

Oblates of Saint Benedict

Saint Martin's Abbey

March 2014

Volume 2 Issue 19

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

Dear brother and sister Oblates:

I would like to make some comments on the matter of "faults". In numerous chapters, the Holy Rule speaks to the correction of faults. In this light, I would like to say some things about "blaming" which I believe comes under the category of faults. Blaming is the result of the unwillingness to accept responsibility for a fault. A fault can rise from psychological or spiritual reasons, such as a poor self image, or never having learned how to be responsible for one's actions. St. Benedict seems to take this demon by the horns and sets guidelines to uproot and expose the demon for what it is worth.

So much of the Holy Rule deals with some aspect of faults. The aim of these is to prevent faults and foster spiritual growth. Obedience, humility, discipline in the monastery, reminder of reverence in prayer, and silence are some of the pillars upon which we stand. Our hope is to rise above the demons which threaten to snare us into the nets of faults or, deeper still, sin.

Once the fault or sin rises in us there are the chapters that act as a "healing tool" to breathe new life into our souls. Chapter 23, Excommunication for Faults; Chap. 24, Degrees of Excommunication; Chap. 28, Those who Refuse to Amend after Frequent Reproofs; Chap. 44, Satisfaction by the Excommunicated; Chap. 46, Faults Committed in Other Matters, may be considered good reading for rooting out sin and faults.

In any organization: monastery, convent, large or small companies, the one thing that can destroy it is dishonesty, failure to accept responsibility and passing the blame on down or up the ladder chain. If we become aware of problems they are best faced head on. Saying, "it's not my problem" is a problem in itself, because we are a part of the whole package. A small spoiled apple in a box, given time, will spread to the whole crate. When a religious develops a habit of murmuring this begins to sour others in that community. When an employee develops a bad attitude like a virus, it can spread to embitter those around him.

St. Benedict saw the ruins of societies and communities, so he wisely acted to nip such negativity in the bud. The Chapter of Faults and the Amendments of monks to their Abbot and brothers are ways of exposing the demons as they present themselves. St. Benedict is careful not to destroy a person and so he suggests that the offense be brought privately before the supervisor. The Sacrament of Reconciliation plays a role here as well. Only as a last resort is the fault brought out more openly that, perhaps by shame, the violator will come around.

For those of you in a business, a good book to read is, St. Benedict's Rule - For Business Success. I have been working through it and see many applications for businesses and for families. Bending and flexing with the Spirit of St. Benedict you can exorcise the demons from your environment. Get rid of the flab and decay that causes trouble in our life.

Abbot's Reflection by Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.



One of the ways I could always upset my father was to look like I was not listening to him. Obviously, learning to listen is important in one's life. Saint Benedict opens the Rule with "Listen my son to your master's precepts and incline the ear of your heart." If we think about it, one's whole life, one's Christian life can be so much stronger and positive if one learns to listen. The word "son" is only referred to twice in the Rule. Thereafter Benedict uses the word "brother". In other words, the Lord is the only real Master. We are the pupil and the child. As followers of Benedict, it is then of paramount importance that we cultivate and practice listening. The Rule is a brief course to educate one to listen, to be attentive, and to be open to the voice of the Lord. We know God speaks to us in a number of subtle ways. We see God's creative hand and beauty in nature, in forests, mountains and hills. We see God, if we are looking, everywhere. We monks sing a hymn during the Christmastide with the line, "Every star shall sing a carol" which refers to the birth of Jesus. In the present, 2014, God is speaking to us in the community of family, in the liturgy, in scripture, in the Church, in our spiritual reading and lectio, and even in the sorrows of our lives.

Benedict says, "Listen". It is always an invitation to listen to the Lord. Why would we ever decide not to listen? When we don't listen to one another, we build walls of misunderstandings, we lock out real communication, and negativity can result which is devastating to any community. Mutual respect needs to be woven into the fabric of our life. We need to guard ourselves against a closed mind and we need to avoid being opinionated. We cannot be open to God when we are closed in on our own opinions and thoughts.

In other words, we, as Benedictines, work at listening precisely to perceive the voice of God. Such is truly the beginning of spiritual art, to being led by the sanctifying Lord.

