

# OBLATES OF ST. BENEDICT

St. Martin's Abbey

Volume 2 Issue 4

February 2011

*Awake my soul! Awake, harp and lyre!  
Psalm 57:8*

## I WAS THINKING...

by Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

Ora et Labora or in English, Prayer and Work is one of the mottos Benedictines live by. Not to steal Loretta Matulich's thunder, but maybe preface it, because she will be speaking to us at our March Oblate meeting on Prayer and Work. I have some thoughts on the subject.

Benedictines strive for a balance of prayer and work. As so many of you who have been working on this element in your lives know the achievement of this balance does not come quickly. The balance is not just a matter of dividing ones time between prayer and work. Actually, it is getting the quality of prayer and work in balance. For each person the balance is different. Everyone must find that balance in his or her heart of hearts.

I often make comparisons or analogies to illustrate my findings. I have put many years into the medical arena so from that I have concluded there is a similarity between maintaining the body and spirit or soul. The body needs proper nutrition and exercise and the same goes for the spirit in form of prayer, reading, lectio-divina, the sacraments of reconciliation and communion. We all know what happens to the body when things are discordant. The body becomes ripe for sickness and at worse even death. The same can happen to the soul. I believe we don't often think of the soul in the same way as the body but we should. Are we exercising our spiritual being? Do we listen and heed the call of our God? How much quality time do I give to this exercise of active listening and conversing?

We develop all kinds of habits in work, eating, and exercising, some good and some not so healthy, but what about the development of vigorous Christian values and prayer? Read and pray the scriptures for great inspiration. Your soul needs it, or it too could fall into a coma like state.

So how do I proceed to balance my prayer and work? You already know. Take a lesson from your body. What does it take to shore up those flabby or wasted muscles? Adjust the nutrition and exercise and slowly the body will take shape. This type of life is not an inoculation but rather a discipline, a life conversion. To maintain good healthy body and flexible limbs, we must move daily. As we shape up our bodies on a daily basis so too must we shape up our souls.

As a monk the opportunity to work and pray in balance are readily available, with Mass and a liturgy of the hours. That is a good beginning but monks too have to balance, work demands can grow large taking away precious time for private prayer. Getting work and prayer to go hand-in-hand requires practice and active resistance to the distractions that demand our attention. We need to find blocks of time however small for pure solitude in the presence of our Father. Ten minutes the experts say several times a day exercising the body will tone it. So I think, a few pauses, throughout the day, remembering God, thanking God, a second or two before you rush out of the house, or leave your car to begin your work day, to breath in the glory of God in your life is all it takes to get started on the path to exercising your soul.

As Oblates you have extra opportunities, like a special gym membership, the newsletter, an open invitation from the community to join us at prayers, and weekly good works at the abbey and of course, our Oblate Sundays are just sitting here waiting for you to pause and turn towards the growth. Just as athletes say you have to go to the gym to work out, so too you have to be involved in the Oblate program to get the benefits

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

Lectio is not just the holy reading of scripture or the Fathers and Mothers of the Church or a contemporary work. It is not a matter of merely studying the page to see what the author is trying to communicate. When we read, the reading must be internalized, digested if you will. It must be a slow contemplative praying of the scriptures. Lectio assumes that God has given the words of Scripture a special grace. The words must penetrate the heart to become a means of union with God.

How does one do this? There are basically four steps: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation—each flows naturally into the other.

One of the suggestions is that you find a set time and place daily for lectio. This place should be quiet and a place where you are not going to be easily interrupted. This enables us to create a certain spiritual rhythm. We then begin by asking the Holy Spirit to reveal whatever needs to be revealed to us. We lead busy lives these days. But I believe even busy persons can pick up a few minutes in the workday whenever and wherever that is possible. If we are cultivating this form of prayer, the fruit will follow. Better to have this as part of your daily prayer, than not at all. I think you will find that adding lectio to your day, whenever that is possible, makes your appointments and duties richer and more beneficial to both you and the persons you work with or associate with that day. Some lectio experiences will be very positive. On other days, this is not so much the case, but that is always the way of prayer.

