

Oblates of Saint Benedict

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

It has occurred to me that many people have questions and personal understandings on "The Meaning of Suffering". I have developed my own theories based on reads and listening to theologians. Yet I still feel that I cannot adequately explain why suffering exists. The Old Testament seems to call it justice for our sins. People believed that a person was blind or lame because they had sinned. That kind of thinking would lead us to conclude that Christ suffered because he was sinful. We know that isn't quite accurate. When we read the New Testament and hear the words of Jesus Christ we learn that suffering has a bigger meaning and perhaps something different.

A while back I came across an apostolic letter, *Salvifici Doloris*, written by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II. In his letter Pope John Paul II quotes the Apostle: "In my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church". Within these words is a hidden mystery, that there is joy in suffering when the pain subsides. St. Paul confirms this when he says: "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake". The joy comes from the discovery of the meaning of salvific suffering. Suffering accompanies every person at some point in their lives. It is inseparable from human existence. Suffering tugs and pushes us to move forward and beyond ourselves. Our humanness pushes back and thus we experience the psychological or emotional pain that is associated with suffering.

Suffering should be redemptive because it was first accomplished through Christ's suffering on the cross. The Church has an obligation to meet us on the path of suffering in this endeavor we become united. Pope John Paul II writes, "Human suffering evokes compassion; it evokes respect, and in its own way it intimidates. For in suffering is contained the greatness of a specific mystery. This special respect for every form of human suffering must be set at the beginning of what will be expressed here later by the deepest need of the heart, and also by the deep imperative of faith. About the theme of suffering these two reasons seem to draw particularly close to each other and to become one: the need of the heart commands us to overcome fear, and the imperative of faith - formulated, for example, in the words of St. Paul quoted at the beginning - provided the content, in the name of which and by virtue of which we dare to touch what appears in every man so tangible: for man, in his suffering, remains an intangible mystery."

I am very slow in discovering great Church documents and comprehending the mysteries that abound in our world. But I think this letter by Pope John Paul II opens the door to our understanding of suffering. When we are aware of our suffering and the suffering of others, we can more easily grasp reasons for suffering. Our suffering and the suffering of others around the globe unites us as one body in Christ the church.

In the next newsletter I will continue my reflections on this topic. Those wishing to read the letter from Pope John Paul II can find it on the web by typing in *Salvifici Doloris* in your web browser or at URL: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/

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

As I approach my 75th year of life, I realize evermore that I am likely not going to have many more years left on this earth. Scripture constantly reminds us that everything eventually comes to an end! Conversion of morals is one of my daily prayer intentions. On thinking about this further, I have to conclude that it is very appropriate for us, as members of the Benedictine family, to reflect on conversion. Conversion indicates change. I suspect that it might be defined with several definitions--perhaps all valid. In thinking of conversion, my mind recalls my personal sins, my negative reactions, at times, to persons and situations in life and in the monastery. And for these, I am truly sorry.

Mother Gail Fitzpatrick, OCSO, past Abbess of Our Lady of the Mississippi, wrote in her book SEASONS OF GRACE, *"For a long time, have had this thought: The contemplative is 'one who weeps' for his sins or her own sin and suffering and for the sin and suffering of every single person in the history of the world. The central job of all contemplatives is to stand—poor, naked, and powerless—before God and to weep because human beings are capable of wounding the very heart of the Son of God."*

There are ample opportunities in life to be open to conversion. To truly realize that one is loved by God is a slow step to conversion. To realize that one does not always have to be right and to be open to correction and suggestion is conversion. To realize that there are few material things in life that we really must possess is conversion. To be sharply aware that our own example does send a message that Christ is an important part of our life. Our daily reading of scripture and our reception of the Eucharist is conversion. By this I mean that one who is faithful to scripture and the Eucharist is, in a spiritual way, enlightened. God lives his divine life in us because we are nurtured through scripture and the Eucharist. Staying with this program, of sorts, is conversion. Finally, Benedict teaches us to do all this with moderation.

If we expect personal growth on our Benedictine journey, we must embrace conversion with its pains and its blessings!

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

A number of priests of the abbey were scheduled to spend considerable time away from the monastery during the summer of 1954, mostly assisting in parishes while the pastors were on vacation: **Father Augustine Osgniach (1891-1975)** in Centralia and then in Hoquiam; **Father Vincent Carey (1895-1967)** in Jerome, Burley and Rupert, Idaho; **Father Marcel Berthon (1899-1975)** in Edmonds; **Father Philip Bagan (1905-1992)** at Marysville; **Father Alphonse Fuchs (1904-1971)** at Nezperce, Idaho; **Father Leonard Feeny (1908-1980)** and **Father Richard Cebula (1916-2004)** taking different times at Saint Paul's Cathedral in Yakima; and **Father Marian Esterman (1874-1957)** at Goldendale.