LISTEN

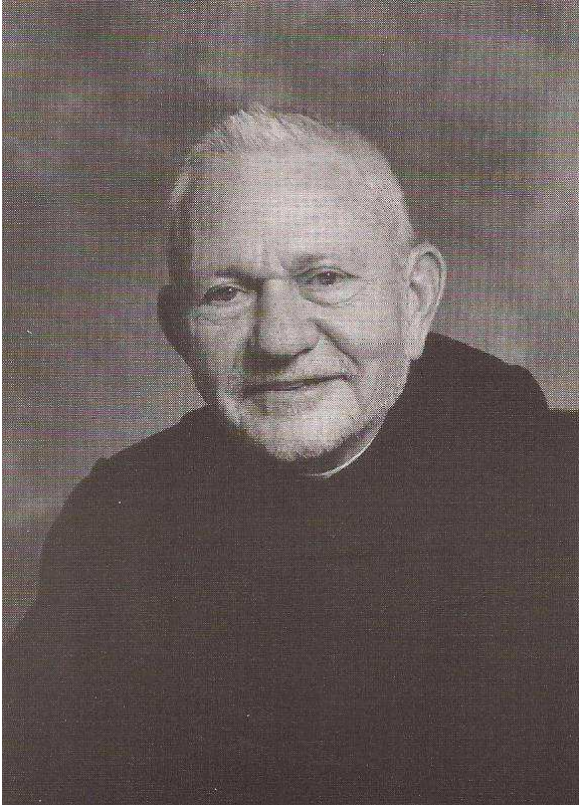
In the Beginning...by Father Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

August, 1954 saw the clearing developed just north of the water tower to provide more parking spaces for the abbey "rolling stock" (sic!) and heavy equipment. The first of the laymen's retreats began on August 5, with 154 men attending; the second on August 12, with 218 men present; the third on August 19, with 230 men; and the fourth retreat on August 26, with a record attendance of 258....On August 6, **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** and **Father Clement Pangratz** attended the funeral in Port Angeles of Mrs. Mary Glenn, mother of **Father Damian Glenn (1907-1986)**... August proved a good month too for digging trenches and installing about 500 feet of storm sewer to drain the roadway and lower campus west of Anselm Hall (a barracks-style temporary dormitory just west of the old shop/engineering building).

On September 26, **Abbot Raphael** left for an extended trip to the Midwest. At 4 PM that afternoon, he conducted a meeting of Yakima Oblates. September 29 found him at Assumption Abbey in Richardton, North Dakota for an abbatial blessing. Following a series of meetings, he wound up at Saint Meinrad Archabbey in Indiana on October 14 for the celebration of that monastery's centennial....The subprior, **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-1982)** had surgery on September 21 (his anniversary of vows!) for a chronic ulcer condition....**Father William Dickerson** left on September 16 to begin doctoral studies in psychology at Catholic University of America in Washington DC....An article by **Father Matthew Britt (1872-1955)** on the care of sacred vessels which appeared in the magazine "The Priest", was being reprinted by the abbey, with permission from the publisher, as a courtesy to the clients of the gold plating department.

For those who remember The Good Old Days, tuition and student body fees were \$187.50 per semester in the college, while board and room were \$270 per semester. Textbooks and lab fees were extra. In the high school, the tuition and student body fees were \$65 per semester, with school insurance costing \$7.50 per year. Board and lodging in the high school was \$285 per semester, prompting one fond father to remark, "I can send my boy to Saint Martin's for less than it would cost me to keep him at home." Oh would that were true today! Also to be noted: there were student retreats for both high school and college every autumn. On December 1-4, 1954, Father Edward J. Nixon, SJ preached to the college students and the high school seniors, while **Father Damian Glenn** gave conferences to the other high school students.

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



Saint Martin's Abbey is surrounded by beautiful trees and I was asked by a recent visitor: "Who takes care of the trees?" There are many of my monastic confreres who have had a special interest in our trees during my years at the Abbey, but I immediately thought of my confrere **FATHER URBAN FEUCHT**. When I first returned from three years of theological studies in Spain, **FATHER URBAN** and I walked through the Abbey forests each morning after breakfast. We spoke of my recent years in Spain, of his work in pastoral care at the local hospital, and of the trees. He was used to working with his ax in the forest, and always interested in which trees might have to be felled due to disease or death. **FATHER URBAN** passed to God on Saturday, 7th December, and his Mass of Christian burial was celebrated by **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** in the Abbey Church of Monday, 16th December. **FATHER URBAN**'s long – time confrere – friend – fellow woodworker, **FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL** delivered the occasional sermon.

When **BROTHER KENNETH MALLOY** passed to God, a niece of his brought dozens and dozens of red Freedom Roses to the funeral Mass. Members of **FATHER URBAN**'s family sent a very special wreath. In keeping with the pre-Christmas season, the wreath was adorned with ornaments which reflected **FATHER URBAN**'s work and interests. It was a beautiful tribute to the deceased. He's much missed by confreres, family, and many former students and patients to who he ministered. R.I.P.

