

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey



OBLATES OF SAINT BENEDICT

Oblate Community of Saint Martin's

May 2017

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

Dear Oblate brothers and sisters:

Questions have arisen about the book titled, *The Benedict Option* by Rod Dreher. While I have not read the book, I have read a few commentaries on this book. Because of this, I will take a guarded view regarding it. There is a consensus among readers that Dreher has taken a Purists point of view of Benedict. It seems you could call it a “fundamentalist” point of view or a narrow interpretation of Benedict and his “Rule for beginners.”

Those of us who have lived by the Rule of Benedict for years, whether monks, nuns, sisters, or oblates, we believe we have a better insight into Benedict than to “leap off the cliff” into a Benedictine melting pot. Benedict has been for us, one who tempers all things with justice and mercy. His very Holy Rule speaks of moderation in all things. Each era, events and activities of the Order must be measured with the times and location. Societies are learning slowly, hopefully in a timely manner to meet the needs of the times.

David Brooks, the columnist for the New York Times seems to have it together. I wonder what his background is? Brooks suggests our response for the times should be more of an Orthodox Pluralism. He says, “It is to surrender to some orthodoxy that will overthrow the superficial obsessions of the self and put one's life in contact with the transcendent ideal. But it is also to reject the notion that that ideal can be easily translated into a pure, homogenized path. It is on the contrary, to throw oneself more deeply into friendship with complexity, with different believers and atheists, liberals and conservatives, and dissimilar and unlike.” Purism that does not allow for differences is not Benedictine, nor Christian. Brooks goes on to say, “It is a form of Purism that cannot tolerate difference because it cannot humbly accept the mystery of truth.”

Here-in is where I see conversion of self, conversion of others by walking in friendship with the other, not seeking truth for the self but God's truth which can be revealed to those in dialogue. In Community, religious rub against one another, unless there is some sort of dialogue the friction that develops can be destructive. We seek not only resolution but also constructive ends.

Yes, St. Benedict does have an option for today but I don't believe it is as the author, Rod Dreher describes. The Benedictines have their work cut out for them. How many of us have a clear vision of that option? It is in the works. Remember moderation, charity, reason, and justice are key elements in that vision.

In St. Benedict, I am,

**Bro. Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.**

## Abbot's Reflection - Abbot Neal Roth, O.S.B.

A few years back Fr. George was the principal celebrant for our Sunday Mass. He preached one of his inimitable parables. One line he used in the homily's conclusion stuck with me – “We keep working at it until we get it right.” Some of us approach each New Year with resolutions for the coming months with the idea that we need to change. Each Lent, we resolve to do something ascetical during Lent. The gospel for Ash Wednesday instructs us to pray in secret, to give alms in secret, and to fast in privacy. In chapter 49 of the Rule, Benedict states in strong, clear words “that the life of a monk ought always to have the character of a Lenten observance.” Obviously, we believe that Lent is not just another liturgical season that we wander through aimlessly. As Benedictines, we take chapter 49 of the Rule seriously. We make every effort to refrain from sin, to pray, to engage in holy reading, and to observe, as we are able, the fast and abstinence days. Benedict was serious about Lent and so as followers of the Rule, we should be serious about Lent. Is there any one thing in our life that we really need to focus on and do battle? Even outside of Lent, do we make every effort to make needed changes in our life? Benedict makes the difficult seem possible. He emphasizes prayer from the heart, prayer of trust in the loving kindness of God. Then he refers to holy reading. He reminds his followers that Lent is the season of reading sacred scripture. He wants his followers to have a hunger for the scriptures and a love of reading. In other words, we need to pursue holy reading and savor spiritual reading.

As members of Benedict's company, we certainly know that Benedict expects a certain amount of asceticism in one's life. Sometimes that may take the form of getting up on time, holding a sharp comeback, or performing one's work with integrity and honesty. The Rule outlines a certain amount of discipline which, when respected and adhered to, results in real joy and a sense of accomplishment (keeping one's Lenten resolutions for the whole forty days!).

By Easter and in the months to come, we celebrate Christ is Risen in our renewed and disciplined hearts. We are refreshed in our faith to the core, having got rid of some of those pesky spiritual fleas. And that is, I believe, “working at it until we get it right.”



