



Photo found at www.reellifewisdom.com/

A Letter from the Oblate Director by Brother Edmund Ebbers O.S.B.

I am forever looking for subject material to write about and recently the monastic community heard a reading or talk on "Choices". Although my letter won't be as nice as that which we heard, it does come from within myself.

In recent years we all have heard about the choices we don't have, or the lack of choices. I propose that we have more choices than ever before, perhaps too many. Some folk can't see the good choices for all the bad choices that starkly stand out. We are bombarded with poor and immoral choices. Maybe we don't have sufficient moral grounds to stand on due to our past. Perhaps we need to rebuild our moral foundations. Along with the rebuilding we need discipline. A moral foundation with discipline is the basic ingredients in the recipe for life.

These days there are numerous suggestions on making healthy food choices. The message is overwhelming at times. Pushing dietary stuff down our pipes like we are trying to fatten the goose is just as bad as doing without or eating all the wrong things. A life in moderation can not go wrong. Good decisions come when we are well informed and have discipline to carry them through to the practice.

This is true with our spiritual life. When our foundations are poor and our discipline is weak we will not stand the storm of temptation when it comes let alone the slightest poof of a wind. A good "choice" is to strengthen our foundations by learning and studying. We can be edified by the lives of saints and martyrs but our spirituality must be deeper than this. Our roots must be firmly planted in the teachings of Christ and blossom forth in true Christian witness of the message of Christ's love. When our roots are in Christ we are able to bear the fruits of the Holy Spirit, namely, love, faith, and hope.

Most of those joining the Oblate program these days are looking for a community of believers and learners those to pray and work with. As a community we need to strive to not let one another down by not doing or being our part in Christ's Holy Church.

Many of you come to the Oblate meetings regularly but some do not. I pray that those who do not attend have good reasons for not coming to share their life, joy and love. The calendar of meetings comes out well in advance and can be found on page 10 of this newsletter. I pray you will prioritize these meetings making an effort to attend. Your presence most likely will make a difference in someone else's life. On page 11 are numerous opportunities to be a part of the Oblate community.

Choices, we all have to make them, since Lent is around the bend maybe this subject can be a matter for a personal Lenten review?

I personally wish each of you a Holy Lent.

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

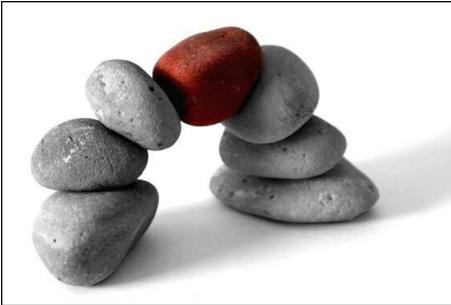


Photo found at bnbanetwork.com/

One of my favorite sitcoms is the British production *KEEPING UP APPEARANCES*. The show revolves around the central character *Hyacinth Bucket* (which she likes to have pronounced *Bouquet*). Her character is obsessed with etiquette, image, and opportunities to climb the social ladder. She is rather pompous and she absolutely never really listens to anyone.

We have all known people with at least one of these annoying characteristics. Perhaps most annoying is the person who is always very willing to give their advice whether solicited or not. Sooner or later we usually begin to resent people who have all the answers to life's problems and they are never wrong!

Chapter three of the Rule outlines an approach the abbot can take with respect to settling problems. It is the duty of the abbot to seek the counsel of the monks. He is to take counsel because he is neither omniscient nor infallible. Most of us can learn from this revelation! With the best will in the world, we all make mistakes and are liable to error. At a time when youth were to be seen and not heard, surprisingly, Benedict suggests even seeking the advice of the youngest in the community "...because it is often to the younger that the Lord reveals what is best." Benedict likely had considerable experience with the young in the monastery. Bottom line is that if we seek counsel from wise and prudent people, chances are better for a decision that will be wise and prudent.

Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

— *Stephen R. Covey*

At the heart of this injunction is that we cannot leave God out of the process. From the youngest person, to whom the Lord may have shown wisdom, to the oldest in the community, the Lord's wisdom must be sought. Because of the limitations of human beings, not all will agree with the decisions that must be made, but, hopefully, the decision will serve a common purpose and ideal. How many of us in our daily living and in our family life cannot learn from this chapter in the Rule of Benedict? With the Rule as our guide, one can begin the conversation with the same language, so to speak. The Rule is adamant about a well-defined purpose and about having God as the guide; about personal responsibility and about submission to others on occasion--a Benedictine pattern for consultative action that leads to peace. This is not such a poor formula for any Christian to adapt to any number of life's situations. Of course, all of this is sprinkled with a good dose of faith and good will!

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

Commencement at Saint Martin's was scheduled for June 4, 1954, with a baccalaureate Mass at 10 including a homily by Father Andrew Squier, pastor of Saint Frances Cabrini in Lakewood. Parents and friends of the graduates would be guests of Saint Martin's at a buffet luncheon at noon. At 2 PM would be the awarding of diplomas and prizes for merit, the main address to be given by Smith Troy, former attorney general of the State of Washington and a close friend of **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)**.

On May 12, the high school students staged the well-known play "Brother Orchid", the production being directed by two college students who were majoring in speech and dramatics. The revolving stage of the abbey theater — reputedly the largest such around at 30 feet in diameter — was used to good advantage for the number of scene shifts which were required in this play.

The annual retreat for the members of the Saint Martin's community was scheduled for June 7 (Monday evening) to June 11 (Friday morning). The retreat master was Father Edward Malone, OSB of Conception Abbey, Missouri. (He later transferred to Conception's foundation in Nebraska and would give another annual retreat at Saint Martin's in 1968.) A retreat for the Benedictine Sisters of the area was scheduled to begin the evening of July 5, with Abbot Cuthbert Goeb of Assumption Abbey (Richardton, North Dakota) giving the conferences. The annual laymen's retreats, four in number, would begin each Thursday evening in August (5, 12, 19, 26).

Father John Raymond (1911-1974) was hospitalized on May 15 with a heart condition which required a two-week rest and a period of observation. It was expected that he would be able to return to his duties in time to conduct the final examinations for his mathematics classes. He was also bursar (financial officer) of the institution ... **Father Bede Ernsdroff (1909-1982)** gave a baccalaureate sermon for the graduates at Centralia on May 23 and was scheduled for a similar function in Yakima in June ... **Father Philip Bagan (1905 -1992)** assisted at Saint Anthony's in Kent on weekends during the month of May.

The schedule of summer assignments was posted at the abbey on May 17. Fourteen of the community would be attending summer school (chiefly in Seattle) and a few replacements would be made of pastors who would be absent a month or more. A well-prepared staff of teachers was vital for both college and high school. (Father Gerard recalls a Sunday in summer, 1966 when **Abbot Gerald Desmond (1904-1990)** was the only priest home to offer the community Mass. All other priests were either on parish or away at school.)

The issue of "Family Circle" (from which publication Father Gerard has drawn copiously) was the last in a series which, with varying formats, had begun in 1948, overlapping for a time with an earlier publication, The Benedictine Monachist (1934-1951). The date of the first issue for the new publication — which would be known as The Saint Martin's News, 1954-1974 — was scheduled for September 1; but owing to the indefatigable efforts of its editor, **Father Meinrad**, it appeared in July without a hitch.

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

"For the Lord is the giver of life to us . . ."

When I taught with the Woodside Priory Benedictines in California, I also sang in the choir at Saint Matt's in San Mateo. Twice a week, my colleague peers and I would make the drive from Portola Valley to San Mateo. At Easter time, we borrowed from Mascagni's "Cavalleria rusticana"; we sang of God, giver of life, at the time of the year when new growth and flowers abounded.

At the Abbey, God continues to give life to us in many ways, not least in gifting us new life in the form of men coming to join us in our way of life. We rejoiced on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord with the entrance of **THANG DIHN** into the postulancy program. **THANG** joins Novice **FATHER MARION NGUYEN**, who is about half way through his monastic novitiate. **FATHER GERARD KIRSCH**, long-time history teacher in our university and former Oblate Director, is both Postulant Director and Novice Master. **THANG** is a wonderfully amiable and spiritual-minded addition to our community and we welcome him warmly.

