreciative of all the wonderful gifts he gave us.

Substitute teaching usually nets about \$96 a day, you don't work every day, and the work is often very difficult. With an unreliable paycheck, drastic cuts were in order. At first, we didn't have a clue about what to do. Eventually, we began to think outside the 'selfish' box in which we were living. For example, we turned off the cable saving \$1200 a year, began to conserve electricity and cut our car insurance rates. We made a game out of trying to make cheap healthy meals. We learned to stay home and enjoy each other's company. Our two kids barely notice a change in their diet. The more we took responsibility for not wasting God gifts, the more grateful to God we became. The more grateful we became the more thoughtful we became about the needs of others.

Our tithing varied wildly mostly because I could never predict my income. I did begin to notice a pattern. The more we gave to others the more we were blessed with material goods and even money. The more we tithed the more we began to realize that everything we had was a gift from God. We made a commitment to give 10% back to God, every job big or small ten percent off the top.

Then amazing things happened. I started getting very unusual sub jobs for a few weeks to several months at a time. God is more generous with us than we had been with him. We knew come September that my first paycheck would not happen until the end of October. However, we weren't worried because it was all in God's hands. As it so often happens unexpected things happen, I have received more than \$7,000 in raises and I got my first paycheck in September instead of October.

Yes, being unemployed is the best thing that ever happened to us. I'm so looking forward to the time when I will have a permanent job, which I have been praying for 2006. In the mean time, I will rejoice that I'm able to work with emotionally and behaviorally challenged children at my new job and continue to share the wealth of gifts that God continues to bestow on my family and me.



Thanks from A.I.M.

Sister Susan Doubet, OSB. executive director of the Alliance for International Monasticism wrote Brother Edmund and Oblates saying your gift of \$375.00 in AIM USA's Monastery to Monastery program enables the US Secretariat to send money for grants to Benedictine and Cistercian monasteries and regional meetings throughout our monastic world. They are awarded each June and November from the AIM International office in France.

Argentina received musical instruments for liturgy, Brazil used grants for publication of books in Portuguese, CIMBRA superiors meeting, temporary processed meeting, Peru paid retreat director's travel fees, Latin America financed REMILA Cistercian meeting. India used the money for solar water heater, protective wall around the monastery, a Biblical formation program. Indonesia paid for a retreat director's travel fees, Philippines replaced a kitchen and ovens. Vietnam sent two monks to study at Sant' Anselmo. Madagascar purchased a laptop, formations, and liturgical books. Nigeria purchased a water pump and reservoir. South Africa used the money for a study course for the director of novices. Togo financed education for infirmarian and Tanzania purchased tools.

Annually AIM USA not only funds these "formal grants", but also sends aid in the form of Mass stipends, books and spirituality magazine subscriptions, as well as its own grants through our Lenten Appeal and African Women's Commission.

All of this is possible because of your donations, commitment, and love for our Benedictine/Cistercian family around the world.

So many thanks to those of you who contributed financially to make this happen.

Oblate polo shirts with insignia St. Benedict.



Logo will look something like this. The colors are yet to be decided.

At the last meeting Brother Edmund told us about polo shirts for Oblates. Since then many of you have placed an order with him. But for those who weren't there at the meeting you can also order a black polo shirt with an embroidered logo of Saint Benedict. The cost is approximately \$25.00. Please indicate the size and whether it is for a man or woman. Please call or e-mail Brother Edmund in the next few weeks so that he can place the order and have them ready for distribution at the December meeting.

E-mail: br_edmund@stmartin.edu
Phone: 360-438-4457

Inseparably by the Wrists... by Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

“I have no crazier and greater wish than we should be bound together inseparably by the wrists.”