Image found at [embeddedfaith.org](http://embeddedfaith.org)

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

## In the Beginning - Father Gerard Kirsch, O.S.B.

On December 17, 1955, Bert Crowley, brother of Oblate **BROTHER CHARLES CRAWLEY (1876-1958)** and **BROTHER JOSEPH CROWLEY (1884-1973)** and himself an employee at Saint Martin's, died at Saint Peter Hospital. On December 18, **FATHERS MARCEL BERTHON (1899-1975)** and **Walter Hellan (1920-1968)** were stranded in Tacoma by a heavy snowfall. On December 23, **postulant Don Batey** took photos of sacred vessels, to be incorporated into a pictorial inventory ... December 25 was quiet at the abbey, with so many assigned to parish work and those at home tired from liturgical ceremonies; but many had revived by the time of the community Christmas that evening. On December 31, a thanksgiving service and pontifical benediction closed the year 1955.

January 1, 1956 began a new year with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. On January 2, **FATHER PLACIDUS REISCHMAN(1926-2000)** and **Frater Kevin McStay** gathered marine specimens for the biology department, mostly dogfish for dissection and study. On January 6, **ABBOTT RAPHAEL HEIDER (1903-1971)**, **FATHER JOHN RAYMOND (1911-1974)** and **FATHER WALTER HELLAN (1920-1968)** had a meeting with Housing and Home Finance Agency in Seattle regarding completion of the final application form for loan assistance for the construction of a proposed new dormitory (Baran Hall, 1957). On January 25, **Abbot Raphael** went to Seattle for the investiture of oblate novices and the reception of final oblations at Assumption parish.

In other abbey news, **FATHER RICHARD CEBULA (1916-2004)** claimed that he was the only priest member in the United States of the American Society of Engineers, although there were a number of religious Brothers. **FATHER DAMIAN GLENN (1907-1986)** and **FATHER FELIX WIRTH (1913-1984)** attended a dinner at the Sorrento Hotel in Seattle on February 1 where priests of the Archdiocese who were to preach on the Catholic Press had gathered to make plans ... **Father Walter Hellan**, procurator (business agent) of the abbey, left on February 3 to attend a meeting of Benedictine procurators at Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota.



Image found at weebay.com

Second semester registration in January 1956 showed a total of 227 college students, of whom 124 were boarders and 103 were day students. There were 105 freshmen, 50 sophomores, 28 juniors, 37 seniors, and 7 graduate or special students. Seventy were veterans, 55 married, and 69 non-Catholics. The Saint Martin's High School basketball team was playing all its games away because the heating plant in the gym wasn't working. The high school glee club went to Sumner on February 2 to give a concert in the Saint Andrew's parish hall. On February 3, Ken Stevens, college graduate of 1954 and music instructor at Yelm High School, presented his band and chorus in an exchange performance in the abbey theater.

**From The Hill - Boniface V. Lazzari, O.S.B.**



Image found at seedman.com

Spring officially arrived in late March, as usual. It was a wet rainy spring, softened with occasional periods of sun. Witness to spring's arrival are some of the flowers that are beginning to bloom, notably the lovely white violets in the Abbey Church rose garden. Violets, be they white, rose, or violet-colored are a certain harbinger of spring. In the same way, the rose-colored vestments that appear on Laetare Sunday are a sign that the Lenten season is half over and we are approaching Easter, a time of growth and new life. At Easter, the community will welcome back **BROTHER NICOLAUS WILSON**, who this semester is completing a theological program and will take a respite from Mount Angel Seminary during the Easter holidays prior to returning to Mount Angel to finish the academic year. **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** recently appointed **BROTHER NICOLAUS** Novice and Junior Master for Saint Martin's Abbey. When Postulant **BRANDON RAPPUHN** enters the novitiate, he will become **BROTHER NICOLAUS'** first novice.