Other "new life" is present in the form of the lovely gardens which surround the Abbey Church. Several years ago, **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS** worked with a wonderfully talented local landscape architect who created a fine Japanese-style garden. More recently, **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE** worked with the same gifted individual who added a "dry garden" and completed his original project. The flowering cherry and **ABBOT CONRAD RAUSCH's** munera plant are gone, but the landscape architect has created a garden which complements both the Abbey Church and the excellent garden he designed several years ago.

For the first time in decades, the Office of the Abbot has a new look. **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** now has an office that functions well as a workspace for all of the work that an abbot is required to do on a daily basis, and which also reflects his aesthetic taste and affords him a comfortable setting in which to meet with monks and others. The room's mantel clearly reflects **ABBOT NEAL's** ornithological interests!



Late 2012 and early 2013 have not been without some medical concerns. In December, **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** had a cochlear implant, designed to improve his hearing, and is doing very well. In January, **FATHER PETER TYNAN** had surgery to improve his vision, and for the first time in memory is not wearing eyeglasses. **BROTHER LAWRENCE VOGEL** is recovering from hip replacement. It was an emergency surgery necessitated when he slipped on the ice on a very cold morning and broke his hip.

BROTHER LUKE DEVINE was home from Berkeley for the long winter break. He spent much of his time preparing for some tough exams he must take early in the semester as part of his doctoral program. There are eight hours of exams spread over two days! . . . On Christmas Eve, we received the news that Prior Basil Kirsch had died suddenly at Assumption Abbey, North Dakota. Brother Basil was a brother of our **FATHER GERARD** and a cousin of our late confrere **FATHER CHRISTOPHER AB AIR**. A long-time Abbey friend and oblate, Norma O'Neill passed to God early in January. May the souls of Brother Basil and Norma rest in God's peace!

Blessed Lent, and be observant of the life-giving things God gifts to you.



Our Oblate Prayer by Oblate Bill Lagreid

My fellow Oblates, I'm very sorry I have not been able to be with you more in the last year but we at the Lagreid House in Seattle have not been well. We are improving, thanks be to God, and our fellow Benedictine Oblates and Monk's Prayers.

As I daily pray the Liturgy of the Hours, I know that my prayers will join the prayers of others here and around the world. When I first became an Oblate of St. Benedict at St. Martins Abby several years ago I learned this Oblate Prayer. I share it again with you now and our fellow oblates.

The Oblates' Prayer

Loving God, I ask your blessing this day on all the Oblates of Saint Benedict and those with whom we are affiliated.

Help us to become people of prayer and peace.

Though scattered far and wide, help us to be together in the spirit of your love.

Give us hearts wide enough to embrace each other as well as those whose lives we touch.

Enable us to listen and to learn from each other and those around us each day.

**May we be models in our homes, neighborhoods, and communities of wise stewardship,
dignified human labor, sacred leisure, and reverence for all living things.**

Above all God, may our presence among others be a constant witness of justice, compassion, and hope to all. Amen.

These are words we oblates can all live and pray

Dribbling My Soul by Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.



“He began on a blank page.”
Annie Dillard, *The Maytrees*

When you fall asleep during Math class sometimes you dribble all over the desk,
and use your sleeve to wipe the evidence away.

When writing one also has sleep-spittle fall onto the page, and then allow the delete
key to wipe the mental prattle off the screen forever.

Yesterday someone came to me in tears,
a weekend workshop revealed the hidden recesses of her soul,
the exercises had pierced her ego, brought out ideas she knew were there,
but made more vulnerable than she wanted to be, writing does that for me.

My typing out a poem that is coming from somewhere deep, deep within me,
causes an anxiety that makes me more vulnerable than most readers think.

Writing is skinny-dipping in a clear quarry pool,
and finding your friends watching from the highest rock,
giggling and pointing at your vulnerable spot,
touching your virginity without putting a finger on your body,
but realizing you can never again be what you were,
only be what you knew you were not confident to reveal.

It is public masturbation with the reaction of joy followed by the let down of reality.

It is a singular act, not shared with the reader, only read at a distance,
far from the source, allowing the author to feel free to discourse.