In the Old Testament, Elijah is worth

imitating. (1 Kings 19: 1-2). Elijah had to listen to the voice of God in a tiny whispering sound, which was God's word for him and for us as well. In order to hear a soft-spoken person, we have to listen carefully. We have to love a certain amount of silence. If we are constantly surrounded by noise, we will not hear gentle sounds. Lectio requires that one quiet down for a while. It is worth it to hear God's word to us.

So, the reading or listening is the first step in lectio divina - very different from the way we read the newspaper or a novel. It is close reading, paying attention to words and sentences, not allowing us to pass over anything. Sometimes it helps to read out loud. This slows us down and tends to avoid distract-

### ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION?

tions. It means reading slowly and attentively, and gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God's word for us this day. Some spiritual writers suggest that the use of candles, an icon, offering reverence to the Bible will help us move into a more prayerful space. Personally, I have never bothered much with these suggestions, but if it helps one to pray, why not?

Some people begin with a reading from the Old Testament like Genesis, or they will choose a specific book like Isaiah or Hebrews, the Psalms, the Office of Readings or they use the Lectionary with the readings of the day. Once we have found a word or passage of scrip-



ture that speaks to us, we can take it in and work with it. We can take that word, absorb it, and chew on it for a while. In one ancient source on lectio, I found the homely example of a cow chewing its cud as a symbol of contemplation. Many years ago, I had a Benedictine Sister teach me the following aids to lectio: Is there a command for me to obey? (Give your mind the freedom to go where it will). Do I see an example to follow? Can I admit that I am a sinner? Maybe it leads me to conclude that there is a sin I need to confess. Is there a new thought about God? Have I run away from God? Why can't I let go of that which impedes my spiritual growth? In other words, we allow God's word to become His word for us, a word that touches us, and affects us at our deepest levels.

Meditation gives way to prayer. The words we meditate on provide for a starting point for our prayer. We offer God praise and thanks for unlimited mercy. The third step, then, in lectio is prayer — a loving conversation with God, a conversation from the heart. We offer ourselves to God. We allow the Word we have taken in to change us, to heal us, or to challenge us at our deepest levels. In other words, we allow ourselves to be touched and changed by God.

## IN THE BEGINNING...by Fr. Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

The clerics studying at Mount Angel returned home on May 27, 1953. Commencement exercises were held at Saint Martin's on May 29 for both high school and college. The college valedictory address was given by Mrs. Grace Dixon, a special student enrolled at Saint Martin's whose blindness manifested her remarkable qualities of character. Archbishop Thomas A. Connolly of Seattle gave the commencement address. On May 29, **Father Vincent Carey (1895-1967)** began a series of retreats at Colorado Springs that extended to July 12.

The contract had been let for black-topping the roads around the Hill at Saint Martin's. It was hoped the work would be done before commencement, but the contractor had other obligations which were set back because of bad weather. Black-topping did begin on June 16 and was completed in a few short weeks. Meanwhile, **Father Prior James Piotrkowski (1897-1974)** was put in charge of erecting the three ton marble relief carving of Saint Martin of Tours. The lower half was placed in position on June 23. The upper half was hoisted into position the next day and was allowed to settle into position by using blocks of ice.



**Father Anselm Lenzlinger (1899-1960)** left on June 22 for a family visit in Switzerland, to return to Visitation parish, Tacoma on August 22. **Father Leonard Feeny (1908-1980)** would replace him those two months. June 8-12 saw thirty-three Sisters of Saint Placid Priory and nine Saint Martin's Sisters (from Saint Gertrude's in Cottonwood, Idaho) making retreat, with Abbot Aidan Williams of Shrewsbury, England presiding. **Father Denis Purcell (1902-1967)** celebrated his silver jubilee of ordination at Sacred Heart, Lacey on June 17, to be followed by a month's visit to relatives in Denver.

The General Chapter of our American-Cassinense Congregation was held at Saint Andrew's Abbey, Cleveland, June 22-25, 1953. Attending were **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** and **Father Eugene Kellenbenz (1917-1982)** as delegate. On his return, Father Eugene stopped off at Yakima to replace **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)** who had been assigned to Saint Paul's Cathedral for several weeks. Preparations for the Alumni Picnic on July 12 prevented Father Meinrad from taking on the assignment until after that event. Ill health found **Father Matthew Britt (1872-1955)** confined to Saint Peter's Hospital, but by mid-June, he was home again and offering Mass daily.