**ABBOT NEAL** received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Saint Martin's University at a special luncheon during the 2017 homecoming activities. Following the luncheon, alums and friends joined members of the monastic community for coffee in Harned Hall ... **BROTHER LUKE DEVINE** will return to California in May to "walk" and pick up the diploma he earned on completing his requirements as a doctoral candidate at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, last fall ... **FATHER PAUL WECKERT**, Vocation Director and Guest master for the Abbey, will spend a month at Sant' Anselmo, Rome, in late Spring/early Summer. He will be participating in a monastic renewal program. Participants will visit places that shaped Saint Benedict of Nursia, our patron, and study anew, parts of his Rule as well as the Dialogues of Saint Gregory ... **ABBOT NEAL**, **SUBPRIOR RAMON NEWELL**, **FATHER BEDE CLASSICK** and this writer all were guests at the University's 65th annual engineering banquet at which **ABBOT NEAL** gave the invocation ... Our newest doctor, **BROTHER LUKE**, traveled to southwestern Washington to give a presentation on Benedictinism at a Quaker Meeting this spring.

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## From the Hill continued:

Each person in the monastic community has an assigned job; sometimes he has more than one. Most monks are also involved, be it their principal assignment or an “extra”s in what one of our late confreres used to call “in house services” -- those things necessary to keep the monastery and life in community on a smooth path. One of **BROTHER NICOLAUS'** in house services is being attentive to the Abbey's motor pool --- making certain that the Abbey's motor vehicles are ready for use. During his absence this semester, that service is being taken care of by **FATHER PAUL**. Both **BROTHER NICOLAUS** and **FATHER PAUL** have wide experience when it comes to the maintaining of motor Vehicles. **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE** is responsible for the condition of the physical plant. As such, he can be seen contracting with painters: for the painting of the interior of the monastery, as he did last fall, or changing the many lights in the Abbey Church with the assistance of **POSTULANT BRANDON**. Sacristan and Assistant Guest master **BROTHER BEDE NICOL** also acts as a liaison between the university and Monastic library, and also sees to the delivery of messages and packages left in Old Main's visitor's center for monks. **BROTHER NICOLAUS** seems to be a “go to” person for monks with computer problems. And this writer is frequently asked to practice his “throw away art” (So-named by an ethnomusicologist friend) and gift-wrap a special gift for someone. There is a snack bar in the monastery, and a half dozen or so monks take their week being the person responsible for keeping it stocked and in order. **BROTHER MARK** and **FATHER BENEDICT AUER**, our poet-monk, purchase the necessary supplies. The list goes on and on. It is the generosity of various confreres in their in house service that contribute to our lives running smoothly.

Condolences to **ABBOT NEAL**, whose sister died after a brief illness, and to **FATHER BEDE**, who recently learned of the death of a cousin R.I.P.

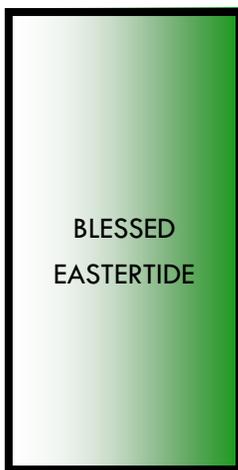


Image found at [peopleof.oureverydaylife.com](http://peopleof.oureverydaylife.com)

## ASH WEDNESDAY By Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

Holy Week Palms from last year  
burnt to ashes  
to be rubbed on the foreheads  
in a cruciform of penance.  
Each believer reminded  
from dust you have come  
and to dust you shall return.  
Forty days of Lent seems  
so very far away from Easter,  
as far as purple is from white,  
and the resurrected Christ.



Image found at catholic.org

You are so Beautiful  
By Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

"Let us make  
man in our  
image,  
after our own  
likeness....."

Genesis 1:26

Michelangelo could create from a  
block of stone a perfect man,  
a sculpted David.

The stone seemed to take on life,  
but, lacking breath, it remained stone.

For Michelangelo was a great artist, not God.  
His talents only mimicked his God.  
Yet the beauty he created is awesome and lasting.  
And even today his David stands amid Florentine treasures.

Now God creates in human flesh and bone,  
and breathes a soul within a man.  
He moulds and shapes,  
scrapes and buffs and even hurts,  
and finally stands back and allows to grow.

God makes us the way we are,  
no regrets, no excuses, just us.  
And then he whispers, through a lover's voice:  
**"You are so beautiful. I love you."**

## May 7th Oblate Community Sunday

Join your fellow Oblates and Monks for Mass in the Abbey church at 11 A.M. , followed by brunch for purchase in the student cafeteria (St. Gertrude's Hall). A time to share your journey and get to know your community. At 1:30 attend a presentation in the Abbey Church. At this time we are not sure who will be presenting. If Abbot Timothy's health needs are addressed then he will present if not then Sister Gertrude has volunteered to speak.