Summer, 1954 also saw the west side of the hill landscaped. The road was blacktopped from the Pacific Highway entrance up to the grand staircase. The road then swept up around the west side of the hill past the old steam plant, music hall and infirmary (widening for a parking area behind the kitchen) and then proceeding in a long curve behind Saint Placid Hall (now the abbey guest house) to link up with the north road leading to Highway 99 (now Martin Way). **Fathers Leonard, Clement Pangratz, and Conrad Rausch (1921-2011)** had students hauling in dirt to cover over the gravel of the hill...planting lawns...setting out flowers. The steeper hillsides were planted with ivy. The purchase the year before of a power lawn mower, able to cut 20 acres in a day, would be more than sufficient for the 2 1/2 acres of lawn Saint Martin's then had—a tiny fraction of the lawns it has today!

As of August 1, 1954, **Father Richard Cebula** would assume the important position of Dean of Instruction at Saint Martin's College, succeeding **Father Meinrad Gaul (1907-1984)**, by appointment of **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)**. **Father Meinrad**, who had more than a full teaching load, could now devote more time to alum work, particularly editing the Saint Martin's News. **Father Richard**, with a master's degree from the University of Michigan in 1943 and a master's in engineering from Iowa State University, had already served as principal of Saint Martin's High School in 1941-1943. He would be assisted as registrar by **Father Dunstan Curtis (1921-1981)**.

Prospects for fall enrollment at Saint Martin's College were bright, and it was estimated that boarding facilities would be severely taxed. The status of the athletic program was also undergoing review. Having dropped football in 1950, the college had been obliged to withdraw from the Evergreen Conference. Restoring football or playing non-conference would be expensive. An alternative was to set up an intramural program for the benefit of all students, but this too was not without problems, given the inadequate gymnasium then existing. This made contributions to the newly begun Alumni Building Fund all the more vital, to say nothing of the Abbey Church Fund, which had recent donations from two former confreres, **Father Francis O'Driscoll** and **Hubert Witscher (formerly Frater Novice Leopold)**.

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

Were I to have a "bucket list" of things I hope to accomplish in my lifetime, a trip to Sissinghurst would surely be on it. Sissinghurst is the legendary garden created in the 1930's in Kent, England, by the poet Vita Sackville-West. Sissinghurst is many gardens, and I particularly would like to visit the celebrated "white garden" planted by Sackville-West. I love gardens and flowers, though I am not a gardener myself. In a well-planned garden, the plants and shrubs open and flower at different moments. When one finishes blooming, another reveals itself in its entire splendor. Gardens are something like the plan God has in mind for us in our lives. Our lives develop gradually. As with gardens, sometimes there are weeds or thorns amidst the beautiful flowers. Like gardens, living takes work.

This spring, at the conclusion of our annual retreat, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of monastic profession of two of our confreres: retired **ABBOT ADRIAN PARCHER** and **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** both made monastic profession on 11th July 1953. **ABBOT ADRIAN** is engaged in parochial work in Colfax, Washington. **FATHER GEORGE** is Abbey organist, a member of the Schola, and philosophy professor at Saint Martin's University. Our senior professed monk at present is **FATHER CLEMENT PAN-GRATZ**, who is celebrating his 72nd anniversary of profession. He has been an active member of the Saint Martin's community for almost three quarters of a century. Always very musical, **FATHER CLEMENT'S** present duties include that of accompanist for the musical parts of the monk's Sunday evening Compline Service.

ABBOT NEAL ROTH formally blessed the renovated Abbey Courtyard this Spring, on the same day that he blessed the university's new engineering building. The courtyard has been named for **PRIOR ALFRED HULSCHER**, for his many contributions to the Saint Martin's community; the engineering building has been named Cebula Hall in recognition of the founder of the university's school of engineering, **FATHER RICHARD CEBULA** ... **ABBOT NEAL** also presented, the Saint Martin's Abbey Faculty of the Year and Staff of the Year awards to the winners selected by the selection committee and later hosted a private luncheon for the winners ... **FATHER PAUL WECKERT** is newly assigned to St. Columban Parish, Yelm, Washington. St. Columban has had a long connection to Saint Martin's Abbey. The last Saint Martin's Benedictine to serve as pastor there was the late **FATHER TERENCE WAGER** ... The Abbey has a new accountant, following the death this spring of our long-time accountant Donna Smith. Our new accountant Sonja Handstad is well qualified for the position and has a Saint Martin's connection: her late step-father, Carl Hageman, is a SMC graduate of the late 1960's ... Saint Martin's University has purchased the Heritage Edition (limited to 299 copies) of the Saint John's Bible. The Dean of the O'Grady Library and I gave a presentation of the bible at its campus debut at a gathering of the University's Board.

