

# Oblates of Saint Benedict

Saint Martin's Abbey

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 7

September 2011

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

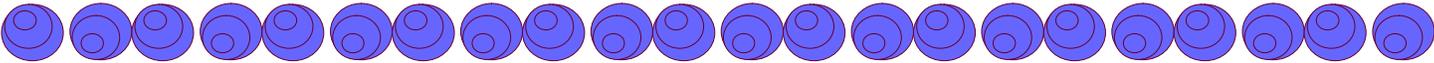
On the 25<sup>th</sup> of July, I returned from a enjoyable vacation in my home state of Idaho. I very much appreciated seeing all my siblings that are scattered across Idaho and eastern Oregon. While I was relaxing, socializing, working, and making some rosaries, I had in the back of my mind that upon my return I would need a piece for the newsletter. As I was forming my thoughts, I was struck by what St. Benedict says in His Holy Rule. Paraphrasing, he says, “a monk ought not to be granted the liberty to spend too much time away from the monastery because we read that, it is not good for the soul. It could make the wise fall away.” Furthermore, “a monk ought not come back and tell others what he has seen because it may give cause for scandal.”

Most of us, are aware of the woes of the world. As a monk, I am too but when I am away from the monastery, I find it hard to cope with the constant bombardment of sadness, sickness, and immorality in society. Here in the monastery, while aware of the above, we have the strength of prayers plus community. We have our private prayer and reading plus community prayer and community meals, recreation and works yet by design we are shielded, set apart from those things, which are distracting. As Oblates seeking God, it seems to me that those distractions are harder to ignore. I commend you for your struggles, your fight. The battle can be exhausting and this is why I and the monks of St. Martin's Abbey, invite you to come to the monastery for a respite. I pray for your strength to continue the good fight and I pray that when you come for oblate Sunday, prayers, and retreats that the time you spend with us at the abbey is a time for you to rest apart in quiet, peace and prayer. This is what I seek here in the monastery.

Where there is stress and conflict there is no peace of Christ. The world seems to know less and less of this peace of Christ. The peace we seek is not the same peace the world seeks. The ONLY way I know to have that peace of Christ is to be conversing in prayer, throughout the day. Putting our trust Him - in all our activities, conjoining our self will with God's will. The more focused we are on prayer the less distracted we become. The less opportunity for ourselves to be taken over by fear and anxieties. When the worldly cares crowd us, all we need do is to ask God to replace them with His Graces. Remember Christ says, “My grace is sufficient”.

We can't avoid all stress or troubles but we can see those times as blessing times that allow us to be strengthened, challenged, and purified like gold in the furnace. We are not alone for even Jesus had help from Simon of Cyrene, a sign that we too can accept help and are to be of assistance to others in their struggles. We must take up our cross and follow him because through that Cross, we will find salvation, hoping one day to hear, “Good and faithful servant and enter into my Kingdom.”





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

One of my favorite intercessory prayers in our Divine Office prays for those who are tired of doing good. No matter what vocation we have been called to, as Christians and followers as well of Benedict's Rule, we are called to do "good." Benedict gives us a number of chapters detailing daily life and the realities of serving others. He outlines in some detail everything from what to eat and drink to the care of the sick, to work, to finally crawling into bed at night without one's knife! All of these rules point to mutual service for the explicit purpose of unselfishness and making life easier for the entire community (family). When approached with the idea of serving God and one another, it can be challenging but also

**Looking for a chance to do some good? Check out the good works available for Oblates.**

very spiritual.

Times have changed a great deal since Benedict first penned the Rule. We no longer get up and start the fire, pump the water up from the well or light candles in order to read the newspaper. In many households today, both husband and wife work outside the home. Household chores and errands wait until the evening or the weekend. Care of sick children or the elderly become duties that must be attended to first. The challenge of seeing the hidden Christ's presence is certainly there. The young and the fragile become our greatest care. Benedict has the abbot making sure that the sick and helpless are cared for properly. Monk or Oblate has the obligation of caring for those in the house who suffer. We might have long periods of time when we tire of "doing good." When tired, we might also have those moments of love and compassion which urge us forward because it is simply the right thing to do, the loving thing. The Abbey's motto (and mine as well) is taken from RB 4:26: "Never ... turn away when someone needs your love." Charity, in all its many dimensions, must have a priority in our Benedictine life. When lived out fully, it certainly overrides the practical!