Investitures and Oblations will take place at this conference. If you are ready to be invested or to make your oblation ( having been invested last May). Please contact Brother Edmund before the conference with your intention. There is always some paperwork to be filled out in advance.

### Oblate Community dates for 2017

July 2nd Fr. Peter speaking on "Wisdom." Also our annual potluck picnic.

August 12th Retreat and potluck at Lambert lodge.

September 3rd Br. Nicolaus

December 3rd Br. Luke

### Mark the Date August 12th

"Opening the Door-Insights: Saint John of the Cross Saint Teresa of Calcutta"

Presenter:

Oblate Mary Randall, MA, MaC, LMHC.

Mary has presented many workshops on this material and delights in engaging and stretching minds. Mark your calendars now and be part of this spiritual journey. Mary worked as a pastoral assistant at Saint Patrick Parish in Tacoma for 18 years and has returned to Olympia for her retirement years.

### What you missed ...

Last time...Sister Gertrude spoke to us about "The art of searching for God." She encouraged each of us to see that we are all works of art. Masterpieces in the making. She left us with many things to reflect on, in particular who are the people who have influenced us on our journey in seeking God. She reminded us that God is with us and chasing after us when we stray. She encouraged us to use and discover our God given talents and let those talents shine forth in our service to God, the Church and our Oblate community. Sr. Gertrude asked us why we became oblates and why we remain so? We left our meeting pondering that every person has something to teach us about God, we just have to be open and ready to encounter the Christ within them.

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

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## Prayer Requests

R.I.P. Myra Mickels, the sister of Abbot Neal  
Sick & recovering friends of the Abbey and University  
Oblate Bill and Barbara Lagreid  
Olates Gavin & Carole Machutchin  
Growth in the Lord through The Rule of St. Benedict for all Oblates.

## On the Book Shelf

"Wisdom The Good Life" by Irene Nowell  
"Blessed Among Us" by Robert Ellsberg  
"Lectio Divina —The Medieval Experience of Reading" by Duncan Robertson

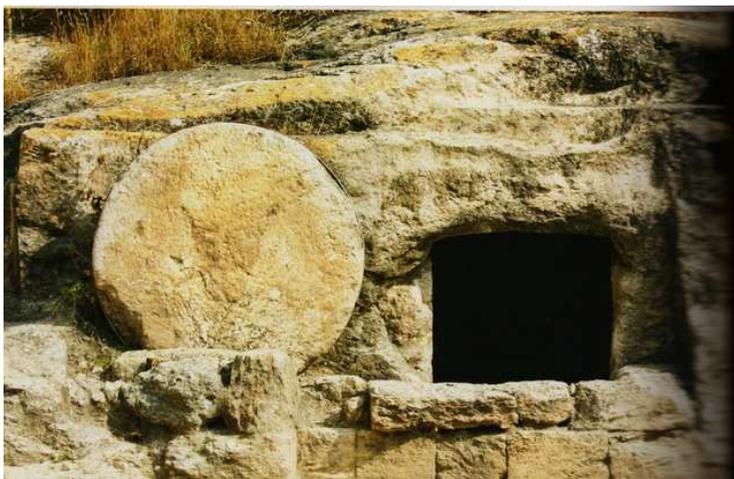


Image found at [theschoolmarm.com](http://theschoolmarm.com)

### **Almsgiving**

**"For I was in prison and you visited me." Matthew 25:35-36**

**"Send the uplifting message of Easter to incarcerated men, women, and youth. Notes and cards offering prayers and support will be disseminated by Catholic chaplains during weekly Masses at jails, prisons and youth facilities in the Archdiocese of Seattle. (Use your first name, but no other personal information.) Send them to: Joe Cotton, Criminal Justice Ministry, 710 ninth Ave., Seattle, Wa. 98104.**

## A Corner of the Universe By Oblate Bill Legreid

Within easy walking distance from the front door of our former house in the valley there are eight church buildings with signs out front inviting people of various Christian faith traditions to enter and worship every Sunday morning.