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



Stability of place is part of the Benedictine way of life. When one becomes a Benedictine one joins a group of like-minded persons who are seeking god in a specific geographic location. If one perseveres, one is apart of that group in that place for life. On Rare occasions, a monk may transfer his stability from one Benedictine community. This was the case of the lat **ABBOT LAMBERT BURTON** of Saint Martin's, who hailed from a community in Kansas. Of our present community, **FATHE BEDE CLASSICK**, **BROTHER BEDE NICOL** and **FATHER BENEDICT AUER** were all "transplanted" to Lacey from other Benedictine communities.

Sometimes, a monk may be sent by the Abbot to another place for reasons of work or study. **FATHER JUSTIN MCCREEDY** carries on a parish and hospital ministry in western Washington. **BROTHER PETER TYNAN** is completing theological studies in Oregon, in preparation for his priestly ordination in the summer of 2011. **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** is in California pursuing a doctorate, which will better prepare him for his college teaching of religious studies. At one time, our vocation director, guest master was ministering in a Vancouver Washington parish and **FATHER THADDAEUS ARLEDGE** ministered to the Benedictine nuns on Shaw Island.

*"To catch the reader's attention, place an interesting sentence or quote from the story here."*

The furthest away at present is **FATHER EDWARD RECECONI**, who has been sent to Rome, the Eternal city, to participate in a program for monastic formators from many parts of the world. The second part of the three-month program will take pace in Assisi. **FATHER EDWARD** is attending in his role of Junior Master for the Abbey. Our Junior Monks are **BROTHER VINCENT FRANCIS**, **NICOLAUS WILSON** and **MARK BONNVILLE**. **FATHER EDWARD** will return to Saint Martin's in June.

In February, **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** attended the annual Abbots' Workshop in Florida... This winter, **FATHER THADDAEUS** provided some priestly assistance in the San Jaun Islands for several weeks...**FATHER URBAN FEUCHT**, surely one of our most gregarious monks, early in the New Year moved to Clare Bridge, a memory assisting facility on Olympia's westside, where he now resides...**FATHER PAUL WECKERT**, **FATHER CLEMENT PANGRATZ**, Abbey Subprior, and I, represented the Abbey at the annual Knights of Columbus Clergy Dinner. The Knights have a tradition of being very supportive of priests and religious. The local chapter is named in honor of our late confrere **FATHER NICHOLAS RAUSCH**, a cousin of **ABBOT CONRAD RAUSCH**...Oblate Director **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS** works regularly in the Abbey gardens, sometimes assisted by monks or oblates, at other times assisted by vocation prospects who are visiting the Abbey at the invitation of vocation director **FATHER PAUL**.



**BROTHERS AELRED WOODARD, VINCENT, NICOLAUS** and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** provided the music, including selection from Faure's "Requiem", at the memorial Mass in the Abbey church for my late mother, *Hildegard M Lazzari*. Father John Coleman, of the San Francisco Archdiocese, was principal celebrant at the Mass, whose con-celebrants included **ABBOT NEAL**. This beautiful final earthly parting launches me into a new epoch of my life on the tide of love. May she and all the others recently deceased rest forever in God's love and peace.

## ON THE BOOK SHELF

*The Benedictine Handbook* by Liturgical Press. And *The Rule of St. Benedict* by Liturgical Press.



Although Br. Edmund has not seen this edition, he believes that the handbook will help people follow the Rule of St. Benedict, as it explains the essential elements of Benedictine Spirituality.

This Rule of St. Benedict is also a great addition to your library with its larger print and well organized presentation.

*Running with Expanding Heart - Meeting God in Everyday Life* by Mary Reuter, O.S.B.

*Around the Monastic table Growing in Mutual Service and Love* by Aquinata Bockmann, O.S.B., translated by Matilda Handl, O.S.B. and Marianne Burkhard.