While a number of us work in our university as teachers and in other areas, we often are called upon (or volunteer for) things not directly related to our job. **BROTHER RAMON NEWELL** is Saint Martin's post-master, but also is very active in the Dragon Boat races. This year **FATHER PETER TYNAN** blessed the boats prior to the big race in April. **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** teaches religious studies and English. He is also a member of the Board and this spring took the students who form the group of Benedictine Scholars to visit Benedictines at St. Gertrude's in Cottonwood, Idaho. **FATHER KILIAN** and I were also on the recent search committee looking for a new university provost. **FATHER BEDE CLASSICK** is university treasurer. He also is a member of the Board, and frequently serves on search committees.

Have a blessedly safe summer enjoying gardens as they unfold their beauty and being aware of how God

The Power of the Eucharist by Oblate John Daniel

Jesus present
(Love makes it so)
work is done.

in The Eucharist
Justice and mercy
kiss.
calling us to friendship
to His Passover
to love
and become
begotten of God

Jesus:
Light from Light
true God from true God
begotten and made
true man
formed in his mother's womb
by "the hand that moves the sun
and other stars."

We
are creatures
who learning to love
become
the true brothers
and sisters
sons and
daughters of God
growing
into
our Christ made
self

epilogue:

Sit quietly
interiorly still
before Jesus
in silent Adoration.
spend time with Christ
become more Christ
without ever losing
your freedom.

Garden Wisdom by Oblate Bill Lagreid



The man who lived at the end of the block was working in his garden, trimming, mulching, fertilizing, and weeding. A neighbor walking by stopped to talk and pass the time of day as neighbors often do.

“Your garden always looks so beautiful how do you do it?”

The man smiled and thanked his neighbor then said, “Many years ago when I was a teacher, a wise principal of the school I was assigned to shared with me his philosophy of child growth and development. It made sense to me so when I started working in my garden I adopted his ideas to tending my garden.”

“What was his philosophy?”

“When children come to us at five or six years old we have no control over their roots or home life. We have to accept them as they are. We can help them grow in knowledge and basic skills but every child is different from every other child in every possible way. They seem to grow with our care and concern. We enrich them with positive experiences, and healthy neglect, not force. Too much intervention can discourage not enhance their natural growth, talent, and ability.”

“How does that translate into your gardening?”

“Well, I don’t have any control over the plants and seeds. I buy at the nursery, I plant them, give them water, fertilizer, and keep the weeds under control then I let them grow on their own. When they begin to grow I prune them and support them, and let them bloom on their own. God created both the children and the plants, as the gardener I can only help the process so they can develop into what God intended them to become and that is what you see in this garden.”

“Does everything you plant grow to perfection like these?”

“No unfortunately, just like young people, over time pests and bad influence are out of my control, the strong survive and the weak struggle during their lives. All I do is to keep on giving them tender loving care, hope for the best, plan for the worst, and take what comes.”

Finding God Through His Creation by Oblate J.J. Nugent

Each Season of the year gives us opportunities to reflect upon creation and our creator. As modern people most of us are fairly insulated from the seasonal changes as the planet cycles its way around the sun. A few steps to our car, a mad dash into work, we don't really see or make contact with nature.



This state of affairs puts us at a distinct disadvantage. Missing the sunrise or sunset, the smell of the heated summer grass in a field, or the light sprinkle of rain on our face and hands; we are missing the gifts of God. The solution is simple. Spend a few moments or minutes intentionally focusing your senses on the natural environment.

Go outside to let God's gift of creation wash over your senses and touch your heart. What you see, feel, and hear is always there to comfort, inspire and calm us.



Rain by Father Benedict Auer O.S.B.

"The modern predicament is in this way structurally different from anything which went before."

Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*.

I heard it in the night.
I thought it was the Sound and the waves hitting the embankment.

This morning there were puddles on the patio and the furniture was wet.