Franz Kafka

He wrote novels that had no endings,
short stories that metamorphosed into Giant bugs.
He was deemed crazy by most,
a genius by some,
and lived a life similar to Vincent Van Gogh,
as misunderstood as the painter was himself.
Kafka knew he was strange,
but what can you do,
*when a castle takes over your mind
and won't allow you to enter in.*

How do you tell the world you are so lonely that it physically hurts,
no one would believe you and even if they did wouldn't understand.
The artist swims from the wreckage of his life,
walks ashore and no one really knows he was missing
or much less that he almost drowned.
It was hard being Kafka, almost as difficult as being yourself.
We too have castles we can't find ways to reach the doors.
Intimacy may avoid lunacy;
lunacy may be a form of intimacy.
But what if the two are one,
maybe Kafka was right –

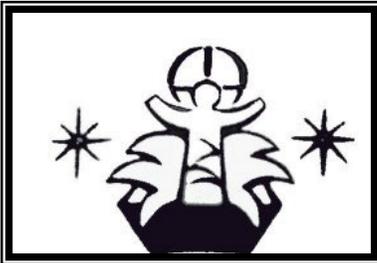
“bound together inseparately by the wrists.”

It is a scary thought,
even if freely entered into,
such an intimacy that would allow no alteration,
imprisonment forever
even with the one you love,
narcissism without a mirror,
love with no way out.
Kafka raises a thought that is too frightening to answer.
What if there is only infatuation
and really no love that lasts,
accordingly to psychologists an infatuation last eighteen months.
Can we love forever if not must we be bound by the wrists,
or only redefine love from a feeling to an act of the will.
If we do, can we love someone
while loving someone else,
and someone else, ad infinitum?
Or is love once lost never found again?
No matter how lonely,
bound at the wrists is too drastic an act,
that even Kafka knew.
Our need for love becomes a **fiction**,
a short story told in retrospect.



Oblate Sunday December 5th 2010

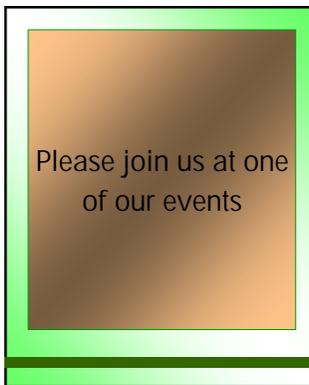
Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11AM. Lunch in the cafeteria and then at 1:30 Brother Vincent will speak to us about Advent and Anticipation in the Rule and Psalms.



Following the lecture by Brother Vincent, we will have a half hour discussion on:

Chapter 53 of the Rule "On the Reception of Guests"

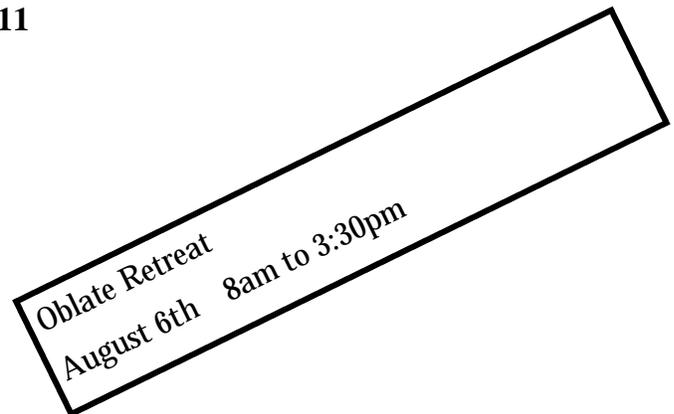
Be prepared to share how you apply the Spirit of this Chapter in your life.



Mark your Calendars

Oblate Sundays for 2011

- March 6th
- May 15th
- July 10th
- September 11th
- December 4th



Abbey Church Events

- 20th November 8pm Tenor Francisco Casanova
- 5th February 8pm Violinist Erin Keefe and Pianist Anna Polonsky
- 2nd April 8pm REBEL Ensemble for Baroque Music.



Events are not ticketed, seating is generally unreserved, doors open one hour prior to starting time and a freewill offering is suggested to support these events.

GOOD WORKS

ROSARY WORK

Saturdays 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main.

- January 15th
- February 12th
- March 5th
- April 9th
- May 14th
- June 11th
- July 9th
- August 20th
- September 10th
- October 8th
- November 12th
- December 3rd



Lodge work days 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

March 19th

October 22nd

Please notify Br. Edmund if you plan to make this event.

Join us in Work

Gardening:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session and weather permitting!

Don't forget to contact Br. Edmund if you think you would like to participate.

ARRIVE early and join the community in noon day prayer!