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

On July 31, 1953, **Father Pascal Merola (1902-1977)** returned to Saint Martin's after an absence of eight weeks in the east where he celebrated his silver jubilee of ordination at Saint Columba's Church, Caledonia, New York. There he had made his first communion, served Mass for years, and celebrated his first solemn high Mass ... The laymen's retreats at Saint Martin's during August were well attended. The four retreats totaled very nearly the 900 mark this year ... **Father Dunstan Curtis (1921-1981)** returned on August 26th from Stanford University, where he completed studies for the Master of Arts degree in education.

On September 9th, Saint Martin's High School opened, with the votive Mass of the Holy Spirit for 170 students, a record enrollment. **Father Marcel Berthon (1899-1975)**, principal, was the celebrant, assisted by **Fathers Damian Glenn (1907-1986)** and **Felix Wirth (1913-1984)**. **Father Vincent Carey (1895-1967)** delivered the homily. A solemn votive Mass of the Holy Spirit opened the college school year on September 16th, with **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-1982)**, dean of the college, as celebrant, assisted by **Father Henry Rozycki (1898-1975)** and **Frater Placidus Reischman (1926-2000)**. **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)** delivered the homily.

*Mrs. Grace Dixon*, Saint Martin's first woman college graduate and blind, appeared on the radio and television program "Welcome Traveler". As part of the stipend for her appearance, she requested that a new set of the Americana encyclopedia be given to the Saint Martin's library. **Father Eugene Kellenbenz (1917-1982)**, with the student schola, was scheduled to appear on King TV on October 28th at 6:00 PM, presenting the program "And Give Thee Peace". **Father Damian Glenn (1907-1986)** was scheduled to give the address.

On September 8th, **Frater Adrian Parcher** pronounced first vows as a cleric and began philosophical studies at Saint Martin's College the following week. On September 7th, *John McStay* and **Joseph Grubb (1932-1979)** began monastic life as choir novices, receiving the names Kevin and Valerian, respectively. On September 19th, *Frater Ambrose Turner* was ordained subdeacon.

Oblate Manuals are available for purchase - recommended for all St. Martin's Abbey Oblates.



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

God has abundantly blessed the Saint Martin’s Abbey community this summer in many ways. One of our confreres made his solemn profession; another was ordained to the priesthood. Through work is never lacking, even in the summer, there was time for personal renewal, and for serving others. There was also time for occasional R and R and conversations with those visiting the Abbey.

On July 11th, the feast of our founder Saint Benedict of Nursia, **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON** made his solemn profession of monastic vows at the pontifical Mass. **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** received **BROTHER NICOLAUS’** vows in the presence of the monastic community, family members, and many friends. **FATHER GERARD KIRSCH**, Junior Master, presented **BROTHER NICOLAUS** for vows; **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** delivered the occasional sermon. A pasta bar luncheon followed the Mass. After spending some time with family and friends, **BROTHER NICOLAUS** will begin his theological studies at Mt. Angel Seminary, Oregon, in late August. It is a four-year program, and he will be greatly missed by his confreres.

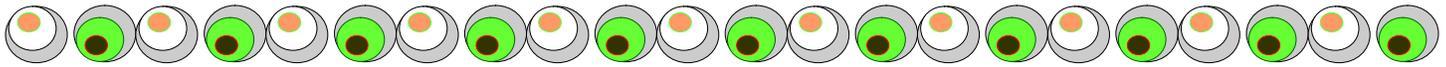


Art work Brother Luke Devine OSB

**BROTHER PETER TYNAN** was ordained to the priesthood in the Saint Martin’s Abbey Church by the Archbishop of Seattle on July 16th. Witnesses to the event were **ABBOT NEAL** and the monastic community, family members who traveled from the mid-west, and friends, some traveling from as far as the east coast. **ABBOT NEAL** delivered the occasional sermon. The Archbishop joined the gathered assembly for the post ordination luncheon that followed. The following day, **FATHER PETER** offered the traditional “first Mass” before heading for the mid-west with his family to offer Mass at his home parish. In the fall, **FATHER PETER** will continue his work as the head of the Abbey vocation team; will work in the University’s Campus Ministry office; and will continue his work of many years in the Abbey and University libraries.

