

# Oblates of Saint Benedict

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

Dear Oblate brothers & sisters:

Since it is Lent, I have been reading some of the narratives of Jesus as a child and adult. This enhances my meditations on the Rosary. Of course, we know the ultimate historical conclusion, so perhaps it makes the task of putting together a complete picture, as if it were a puzzle, and we can draw some conclusions about the parallels that are found between the young Jesus and the his adult ministry.

One such parallel starts with Jesus and his family going to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. It is here in Jerusalem that Jesus is drawn to the Temple to begin his Father's ministry of teaching. For Jesus, the pilgrimage had to be truly one to his Father's House. In Jewish tradition, the Temple was where God resided but for Jesus it was more than the physical Temple, it was being with his Father in Spirit, doing his work. This desire was what drove Jesus to the Temple often. Can we take a lesson from this for living our lives? After Jesus had been in the Temple for three days, Mary and Joseph discovered their son missing from the group of pilgrims. Upon finding their son in the Temple, Jesus responds to his mother, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" At first hearing this, it sounds like he is scolding his mother for being worried, but there is more to this. It is believed Jesus was preparing his mother for his passion and later yet, to find him in the Temple of his risen body. Jesus was looking intently at his mission of being at his Father's business, resting in the heart of his Father, while Mary and Joseph seemed to be intent on getting back home to a normal life. I like that familiar term "Abba" as it represents such a gentle, caring, and loving parent. I do not know the origin of "Mama" but could it also be equally endearing?

Fr. Frederick Miller writes, "The Father willed that Jesus reveal himself to the official Temple scholars and preachers as the teacher and preacher par excellence. The Father willed that Christ prepare his parents to participate in his paschal mystery through faith and parental love." It must have been tough on Joseph a more silent element in the dialogue. Not only had Mary taken much to heart, Joseph as well. Though not a biological father he was a "protector" and parent in every sense of the word. Fr. Frederick writes, " ...the word 'father', so dear to Joseph, on the lips of the boy Jesus, becomes the very sword that pierces Joseph's heart and purifies his love for Christ and for all of us. Jesus asks Joseph, to acknowledge at a new depth that he is the heavenly Father's only son. He asks Joseph to be ready to release him for his mission when the appointed time arrives." To raise a son or daughter, and at a appointed time to let go, so the child may be about their appointed mission of life, must be heart breaking for parents, but it is for this that we must raise each generation. We don't raise children to be our possessions.

As parents, where do we fit and how do we measure up? Surely not one reader of this letter would have no care for their offspring? Or for any child to bring them harm?

A couple weeks back Oblate Gavin M. and I had a beautiful opportunity to attend a day long conference on the role of men in the family. I intend to share the DVD's with the Oblates in the future. I believe the material is appropriate for the family as well as for fathers.

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

On March 13, 2013, when I learned that the cardinals had elected a pope, I rushed to a television to see what I could of the new pontiff. Pope Francis walked out on the balcony, almost shyly, stood silently for a moment, and then smiled. After a few words, Pope Francis asked the crowd to join him in prayer for Pope Benedict XVI and then he asked the people to bless him while he made a profound bow. He promised that he would work for the evangelization of Rome and he asked Mary, the Mother of God, to watch over his service as Bishop of the universal Church. Clearly, our new pope is a man of deep prayer!

Benedict has a lot to say about prayer: adoration, compunction, conversion, offering, praise, duration, and much, much more. The whole monastic community could not survive without its prayer life and neither can the sincere Christian family. We draw strength from prayer, especially the prayers we pray when we are with others. Prayer and the importance of prayer must be passed on from one generation to the next. As a very young child, I do not remember when I learned the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and several other prayers, I remember my father (not a particularly pious man), had us kneel down at bedtime and recite our prayers in front of his "reading" chair. He would put the newspaper down and listen to our prayers. We were not, as a family, especially devout, but we prayed before meals, attended the parish school, went to church on Sundays, did the Lent thing, and joined our Catholic neighbors to pray the "block rosary" once a week for peace. I never minded these practices while growing up. They helped me get on the right track! As a former pastor, I have to say that passing the faith on to children cannot be left up, totally, to the parish religious education program. Parents need to be an example and involved. Children need to witness their parents praying and being involved with church.