As the community bid an earthly farewell to **FATHER URBAN**, it welcomed a new member. On 19th January, **ABBOT NEAL** received **POSTULANT GUS LABAYEN** into our community. He will have **FATHER GERARD KIRSCH** as postulant director; in discerning his vocation to Saint Martin's. **POSTULANT GUS** was assisted by the **ABBOT**, **FATHER PETER TYNAN**, members of the vocation team and others in the community. Our new postulant is a recent graduate in music from Central Washington University. A gifted musician, he is both a pianist and a singer. For exercise and recreation, he joins a small group of monks who favor bicycle riding. When only in the community for a few days, our new postulant was asked to pinch hit for choir director **BROTHER AELRED WOODARD** as cantor. **BROTHER AELRED** was a way from the Abbey giving a workshop. Warm welcome, **Gus!**

As loss changes the fabric of a community, so too, does the addition of a new member. We are thankful for the work and fellowship of our late confrere **FATHER URBAN** over many decades, and look forward to integrating **Gus** and his many gifts into our monastic family at Saint Martin's. Remember us in your prayers as we continue to seek God in community.

Our Newest Monks



Gus Labayen started his Postulancy January 19th at St. Martin's Abbey. He has lived most of his life in Gig Harbor. He graduated from Gig Harbor High School in 2007 & Central Washington University in 2012 with a Bachelor of Music in Keyboard Performance and a Religious Studies minor. Early 2012 he traveled to Macau, China (Special Administrative Region) and taught class piano and choir at Hou Kong Middle School. He likes to bike, and write in his free time.

His brother Jim is a freshman at Western Washington University studying Biology and is on the cycling and tennis teams. His Dad, Louie, and his parents Fred and Josie live in Gig Harbor and Mom Rose lives in Tampa, Florida. Gus is looking forward to his formation here at the monastery.

Gus' blog is www.saisondegrandcru.blogspot.com

"The Lord will guard your coming and going both now and forever."

Psalm 121:8



My name is **Martin Dinh**. Currently I am a novice here at St. Martin's Abbey. I was asked by Brother Edmund to write a synopsis about myself and with approval from Fr. Gerard my novice master, I am glad to do so. Let me start with how I first came to know St. Martin and after that I would like to share with you my novitiate experience.

I was born and raised in Vietnam until I was nine years old. Then in 1997 my whole family immigrated to the United States to reunite with the rest of our family. I am the youngest out of five children, four boys and one girl. I remember when I was young, we would wake up at four AM for Mass. We were taught Catholicism by the Dominican sisters. Next, I would go to school and after that I helped my father in the rice paddies. Life was simple, yet our faith was pure. It was much easier for us to follow God's teaching and obey His commandments.

It was in my senior year of high school that I felt God was calling me to become a priest. Thus, I talk to the vocation director of Seattle diocese and was sent to Bishop White Seminary in Spokane. I was there for 2 years and after a period of discernment, I determined that I was searching for something more of a religious life style. Though at that time, I didn't know much about different religious orders and what they were all about. Fortunately, I had a classmate who was looking for a Catholic College and he introduced me to St. Martin's in 2010. It took me about two years of visiting and working with the monks that ultimately gave me the courage to take the initial step of becoming a monk.

One may ask what a novice does beside eating, sleeping, working, and praying. Well, that pretty much sums up what I do. However, despite all the physical things necessary for survival it is the spiritual aspect of it that I am more concerned about. Just like we need food for our body, how much more important it is then for us to nourish our mind and spirits. What I'm hoping to get out of my novitiate is to have a closer relationship with Christ and learn how to live according to the rule of St. Benedict. Though, I have an obvious goal in mind, as much as I would like it to happen, it's really a lifelong process. Therefore, I have a long road ahead of me, but my trust is in the Lord.

Transplanted by Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

**"When I think of the Crucifixion, I commit the sin of envy"
Simone Weil**



I spend a lot of my time envying other people.
Too much time dreaming about who I would like to be
or what I would like to do,
or even just picturing myself in a life other than my own.
Minutes pass then hours in this fantasy repast,
and all of it is wasted time.
For who I am is who I am,
and actually I am coming to believe that ain't so bad.