**Ad Multos Annos to Brother Nicolaus and Father Peter.**





Early in the summer, this writer and **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** gave a talk on monasticism as lived at Saint Martin's to a class in the Sociology of Religion from Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma ... This writer traveled to see to the blessing of his mother's grave in Sacramento ... **BROTHERS NICOLAUS** and **MARK BONNEVILLE** traveled to Saint John's in Colledgeville, Minnesota, to attend the annual Juniorate Institute. The institute is two weeks of classes related to monasticism and the spiritual life with plenty of time for fellowship among neophyte Benedictines ... Later in the summer, **BROTHER MARK** enjoyed a respite from his labors and joined **FATHER PETER** in a camping trip ... **ABBOT NEAL** traveled to Montana for some days of family recreation, and **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** visited with family in Port Angeles and on the Oregon coast. In September, **FATHER KILIAN** will begin a year's sabbatical in New York City...**FATHER JUSTIN MCCREEDY** and **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** were able to take time away from their respective parochial assignments to attend both our solemn profession and ordination to the priesthood.

**Wishes for an abundance of God's blessings as summer concludes and fall begins**

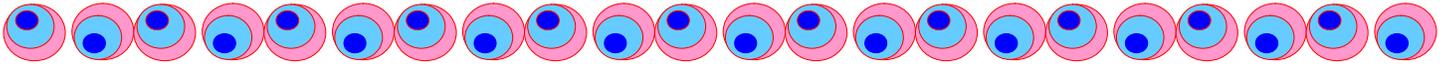
Retreat thoughts by Oblate Patricia McClure

I had the privilege of attending this year's oblate retreat on Lectio Divina. It occurred to me that this practice is more than just reading and meditating. For me, it is the sacred art of listening, to what I read, see, and hear. Allowing those experiences, those moments to awe, enlighten, and delight me. Being present to the ever-present Creator.

In my older years I have found, perhaps some will say it is a cop out, but I find myself ruminating on moments and events that happen on a daily basis, attempting to go deeper into the meaning or experience. I don't spend hours in thought, I don't mark the passage with prose. What I do notice is that every event is potential for a divine moment and what I have discovered by noticing those moments, "*conversatio morum*" occurs. I am delighted with this insight because I was waiting for some momentous events so I could say "I was this, now I am that." For me that isn't how it has happened. No, AH HA moment.

So now when someone asks me about life as an oblate how I practice the rule I can confidently say by savoring each ordinary moment.





## Balancing by Oblate Bill Lagreid

Being an Oblate is a balancing act; for that matter, all of life is a balancing act. Brother Edmund's work in the gardens helps the plants grow so that they will become all they are meant to be. He works with us Oblates in the same way but just like the plants who rely upon nature's ways, we too must balance our physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual needs with our responsibilities to our family members and employers.

Homeostasis is a wonderful principle of nature that means the tendency toward a relative stable equilibrium between independent elements especially as maintained by physiological processes. Our lives are made up of independent elements, and each of our lives is different yet the one element we have in common is the spiritual. We are Oblates of St. Benedict because we are spiritual people. We pray regularly for our families, for the living and those who have passed on, and for ourselves. We pray for those we know and those we don't know who are in need. We pray for all the members of the St. Martin's monastic community and the students who attend the university.

**"A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life"**

**William Arthur Ward**

We try the best we can to keep our lives in balance by not neglecting any element, physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual but that can become a challenge to balancing our lives. The anchor to which we bind our lives is daily prayer, spiritual reading and a focus on others more than on ourselves. No matter how difficult our lives, we have faith that God knows our needs better than we do and is walking with us on our own unique journey.





## How to Tolerate Silent Time with God By Oblate J.J. Nugent

There are numerous barriers to silent time with God, placed by the devil. If even one of these tricks works, he has succeeded in isolating us from our Creator. I'd like to spend a little time focusing a big issue that can block our growth to an intimate relationship with our God. Many of us have a difficult time being quiet!

When I was in my early twenties, I could not tolerate silence. Even as I studied I needed to play a TV in the background. I actually left a TV on for 24 hours a day for 4 months once. Eventually, the TV caught on fire at 3:00am but that's another story. Then I did not recognize I was avoiding being alone. Obviously, prayer was a quick affair and although sincere, it usually consisted of a short list of concerns for which I was asking a remedy.

In my mid - twenties, I challenged myself to a series of multi-week sailing adventures around the Puget Sound. It was a two-part challenge. First was an attempt to go places, see, and do things that I had never done before. Second was a white knuckled attempt to be alone. I was successful in both parts of the challenge but still couldn't keep my mouth shut while praying.

In my thirties after graduate training in Psychology at Saint Martin's, I again tackled the issue of listening silently to God. I asked myself, "What is so painful about listening to God?" After much *talking* with myself, I concluded that I was afraid to hear what God had to say. Never being one to back down from a challenge, I forced myself to listen. At first, I was terrified and could only take it for a little while. As I listened I began to feel consoled, and supported.