## A View of the Summit By Oblate Bill Lagreid

Each day we turn to a new page in the story of our lives that has a beginning, middle and an end. The day often begins with the morning paper, the TV broadcast, or the Internet, as our first source of local and world news events. We have choices to make, read, scan, skim, pass, or click it off. I hope that we choose our sources of information from trusted sources. The information we receive may cause us to worry over things which we have no control. As we go about our day we may ask ourselves if what we are doing today is getting us closer to where we want to be tomorrow or is it taking us off in a different direction. We each have control over how we respond to the people and situations we face.



Father Martin and Patricia on Mount Rainer

H.V. Merlchert once said, "Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance toward the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point. Climb slowly, steadily, enjoying each new vantage point; the view of the summit will serve as a fitting climax for the journey."

As Oblates our morning, midday, and evening prayers along with our reading of the psalms and scripture gives us new vantage points from which to view the world. That is if we stop and take advantage of the moment. God willing, we will have a new vision tomorrow as we begin a new page in our personal and spiritual journey with new wisdom and understanding.



### PRAYER REQUESTS

Oblate Michael Wilson is appreciative and still in need of your prayers as he struggles with his daily challenges.

Please remember our elderly and ill Oblates that they can patiently and courageously bare their burdens and be given the peace that comes from Christ.

## Taking It To God By Oblate J.J. Nugent

Perhaps because we are made in God's image we get so full of ourselves and forget just where we stand in the universe. Since we have a free will, we think that just because we have an idea, it is a good one. Why is it that we are so hesitant to check with God on issues which are big or small? Is it because most of the time we are just afraid of the answers we might get. I have noticed that I pray easily about things when I'm pretty sure I already know the answer. It's when I don't want a particular answer that I'm hesitant to pray. Of course, this hesitance to submit to God's will is sin. It is probably a serious sin. The trick to being less sinful is to build a habit of praying always. The Benedictine discipline of intermittent prayer throughout the day is an enormous help to those who really seek God's gentle but firm guidance in all things.

This is what attracted me to the monastery so long ago. Although it might have been a mistake for me not to commit my life to the Abbey, I made the decision based on looking into myself not by asking God what he wanted. Of course, I had only a vague idea about what prayer was and how dynamic a relationship with God can be, at the time. On the bright side, God is patient with all of us and he continued to call me to prayer and healing over the decades. He called me to live out a vocation of service to others as a layperson. His very powerful presence has been with me and protected me all these years.

*Seriously, we need to talk.*

*God*

One day while doing Morning Prayer (in my hot tub), I asked God if I could please have a spouse. I was 39 years old and had concluded that I had poor judgment in the matter and really needed to give the issue to God. Oh, how hesitant I was to take this issue to God. Anyway, to my surprise God clearly said, "Yes. You will be married. Today you will learn the name of your future spouse." I was so happy and excited that I went to work and told my Christian friends what God told me in Morning Prayer. I was so sure that God had told me this that I wasn't even afraid that I could look like a fool if it didn't turn out. All day I kept wondering who was going to be my spouse. That evening a distant acquaintance stopped me and said there was someone who she thought would be fun for me to meet. At that moment, I learned the name of my future spouse (Theresa).

God is so brilliant. When we did meet, it was love at first sight. Theresa is the most wonderful wife I could ever ask for. Not only is she fun, thoughtful, and loving but she encourages me to grow closer to God. I do the same for her.

It is so important that we take all our issues to God. Like the old joke goes ... what is the difference between a human being and God? The answer is "God knows he is not a human being!"

## IF ONLY BY FATHER BENEDICT AUER, O.S.B.

**If only** I could believe the adage:

"You are never given more than you can handle."

I know Jesus meant well

when he told us his burden is light,

but Jesus wasn't bipolar.

He suffered a horrible death, once and not daily,

his chemical compound

100% God and 100% human through an Immaculately conceived Virgin,

gave him a head start,

although the end result was a short but productive life,

but his mood swings were never out of whack,

instead he handled everyone and everything

in stride, without prejudice, and "coolly."

I often say of those who die young

that they had it easy, over and done with,

few sins, even fewer habits that

are impossible to change, that takes

years to develop and they did not have the time.