Miniscule drops of water colored the window with little diamonds that caught the gray day, but no tiny rainbows. Instead it felt rain, the air was damp, a chill seeped into your bones, and the madrona leaves were slick with last night's showers. But the tree closest to the house, a huge pine was untouched, its bark was old and misshapen but dry, while the ivy that climbed up the trunk was untouched by the precipitation. The four day retreat is actually over this evening, I am no evaluator of what took place, too close, too well fed by the talented novices to pass judgment.

There are times when I just shook my head, but mostly I just enjoyed the time. Stories slipped out, comments about self and family, but nothing surprising that I did not know.

All are older men by comparison and that is very good, the innocence is gone, experience makes these men different, not bad, only more secular, more mature, yet more worldly. Two naive and two more not so, all drug free.

Those entering the monastery are much more conservative now, religiously, artistically.

I just find myself old. I do not know about X-boxes or use I-pods and even programs on my computer that produce games or copy DVD's. It is a different world.

One that is not readily accessible to monks who have resided behind walls for twenty or more years.

My purpose is presence, not instruction.

Other monks come for the input, I only for the supervision.

What I do they see, who I am I share, but I cannot instruct them in what to do. I'm certainly not the norm.

I poet. I listen to non-country music. I see God in the ordinary.

I expect self-discipline, but often do not have it or even try. I am bipolar.

I am not very ordinary rather somewhat un-monkish. Who am I to tell others what to do?

At my age, I have lost my pretenses, I don't have to be anything but who I am.

I am not going to change, only modify or maybe soften or mellow, but not much else is in the wind

except the place where all monks eventually go.

I wonder what the future is for our Abbey, if this is it, I am not worried,

We need people to stay and commit and that is the most serious problem -

Tomorrow they could all be gone.

But then in ten years they could all be here.

It is the mystery of God. It is the leap of faith.

Like the appearance of the sun after the rain.

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.

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

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

Contact Oblate Director:

E-mail: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

Phone: 360-438-4457

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Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

St. Martin's Abbey

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Lacey, WA 98503

July 7th — Oblate Sunday — July 7th

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

We will meet on the north end of new courtyard for a Potluck picnic. Please bring a dish to share. Plates, utensils, cups and drinks will be supplied. Brother Nicolaus O.S.B. will talk on "Justice in the Holy Rule" at 1:30 in the ABBEY CHURCH. If you are hard of hearing please sit up front. If need be, you can take a chair and sit under the speaker in the atrium. People with hearing problems hear very well at this location - you just can't see the speaker.

Retreat August 10th 2013

Join us for Mass at 8:00 AM. We will head to Lambert Lodge at 9:00. There will be a van-pool for those not wanting to drive. Our theme will be the Holy Rule. Bring a dish for our pot luck lunch at noon and we will conclude around 3 and depart at 3:30PM.

Lambert Lodge Directions: South on I-5 and West on Hwy. 101. Exit for Evergreen College or earlier exit of Black Lake Blvd., Either route will take you to Cooper Pt. Rd., Follow Cooper Pt. Rd. for several miles to 67th St. (Left turn by a ships anchor sign holder). Down 67th and left on to Belle Vista St. The Address is 6525 Belle Vista St. Last drive at the end onto dirt drive way. It's about a 20 minute drive from the Abbey.

Prayer Requests

The following Oblates need your prayers:

Oblate Bruce Tenney,
 Oblate Judy Shincke,
 Oblate Bill Lagreid and his wife Barb,
 Oblate Kay Sullivan (Pace maker implant),
 Oblate Fr. Steve Gallagher who is back at the abbey for tests and R&R.

Remember too our home bound Oblates and those who have recently been affected by the natural disasters.

Mark your Calendars

PLAN AHEAD:

OBLATE SUNDAYS 2013 dates:

September 8th, Brother Aelred O.S.B.

December 8th, Oblate Gavin MacHutchin

Welcome



Those making final oblation in May. James Riddell, Barb Miller, Marg Birchem, Ted Larsen, and Dale Pollard.

Our novices: Son Nugyen, Greg Lente, Suzanne Rothwell, and Otto Fink.



On the Book Shelf...

Women in Ministry and the Writings of Paul by Karen M. Elliott, C.P.P.S.

Called Together, An Introduction to Ecclesiology by Christopher McMahon

Encountering Ancient Voices, Second Ed. A Guide to Reading the Old Testament by Corrine L. Carvalho, PhD

On the Web...

Sites to inspire:

Seeingcreation.com

Nature photographers Chuck Summers and Rob Sheppard who want to highlight a spiritual connection with nature through photography.

Abbeyofthearts.com

Christine Valters Paintner offers a virtual monastery that offers a variety of online classes, reflections, and resources which integrate contemplative practice and creative expression.