The blank page is safe, the black and white page is a risk that cannot really
be taken back, only reacted to by strangers who might not understand,
or worse by friends that do.

On the book shelf...

Listen My Son St Benedict for Fathers by Dwight Longenecker.

Benedictine Daily Prayer: A short Breviary by Maxwell E. Johnson.

Grace Revisted: Epiphanies from a Trappist Monk

St. John's Bible in Volumes: Gospels & Acts, Psalms, The Pentateuch, Prophets,

Wisdom Books, Historical Books. by Donald Jackson

These are a bit pricey but a delight.

Interesting read on this website Catholicism.org

Birds are used as Christian Symbols.

Prayer Requests



Photo found at mission.liguori.org/

Prayers for healing the sick and infirmed Oblates and monks.
Oblate Judy Shinke (cancer),
Br. Lawrence (recovery from broken hip),
Frs. Thaddaeus, Urban and Br. Theodore (disabilities).

Prayers for those recently passed:

Brother Basil Kirsch O.S.B.
Oblate Marjorie Hayden's husband Jack
Oblate Mary Hanagen
Oblate Norma O'Neill

Abbey Church Events

Friday March 8th at 3:00 p.m. Master Class in Kreielsheimer Hall

Saturday March 9th at 8:00 p.m. Violinist Bella Hristova and pianist Amy Yank

Saturday April 6th at 8:00 p.m. Calmus, a vocal ensemble.

Events are not ticketed, seating is generally unreserved and doors open one hour prior to the starting time. A freewill offering suggested.

What you haven't heard from us via Email? Perhaps your email is not up to date or you didn't know that we send out regular Email notices and prayer requests. Make sure you are not left out. Contact Brother Edmund at: br_edmund@stmartin.edu Or Editor Patricia McClure at Ravenwings@comcast.net

Don't forget to send updates to your E-mail address so we can keep you informed.

Don't forget to purchase your St. Martin's Oblate calendar. Donation of \$10.00 plus shipping and handling.

Yes we still have Oblate shirts, jackets and patches available.

Directories are still available for a \$5.00 donation.
A good way to make connection with your fellow Oblates.

March 3rd

Oblate Sunday

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

We will meet in St. Gertrude's hall (the Student cafeteria) where you can purchase lunch. At 1:30 we will move to the third floor, room 351 and listen to Fr. Peter.

FYI:

⇒ The hill top courtyard is nearly finished so as the weather improves take a walk and enjoy the views.

- Don't forget to check out the Oblate lending library always available for your growth and edification on Oblate Sundays.
- What! The meals at the Cafeteria are not being equally charged, the salad bar is sold by the ounce, does that include the plate? Yes, Bro. Edmund is working on the issue with the food service so that my hamburger and your hamburger will cost the same in the future. Thank you for your patience.

Correspondence address to Oblate Director Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

St. Martin's Abbey
5000 Abbey Way SE
Lacey, WA 98503

Mark your calendars

PLAN AHEAD:

OBLATE SUNDAYS 2013 dates:

May 5th, Sr. Laura Swan, O.S.B.

July 7th, Br. Nicolaus on Justice in the Holy Rule.

September 8th, Br. Aelred

December 8th. Oblate Gavin Machutchin

Retreat August 10th 2013



Photo found at ceciliawyu.files.wordpress.com

GOOD WORKS

So many opportunities to be apart of the community. Pick one - pick them all!

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

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main.

Rosary makers and twine cutters are needed for the military and missions.

March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, Aug 3,
Sept. 7, Oct 5, Nov 2, Dec 7.

Gardening:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm when rosary making isn't in session come join us in the dirt. Weather permitting there is work to be done so if you join us for noon prayer, we will feed you before we go out to work.

Wood workers are needed for piling, cutting, loading, delivering. This project of wood goes to those who need warmth, the low income. We need your help to keep this community service going. Call Br. Edmund if you can help at 360-438-4457

Lambert Lodge: 1pm to 3:30pm.

Would you join us in a day of potluck and work to spruce up our retreat lodge and grounds. Contact Brother Edmund for details.

March 16, 2013
Oct. 19, 2013

Coming to a meeting? Can you give another Oblates a ride? Contact Br. Edmund at 360-438-4457