Yesterday, I was admiring a Yucca plant that was flowering outside the Abbey Church.
I wasn't sure it was a Yucca Plant but then again it looked like one.
So, I asked Abbot Conrad, "What is that plant outside of the Abbey Church that looks like a Yucca plant?"
His answer was simple, "It is!"
And then he added, "How do you think it got there?"
Smiling he said, "I brought it back from Colorado. I was afraid it wouldn't grow in this climate but it did."
I reflected as a transplant so did I,
A Midwesterner transplanted to the Pacific Northwest.



I am reading about the Romanovs after the Russian Revolution
and how they did not transplant very well.
They couldn't adapt, they needed an atmosphere
much too rarified outside of imperial Russia
and so they fumbled through the rest of their lives,
never really living, only making the motions
pretending to be who they were,
and never becoming who they had become.

I think that possibly my envy is behind me.
Although my personality trait has envy as its vice,
I have just come to accept this as who I am.
And I can live with that, and even better die with that proposition,
so now I can get on with my life.
Realizing the mountains have been climbed,
the terrain investigated,
and finally I have sunk down roots
a Transplanted Midwesterner in the Pacific Northwest.

Little Things that Count by Oblate Bill Lagreid

Free throws made or missed, field goals made or missed and sacrifice bunted ball executed well or missed are the little things in sports that frequently win or lose games on the athletic fields and courts around the world. It is the little things that people do or say that count and either discourage or encourage relationships between friends and neighbors, husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and students.

Habitual and constant complaining and taking a negative response to everyday life can be addictive; it can be corrosive to productive relationships. Teachers and parents frequently find themselves caught in the habit of being negative when dealing with children. A son once said to his mother, “You always scold me when I do something wrong but you never say anything when I do something right.”

With her hands on her hips, index finger pointing at her son's nose and her eyes fixed on his, she scowled and replied, “Of course. I'm your mother, you're supposed to do what is right, it's my job to tell you when you do things wrong and correct you.” That's the son's lasting memory of his mother because she could never change her approach to everyday life.

As Christians we're called to follow our spiritual leader, Jesus, as our model for living our daily lives by showing care, concern, compassion, forgiveness, and by assisting, helping and praying for all the members of our family and community.

This is not to suggest that we stand mute when confronted with injustices or sinfulness. It does however call on us to model the message of Jesus in our daily relationship with others.

As followers of the Rule of Saint Benedict a re-read of the Prologue, Chapters 5, 6, 7, and 72 might be helpful on this topic.

Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis

Recently, Oblate Patricia and I (Brother Edmund) have emailed oblates about the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis . I have been able to have our CRC department make paper back books of it. I have printed about 6 and they are moving. If you wish a copy please let me know as soon as possible so I can print on demand and have them when you want to pick them up or me send them. My goal is to get the Letter in your hands for reading. I am asking a mere \$10 and if you wish a copy to be sent please add \$2. The Letter is about 220 pages. Perhaps in some future time we can discuss the Letter.

Reconciliation by Oblate J.J. Nugent



Confessional Screen at
Kenrick-Glennon Seminary
Chapel, St. Louis, MO
(Photo: scotus)

I was preparing for reconciliation the other day. I was making a short list of sins and how I would explain my failings to my confessor. I wanted him to understand the context of my sins and recognize that I was making progress in some areas. I was growing more anxious by the minute and I really just wanted to get the whole procedure/sacrament over as soon as possible.

Confession has always been an ordeal for me even if they changed the name to name to Reconciliation. I was sitting in a neurotic puddle of sweat when I realized that I habitually approach confession/reconciliation with the wrong attitude. Some rethinking was in order.

God know all your sins, so nothing you are going to disclose is going to be new to Him.

Forget about appearing like a good guy to the priest. He is there to represent Christ.

If you want full forgiveness you must disclose the whole ugly sin.

The whole sacrament is supposed to be joyful and helpful if we let it.

Reconciliation is like the restart button on a video game. It is a rare opportunity to start your life over.

Do you know someone interested in developing a deeper prayer life through the Benedictine Way? Encourage and or bring them along to the days of Recollection and other Oblate Activities. All are welcome.

Prayer Requests

Sr. Rita Vallee, a friend of many years. R.I.P.

Fr. Urban Feucht, O.S.B. R.I.P.

Professor Dr. Steve Fulton recovering from massive heart attack.

Oblate Michael Roberts - illness.

Oblate Bruce Tenney - illness.

Oblates in need of healing and support.

March 2nd – Oblate Recollection Sunday – March 2nd

Join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11AM. Buy your lunch in the student cafeteria.

1:30 presentation in the Abbey Church.

Oblate Bene Reece on the Oblate congress. Followed by, What ways can I live out the *Labora* of being a Benedictine Oblate?