There are saints who suffered bipolarism: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross,

St. Francis of Assisi to name but a few possible candidates who remain undiagnosed, but had the characteristics.

If only God will count all these years of suffering and pain as substitute for Purgatory,

I have got it made, I am out of Dante's creation as fast as I arrive, but there are no guarantees.

If only I had some insight, some flash of a vision, that said in an instant, "Don't worry you are working off that millennium that you would spend waiting to get through the pearly gates."

But no such message as arrived, rather the mailbox or even email box is empty.

If only someone could figure out how to solve the workings of the brain, but as of now

no one knows how it works, so the medication is all a game.

Anti-seizure medication to stop the mood swings, but it is all guess work.

"Is this working?" says the psychiatrist, "If not we can try this."

The this or that tells me he doesn't know. I am an experiment.

Each person who has bi-polar is such, a trial run, an attempt to balance a different set of chemicals.

DNA with a flaw I was born with, and I have no cure, just maintenance for a little while, and then start all over again.

**If only...if only...if only....** No answers just if only's.

I wouldn't be so productive I am told, my creative self might die, my ability to write would suffer,

I am a productive bipolar.

All that is fine, except sometimes it hurts too much, and I want it to go away.

No one knows what it is to live in the dark and not be blind that is how it feels to be bipolar,

up and down, and when your system changes you start all over again.

**If only....**

*"For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."*

*Matthew 11:30*



# GOOD WORKS

## Rosary work

Saturdays 1:00 pm to 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main.

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 RSVP for this event since Brother Edmund leaves for the lodge at 9:30 am. You are welcome to come early and work. If you do then plan on bringing some food to share for lunch.

## Gardening:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session and weather permitting! All are welcome to help make the grounds a work of wonder and share their green thumb expertise. We need wood cutters and stackers since one of our good deeds is to cut and stack wood for the Byzantine Nuns (it is their primary source of heat).

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

**E-mail:** [br\\_edmund@stmartin.edu](mailto:br_edmund@stmartin.edu)

**Phone:** 360-438-4457

## ABBAY CHURCH EVENTS

2<sup>nd</sup> 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.

## OBLATE SUNDAY MARCH 6TH 2011

Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11AM.

Lunch in the cafeteria and then at 1:30 Loretta Matulich will speak with us on Prayer and Work / Ora et Labora.

### OBLATE SUNDAYS FOR 2011

May 15th thoughts by Br. Nicolaus.

July 10th thoughts by Fr. Kilian.

September 11th thoughts by Oblate Emily Suda.

December 4th thoughts by Oblate Brian Suda.



*Oblate Retreat August 6th 2011*

Oblate Retreat. Plan now to attend. We will begin with Mass at the Abbey church at 8am and then proceed to Lambert Lodge about a 20 minute drive on Eld Inlet. We will have a potluck lunch. Our day will concluded at 3:30 pm

#### OPEN INVITATION

If you know someone who is interested in Benedictine Spirituality or becoming an Oblate please bring them with you to the next meeting.

**EMAILS:** If you change your email address or would like to receive our updates, prayer requests and the newsletter electronically please notify the Editor of the Newsletter Patricia McClure at [Ravenwings@comcast.net](mailto:Ravenwings@comcast.net). In order to cut costs and become more accessible we are considering moving toward **not** sending a hard copy. If you would like to receive one format over the other (as we know many do not have computer access), please indicate that to either the editor or Brother Edmund when you send in your renewal. Note from editor... The newsletter is in color on line!

**ATTENTION**

Always send Oblate questions, donations, statements, etc. to the **Oblate Director**. Please save Abbot Neal the unnecessary added work of passing it on to the Director of Oblates.

Oblate Polo Shirts will continue to be available. If we don't have your size we can order it just let us know. Polo Shirts are \$25 each if you pick them up. Add \$10 for shipping.

Please send your renewal of Oblation in as soon as possible. We will have a special blessing at our meeting in March. Mailing address

Oblate Director Brother Edmund Ebbers O.S.B.

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**RENEWAL of OBLATION 2011**

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 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Final Oblation: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to receive future newsletters electronically.