Prayer, at least in part, flows from an appreciation of the Faith, its traditions and its teachings. I sometimes think that is forgotten today. As followers of Benedict, we can make a real contribution to the spiritual life of the Church. We need to join our fellow Catholics in supporting one another, not only in our weekly Sunday Mass, but in family prayers and devotions, and maybe even the daily rosary. Oblates are always encouraged to pray the Divine Office in part or the complete office of the day. One way we can support the prayer life of the Church is to pray together for the needs of the Church, for our Church leadership and for vocations of service to the Church as priests, deacons, religious, and lay ministers. As Benedictines, prayer must be given priority in our daily lives. As Oblates, this should be a priority in our daily routine and a challenge.

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

In July 1954 was launched "Saint Martin's News", the purpose of which, announced **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)**, was to consolidate all the printed channels of information - thus replacing "Gone Goose" (for alumni), "Family Circle" (for oblates) which had replaced "Benedictine Monachist" (for retreatants) and even "Grey Goose", a literary endeavor. The college publication "Martian" would continue a separate existence—and longest of all, from 1926 to 1970.

The new publication launched an alumni building fund, better known later as the gym fund, the initial donors including 1904 alumnus Nicholas Clerf, 1902 alumnus Bill Knabel, and former monk (and, in 1954, Idaho pastor) **Father Francis O'Driscoll....Father Sebastian Ruth (1875-1958)**, meanwhile, was preparing for four laymen's retreats in August, expecting more than 800 men, many of whom could be expected to contribute to the new fund and to subscribe to "Saint Martin's News", especially with the none too subtle persuasion of **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)**.

Eight priests and seven clerics of Saint Martin's Abbey were studying at various universities in summer 1954. **Father Meinrad** was assisting at Assumption parish in Seattle and taking speech courses at the University of Washington. **Father Bertrand Trautman (1918-1972)** was completing doctoral work at Harvard in political science and was expected to resume teaching at Saint Martin's in the fall. **Father Felix Wirth (1913-1984)** would continue studies at Iowa State College in Ames in agricultural economics. **Frater Maurus Keller** would be spending his second summer at Notre Dame as a graduate student in history.

Bordeaux Hall, a residence hall of Seattle University, had been rented for the summer, and five priests and six clerics would follow the monastic routine there under **Father David Prebula (1918-2009)** as superior. **Father David, Father Placidus Reischman (1926-2000)** and **Frater Christopher Abair (1924-1988)** were studying biology at the University of Washington while newly-ordained **Father Ambrose Turner**, an expert in linguistics, would be pursuing work in Spanish and German. **Fathers William Dickerson and Timothy Lamm** were majoring in psychology at Seattle University, while **Fraters Urban Feucht, Nicholas Rausch, Frederick Theis and Adrian Parcher** were taking education courses to complete the Washington State requirement for teacher's certification.

**Father Jerome Toner (1899-1977)** left by car for the east coast on June 11 immediately following the community retreat. He attended the meeting of the program committee of the Catholic Economic Association at Marquette University on June 15. He was at Maryknoll, New York on June 17 to address the Maryknoll Sisters there. He reached New York City in time to attend the American Colleges Public Relations Association conference, June 19-24. During the summer, **Father Jerome** assisted at the church of Saints Simon and Jude in Brooklyn and engaged in research in both New York City and Washington DC for the college's department of industrial relations as well as for the Washington State Board against Discrimination in Employment and the Committee on State Government organization. He was appointed a member of both committees by Governor Arthur B. Langlie.

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

One afternoon late in the 20th century, the abbot of a small Benedictine community was asked by one of his monks what it was that he did in his office all day long, and didn't he get bored with nothing to do? Saint Benedict says in his Rule that guests are never lacking in a monastery. The same could be said with respect to work. *ORA ET LABORA*, pray and work, is one of the centuries old Benedictine mottos. While our principal work might be said to be prayer, collectively and individually, the monk engages in many types of work, some of which is an extension of Benedictine hospitality, toward the monk's confreres as well as toward guests. Most of us have a principal assignment, but oft times have what the late **FATHER PATRICK DAHLQUIST** used to refer to as "in house services" -- tasks necessary for keeping the community functioning.

**ABBOT NEAL ROTH** and **PRIOR ALFRED HULSCHER** attend to administrative work much of their work day. **ABBOT NEAL** also meets with the monks individually, prepares homilies and talks, and sees a limited number of spiritual advisees. **PRIOR ALFRED**, in any given day may find himself assigning vehicles to monks for their appointments, to dealing with the Abbey's accountant on some fiscal matter.