Congratulations ! Oblate Bene Reece. Benedette has been asked to serve on the committee for making preparations for the next World Oblate Congress in Rome in 2016. The committee will meet yearly before the next Congress. The first meeting will be in Morocco. This also means she will again represent St. Martin's at the next Congress.

Mark your Calendars

May 4, 2014 Presentation by Father Marion Nguyen, OSB

July 13, 2014 Annual Picnic with discussion on How we can carry out the *labora* of being a Benedictine Oblates.

Aug. 9, 2014 Oblate Retreat DVD presentation by Br. Joachim on *Labora* and Br. Jeremiah on monastic poverty and simplicity.

Sept. 7, 2014 Presentation by Sr. Laura Swan, OSB.

Dec. 7, 2014 Presentation by Br. Aelred Woodard, OSB

Mark your calendars and spread the word, Archdiocesan Events in coming months:

March 29, Saturday, Men's Conference, "*Iron Strikes Iron*", one full day, to be held at St. Monica's Parish on Mercer Island. I (Brother Edmund) plan to attend again. The Archbishop will speak, plus a couple of others.

July 31 - August 3, Youth Conference, *Ignite Your Torch NW*, Live out the Culture of Life ! At St Martin's Abbey/University in Lacey. More information go to www.ignitenw.org

Peace advocate Ken Butigan to lecture at Saint Martin's University at the Benedictine

The Benedictine Institute will welcome recognized peace advocate, author and educator Ken Butigan, Ph.D., HS'72, as the spring 2014 distinguished speaker for the next Benedictine Institute Lecture on **Saturday, Feb. 8**, at Saint Martin's University, 5000 Abbey Way SE. This new lecture series provides a forum for the discussion of faith-related issues.

Butigan's presentation, "Blessed Are the Peacemakers: Deepening the Faithful Journey of Gospel Non-violence in Our Lives and Our World," will begin at **2 p.m. in the University's Cebula Hall**. The event is free and open to the public; those planning to attend are asked to R.S.V.P. online.

For more information:

Father Marion Nguyen, O.S.B.

Assistant Director, Benedictine Institute

360-412-6155; fr_marion@stmartin.edu

This years **Oblate Bazaar** plus the Trade Fair at St. Michaels yielded about \$1,000. **Many Thanks for those who worked the events and donated material for them.** This year we will consider having our Bazaar in September.

The Oblate Office carries Oblate Jackets, Polo Shirts, badges, Oblate Manuals and Oblate Directories, Benedictine Prayer booklets etc. Please check these out when attending the meetings.

Recently, Oblate Patricia and I (Brother Edmund) have emailed oblates about Pope Francis Apostolic Exhortation. I have been able to have our CRC department make paper back books of it. I have printed about 6 and they are moving. If you wish a copy please let me know as soon as possible so I can print on demand and have them when you want to pick them up or me send them. My goal is to get the Letter in your hands for reading. I am asking a mere \$10 and if you wish a copy to be sent please add \$2. The Letter is about 220 pages. Perhaps in some future time we can discuss the Letter.

Interested in being more involved consider coming to the regional Oblate/Director conference June 21-22, 2014.

It will be held at Ascension Monastery in Jerome Idaho. Space in limited. We will probably drive over. If

Please stay in touch. Send in your Oblation renewals and donations. This helps us keep our records up to date and reminds you of your commitment to the Benedictine way of life.

Oblates

Good Works

Labora

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

360-438-4457;
br_edmund@stmartin.edu

March 15, 2014

Oct. 18, 2014

Gardening and

Wood:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm

When rosary making isn't in session come join us in the dirt.

Wood workers are needed for piling, cutting, loading, delivering.

Rosary Work. Saturdays,

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Meet in the Guest dining room of Old Main across from the Monastery refectory.

Rosary makers and twine cutters are needed. Our rosaries go to the military and missions.

March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, July 12, Aug. 2, Sept. 6, Oct. 4, Nov. 1, and Dec. 6.

Thanks and appreciation for those who go the extra mile and more to be part of the Charity of heart and selfless giving.

On the Book Shelf

The Papal Exhortation Letter - A must read for all Christians.

Rediscovering Values - On Wall Street, Main Street, and Your Street, A Moral Compass for the New Economy, by Jim Wallis.

The Shadow Man, A Daughter's Search of Her Father by Mary Gordon

Who Would Jesus Kill? War, Peace, and the Christian Tradition by Mark J. Allman.

If you read a book and would like to write a brief overview of it for our readers please submit it to the editor at Ravenwings@comcast.net.

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