There are about twenty thousand people who live in the valley who send their children to the local schools and who shop at the two local grocery stores. There is one drugstore, hardware store and one post office. The people eat and meet at Chinese, Mexican, Thai, Greek, German, Italian, Japanese restaurants, the sports pub, pizza place, and the two coffee houses. We live in peace. We are all friends who respect the many racial, religious, and ethnic similarities and differences without demonstrations or intrusions into private lives.

The people in the valley live the constitutional promise of one nation under God with liberty and justice for all, that's why we have chosen to live here. On Sunday morning and during the week scripture study, prayer meetings and charitable outreach programs operate. Are we unusual? I don't think so but we prove the workability of the principle that peace is possible among faith-filled people of good will.

One might think we live in a remote area but we don't. This place fifteen minutes from the center of downtown Seattle and five minutes away from the center of two other equally peaceful church and diverse communities. We pray together in different places, play together, shop together, and celebrate the seasons together in peace because we respect each other and live the gospel teachings God has given us through Jesus.

What is it that keeps the lives of so many people from being like the people in our valley? Why is it so popular to be so contrary, faultfinding, self-centered? Why is it that competition between individuals and groups seems to be the norm in our modern society? What do I do, what do each of us do to further peace in our own little corner of the universe?

There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. If you worship money and things, if they are where you tap real meaning in life, then you will never have enough, never feel you have enough. It's the truth. Worship your body, beauty, and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. On one level, we all know this stuff already. It's been codified as Myths, proverbs, clichés, epigrams, parables; the skeleton of every great story. The whole trick is keeping the truth up front in daily consciousness.

**Thoughts of David Foster Wallace shared by Oblate Kathleen Hystad.**

**Grazie**  
**Merci**

**THANKS**

**Salamat po**

**Danke**

**Big Thanks to our Oblates who keep this community going.  
Thank you, Oblate advisors who meet the Saturday before Oblate Sunday to assist Brother Edmund in planning, managing, and sustaining our Oblate program.  
Thank you, Oblate Bene Reece who coordinated angels from St. Michael's parish to help with Lambert Lodge clean up in March.  
Thanks to the one Oblate and angel who showed up to clean inside Lambert Lodge.  
Thanks to the Oblate who helps run our office.  
Thanks to Oblate Carmen who runs our oblate store.  
Thanks to all our rosary makers.  
Thanks to those who set up and take down before, during, and after our meetings.  
Thanks to those who provide photos, poems, and insights for our newsletter.  
Thanks to those sewing, preparing, and ordering our products.**

It is coming.... Saint Martin's Oblates are hosting in 2018 the Northwest Regional Oblate conference. We will need volunteers. This is a time when several communities come together to support and learn from each other.

A quick note: Presently it looks like June of 2018 because of the groups that use the dormitory space during the summer months.

We don't have a cost yet since we have to coordinate with the University, but as soon as we know, we will contact those monasteries wishing to participate.

# Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

## GOOD WORKS

Contact Brother Edmund at 360-438-4457

Email: [br\\_edmund@stmartin.edu](mailto:br_edmund@stmartin.edu)

### LAMBERT LODGE WORK

Time: 10:00 - 3:00

**2017** Dates: Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>

The day includes, Prayers, Work, and a Potluck. In you are interested in lending a hand contact Brother Edmund.

### Gardening and Wood:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm

Gardeners and wood workers are appreciated during the summer and winter. Please call Br. Edmund to make arrangements.

### Rosary Makers will meet:

Time: 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm.

Location: Guest dining room of Old Main across from the Monastery refectory.

May 6th,  
June 3rd,  
July 1st,  
Aug. 5th,  
Sept. 2nd,  
Oct. 7th,  
Nov. 4th,  
Dec. 2nd.

### Oblate Advisory Meeting

Time: 10:00AM

Place: St Gertrude's Hall. (student cafeteria)

2017: May 6th, July 1st, Sept. 2nd, Dec. 2nd.

Editor: Oblate Patricia McClure E-mail: [Ravenwings@comcast.net](mailto:Ravenwings@comcast.net)  
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<http://www.saintmartinsabbey.org/Oblates/Newsletter01.htm>