### Prayer and work. Neither is lacking in a monastery!

Were it not for the "in house services" of **FATHER EDWARD RECECONI**, who so adeptly manages the Abbey's fleet of vehicles, a given vehicle might be out of gas when needed by a monk. When guests arrive, they are usually greeted first by either **BROTHER BEDE NICOL**, or by **FATHER BENEDICT AUER**. The former is in charge of the Abbey Guest House, the latter of guest rooms within the monastic cloister. The feeding of guests is a collaborative effort between **BROTHER BEDE** and **BROTHER EDMUND EBBERS**, who is Abbey refectorian. The refectorian concerns himself with what goes on in the refectory, the monastic dining room, and is an official link between the monastic community and the commercial food service that prepares our meals. Among his many other services to the community, **BROTHER EDMUND** works in our woods, often assisted by our novice **FATHER MARION NGUYEN** and postulant **THANG DIHN**. **FATHER GERARD KIRSCH**, in addition to being novice master and postulant director, teaches history in our university and offers Mass regularly at Saint Placid Priory and the local Catholic hospital.

A number of us actively minister to the needs of Catholics in the Pacific Northwest. **FATHER JUSTIN MC CREEDY** does chaplain work in several hospitals and also assists in a parish. **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** and retired **ABBOT ADRIAN PARCHER** are assigned full time to parish work. **FATHER PETER TYNAN**, when he can break away from his regular assignments, which include that of vocation director and Abbey librarian, accepts weekend assignments to assist in local parishes.

**BROTHER AELRED WOODARD** and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** are responsible for our splendid liturgical music, along with **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON**, when he is back at the Abbey during breaks from his theological studies at Mt. Angel, Oregon. In addition to liturgical music and teaching assignments in theology and philosophy respectively, **BROTHER AELRED** and **FATHER GEORGE** also take part in the musical life of the wider community.



For those of us who are teaching, the "extras" also include committee work and serving on search committees. Late in lent, this writer and **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** spent two days at an off campus site interviewing, along with other committee members, potential candidates for the vacant position of university provost. When **SUBPRIOR BROTHER RAMON NEWELL** is not running our campus postal service, he might be found cutting hair in the Abbey barbershop or paddling a dragon boat.

Our long-time Abbey accountant, Donna Smith, passed to God recently, please remember her in prayer...On a joyous note, the community was happy to welcome back **FATHER STEVE GALLAGHER**, long-time friend and SMHS graduate. He is taking a few months off from his parish assignment in Alaska to deal with some health issues. We welcome him.

Oblate items for Donations: Shirts, Jackets, Benedictine medallion patches, directories and a few Benedictine calendars while they last.

### On the Book shelf...

*The Rule of Benedict for Beginners: Spirituality for Daily Life* by Will Derske.

*A Blessed Life: Benedictine Guidelines for Those Who Long for Good Days* by Will Derske.

*Divine Intimacy* by Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen O.C.D.

*Moral Traditions - An Introduction to World Religious Ethics* by Mari Rapela Heidt.

## Body and Soul by Oblate Bill Lagreid

Suggested reading: Jeremiah 17:7-8



For several days following major surgery the old gentleman lay in his hospital bed connected by tubes that seem to come from every region of his body to bottles of fluids intended to help him heal. A lovely young woman touched him on his arm and smiled, "My name is Mary I'll be here with you the rest of the night, how are you doing.

"My body is a mess but I'm doing fine Mary, how are you doing tonight?" The sweet smile on her face turned to a puzzled frown. She went about her duties without saying another word. The old man wondered if he had offended her and thought back to what he had said.

My body is a mess but I'm doing fine was all he said but it was honestly the way he felt. He knew he had no other option than to have the surgery or die and he was still alive so he was doing fine and being alive to him was a gift. He was telling the truth because he was confident that his life or death was in God's hands. Mary never returned but another nurse took her place that evening. After he was discharged from the hospital and met with his doctor he was informed that further lab tests showed there was more cancer in the area of the surgery than expected and he would need to have radiation treatments for a month. His family and friends were concerned but his answer was always the same "My body is a mess but I'm doing fine." After thirty-five radiation treatments the cancer was all gone and his body ... was no longer a mess but he was still doing fine.