Editor's note: Warning this practice is addictive and once invited in, everlasting and sometimes He can be a pest.

Sometime in my forties, I realized that God loved me. He is so vast and powerful that he is naturally awesome (fear inspiring). It also dawned on me that He was on my side and desired a friendship with me. Therefore, I just let go and listened to Him. It now seems such a shame that I spent a couple decades avoiding quiet time with God.

So how can you expand your special time with our creator? One, realize that God knows everything about you already. He forgives you and loves you. Two, recognize that you can't fake an intimate relationship with God. He won't force you but he wants you to be with him now and through all eternity. Third, just go do it. The rewards will outweigh the initial discomfort.

On the lighter side of this topic, I have found that God seems to have an acute sense of humor. He uses it to ease my anxieties and to teach me. He also has an exceptional eye for beauty and appreciation of it, which he constantly is willing to share. All you have to do is silence yourself and listen.





### Dark and Dark by Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

A bunny interrupted my rosary,  
 or maybe it was the other way  
 around,  
 but we both held our ground.  
 The rock garden outside the church  
 has many diverse weeds,  
 green and succulent growing  
 up through the black wood shavings  
 that are supposed to keep the weeds down,  
 but it isn't working, but bunnies do.  
 We were like two friends keeping an eye  
 on one and another, making sure  
 one did not turn on the other.  
 The bunny was so intent  
 as he gourmeted his way around  
 dandelion leaves and clover,  
 stopping once in a while to stretch,  
 and then to rub his nose with both his paws,  
 turning back to weeds but keeping an eye on me.  
 I did the glorious mysteries on my beads,  
 but I must admit that from the Resurrection  
 to the Descent of the Holy Spirit,

**"I rock between dark and dark,  
 My soul nearly my own...."  
 Theodore Roethke, "The Abyss"**



Young Wild Rabbit eating dandelion flower, Leighton Moss RSPB May 2009



I was more bunny-centered than meditating  
 on the life of Christ, not really praying.  
 Tomorrow the bunny may be gone, but  
 I truly hope not, he helped me get from dark  
 to light on a sunny July afternoon.





## On the book shelf...

*On The Love of God and Other Writings* by St. Bernard of Clairvaux.

Introduction to the Devout Life by St. Francis de Sales, an old but good book to read again and again.

*Pocket Size Booklets: God Could be a Teen* by James Penrice

*Virginity* by Raniero Cantalamessa, OFM Cap.

## Prayer requests

Barbara Lagreid, wife of Oblate Bill Lagreid.

Oblate Eleonore Price, very ill with cancer at Panorama City.

Oblate Pat Maser, for continual recovery and healing.

**Please help us keep our records current by letting us know of changes in your mailing address and email address.** Send updates to Brother Edmund or the editor.

Remember when communicating with the Oblate director send correspondence to him directly.

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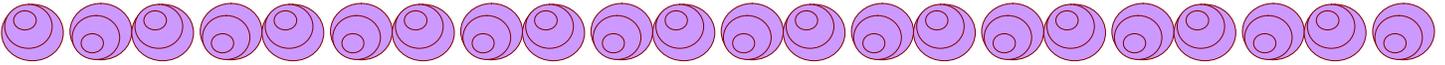
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Contributions welcomed



**OBLATE SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 11TH**

Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11AM. Lunch in the cafeteria and then at 1:30 Oblate Brian Suda will speak on suffering and the Benedictine response. A reflection on why we suffer and how we respond to suffering in light of commitment to the Rule of Benedict.

**Mark your calendars**

December 4th 2011 a talk by Oblate Emily Suda on teaching as a Benedictine.  
A sharing of teaching experiences and how they relate to the Rule of Benedict and life as a Benedictine Oblate.

For the best dressed Oblate we are taking orders for a **fleece jacket**. These jackets are black with sleeves and the logo is the Benedictine Medal in color on the left breast side. The cost is \$45.00 for each. If you need them mailed to you there is an additional fee of \$5.00 for shipping. If you want a fleece jacket please send the full payment, and size S, M, L, XL with your request to Br. Edmund. Delivery for those who have placed orders will be at the Sept. 11th meeting.

We still have Oblate shirts for sale of \$25 each.

**GOOD WORKS**

**We need your help!**

*Rosary Work.*

Saturdays, 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main.

August 20th

September 10th

October 8th

November 12th

December 3rd

*Gardening:*

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session come join us in beautifying the grounds. Weather permitting. If you join us for noon prayer, we will feed you before we go out to work.

*Lambert Lodge:* 1pm to 3:30pm.

**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.