**My body is a mess but I am fine.**

A friend stopped by the house to pay him a visit and had heard what his answer to the question was always, "My body is a mess but I'm doing fine," meant. "Well my friend it is really very simple, my faith is that I have a body and a soul my body was given to me when I was conceived through the love of my parents. My soul, that is me, it belongs to God. I talk to God many times a day in my daily prayers. I know in my heart we are on the best of terms and I feel fine."

### On Holy Ground by Oblate J.J. Nugent

The following practices and events may push the limits of credibility for some but it is my experience and I hope that some of you will take something useful away from my sharing. It is very important to remember that Holy Water is not magic there is a direct correlation to our Baptism and salvation in Jesus Christ. It is a powerful symbol and reminder of our healing and loving God.

I first became interested in the supernatural while I was a freshman at Saint Martin's College. My curiosity led me to a few late night investigations, to various sites on campus that were rumored to be haunted, the graveyard and the fourth floor of Old Main. I always took a: Bible, Rosary, Holy Water, flashlight, camera, tape recorder and a jug of wine. The religious items were for spiritual protection. The other equipment was for documentation and the wine purely recreational. I was kind of a 'Ghost Hunter' only 20 years before the television show "TAPS - The Atlantic Paranormal Society." Except for a disturbing conversation with a junior who wanted to know if I was gay (I'm not); my twilight shenanigans were uneventful. Decades later I adopted the practice of purposeful blessing with holy water.

When I lived in a Marina, there was a woman who said she was being haunted by her dead boyfriend. Without telling her, I blessed the dock. Her nightmares disappeared.

One time in the early evening after the kids were in bed; I walked into my living room and saw a child size spirit sitting on the sofa. I ran to the bedroom, told my wife Theresa, and we blessed the living room. We also had the kids help us bless the whole house. Along with the disposing of some popular but suspicious fantasy books the boys were reading. After the blessing of the house we felt it was spiritually cleaner. I started blessing my home once a year with Holy Water and I found I slept better.

As time went on, I became lax in my blessing ritual. One night I saw two smaller spirits walk by my master bedroom. I leapt up but by the time I got to my door they had disappeared. I realized then that we had not been praying together except at weekly Mass and we had not blessed the house. So we set out to bless every wall in the house, placed crosses in strategic places, set up the Holy Font near the door. We made our home Holy Ground. We were never visited by evil spirits again.

I bless my property and in our home today we try keep a dish of Holy Water next to the door. It's there for anyone to use in order to boost their spiritual health coming or going. I've included holy water in my boat and car and have blessed my work place. It is also part of my 48 hour survival pack when I do my Search and Rescue work around Western Washington. Over the years I witnessed numerous healings of body, mind, and spirit; with the use of Holy Water.

My home is a physical, emotional, and spiritual retreat. I really enjoy living on Holy Ground. Holy Water is free to respectfully take from any church. Don't make a big deal about it just take a clean container and get some from the Baptism Font. Use it to make your own Holy Ground.

## Fear by Father Benedict Auer O.S.B.

**“Love bade me welcome: yet my soul drew back.”**

**George Herbert, “Discipline”**

I slept well last night.

A statement that both terrifies me and says something is good,  
or least my medication worked for one night in many a week.

That is a lie, surprisingly my meds have been working more than usual,  
four and even five hours of sleep a night on and off for a month.

Why? I wish I knew.

The medications are basically the same. Some I have taken for years, others are newer –  
some for the bipolar, and others just for sleep.

It is the rapid cycling mind that never stops that is the problem.

Sometimes just turning off the Internet and e-mail is sufficient to slow it down.

The unpredictable events throw me, or even predictable events through my mind for a loop,  
and then it circles all night long.

Doctors have warned me that bipolarism is not curable, only controllable, yet I wish a “Loudres-drian” cure,  
but whom am I to say that the gift that has given me is something that God should take away.

I am a productive mentally ill person who uses my manic-depression to do positive actions:  
such as writing, poeting, teaching, preaching, listening and more importantly loving.

Would I do so if I were not blessed with my moods that bring me up and down?

When I write, I write, when I love, I love, never in halves only in wholes.

My writing is inspired, I hope it is the Holy Spirit,

when I read what I write I do not often know how I did it or where it comes from.

Everyday life speaks to my soul, and then I write of a tree or a feeling, a stack of books or a simple bird,  
whatever catches my eye, things other people often walk by.

I need love. We all need love.

When I am told “Father, everyone loves you,” it helps, but often is not enough.

My mind falters, it is unsure.

When I know someone loves me,

I need those little things – an inexpensive gift, a phone call, an e-mail to check on me, a sharing of themselves  
that assures me that our friendship is based in God, anything that helps me realize my worth or helps my insecurities.

I guess by now, the winter of my life, I should have grown out of this need,  
but the hole in my soul still needs to be affirmed, filled, and even more loved.

Maybe I am still an adolescent at heart, never grown up, and possibly never will.

Maybe that is sad, but maybe that makes me who I am,

I am in touch with my inner child, or at least my inner teen, when someone shares themselves with me, no  
matter how bad or even how little, it affirms me, makes me feel what I do is worth something, something  
even in the eyes of God.

I sit looking out on the Sound this morning, it is grayish, bleak, but for some reason

I am not, rather I am up, and I know why: an e-mail I got before I left showed me that a friendship is important  
to both of us,

we can share no matter what, it is a friendship that St. Aelred of Rievaulx

said is perfect: “You, I, and the Holy Spirit,” one in caritas, agape, or just plain love.

**Good Works**

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. Our rosaries go to the military and missions.

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

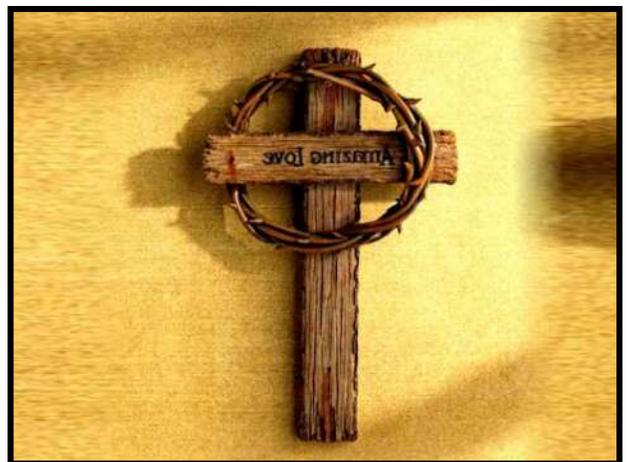
Lambert Lodge: 1pm to 3:30pm.

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

Oct. 19, 2013

A hearty thanks to those who showed up for work at Lambert lodge on the 16th of March. A lot was accomplished.

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



**May 5th— Oblate Sunday – May 5th**

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 Father Bede Classick O.S.B..

Novice investitures and final Oblations will be made in the Abbey Church after the conference.

For those to be invested as Novices or make their Oblation on **May 5** : Please notify me in advance of your intentions in advance.

**IF** you have not supplied me with a short biography of yourself please do so as soon as possible. Could we meet in the Abbey Church right after the Conference that I might address any last minute questions that may have, before your investiture or Oblation.

Parking for guest is in parking lot C near the Abbey church on the hill top. If you are worried about parking you can obtain a parking permits which is provided for faculty, staff, students, and visitors free of charge. A visitor parking permit can be obtained in the safety office in Old Main room 251.

According to the website of the university it states that visitor parking is available in these locations:

- Adjacent to Lynch Development Center (lot D)
- The upper lot next to the Abbey Church (lot C)
- In the Marcus Pavilion - Worthington Conference Center parking area, Lot Q

**Prayer Requests**

- Oblate Bill and Barbara Lagreid
- Oblate Judy Shinke
- Oblate Bruce Tenney
- Margaret Ward sister of Br. Edmund

**Mark your Calendars**

- PLAN AHEAD:**  
**OBLATE SUNDAYS 2013 dates:**
- July 7th, Br. Nicolaus on Justice in the Holy Rule.
  - Retreat August 10th 2013
  - September 8th, Br. Aelred
  - December 8th. Oblate Gavin MacHutchin

Time to renew your Oblation.

Send your form found in your newsletter and your offering to :

**Brother Edmund Ebbers OSB**

Saint Martin's Abbey  
5000 Abbey Way S.E.  
Lacey, WA 98503

Or bring this with you to the next meeting.

**Wishing each Oblate and friend a Blessed and Joyous Easter Season**

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Contributions welcomed