

Oblates of Saint Benedict

Oblate Community of Saint Martin's Abbey

Volume 2 Issue 39

May 2018

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

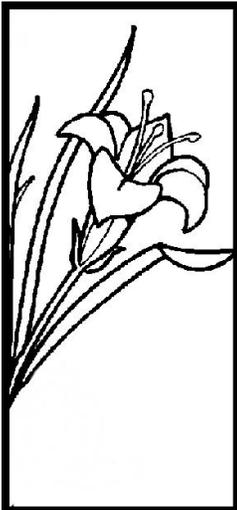
Dear brothers and sisters:

By the time you receive this letter we will have celebrated Easter, that highest of all holy days of the church. Why would I say such a thing? Well, if Jesus did not make the choice to make the ultimate sacrifice of himself for us sinners, we would still be in sin and forever dead, no chance for a resurrection or life with the Father in heaven. The gratitude we show Jesus, now and forever must be deep throughout our remaining days on earth.

While Jesus was on earth among us, he scattered the seeds of life wherever He went. As the parable tells us, some seed fell on dry soil and some on rocky soil and some on very fertile soil. The soil that was most dependable and inviting was the soil that yielded the most food. How is our soil? Are we nourishing it regularly so that when seeds fall they will grow strong and yield in abundance? Are we mindful to keep our soil free of weeds, for those evil weeds can choke out the good?

Jesus went the extra miles, seeding the word to all. He gave His very self to show the world He was the Son of God. Due to the hardness of many hearts, there were still many disbelievers. Even after the Resurrection many disbelieved, so hard was their hearts. But then there were many believers that took up their crosses and continued the mission of spreading the word of God. The tree of Life, Jesus, continues to this day to bear food for those who are thirsting for lasting nourishment. Again, are we receptive to the food, Jesus is ready to give us?

How do we prepare our soil to receive the seeds of life? The answer is simple to hear but a challenge to live out. Christ has given us much food in the scriptures to chew on. The saints have shown the way they found to walk with God. Each of our paths varies, as we are different. We must walk our path, not the path of another. Most of our paths will require us to hunt and gather up the word and pushing aside that which is **not** Godly. It is important to reinforce our lives with prayers of gratitude, praise, thanksgiving, and a dash of petitions for guidance. Leave all else to God. We are not the commanders of our life, God is. I believe the more we try to control the less in reality we command. Our plans can be frustrated because they are not those that have been laid out by our commanding God. The truth is, we must work alongside our Creator and shepherd. So this spring sew the *good* seeds so your life will green-up and bloom!



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

By the time this is printed, Lent will have passed, and we will be celebrating the Easter season. However, every Lent I find myself thinking a great deal about conversion - mainly my own conversion! Of course, as Christians, each of us is called to a lifetime of conversion. We used to use this word, conversion, in the sense of someone becoming a Catholic. Now we give it its original meaning of someone becoming a follower of Christ, a Christian. And that is always going to be a process of "becoming" with the goal of possessing God and sharing heaven with God. If one thinks about it, conversion is a daily challenge. There is always something in life that needs attention. We bump into the need for conversion both in the small and in the serious matters of life. Anger and frustration do not contribute to conversion, but charity does.

Conversion is a work that requires a workshop. That workshop is the heart of the Benedictine. No one can get into that heart unless we allow it. If we cannot get at the heart, we cannot assist others in any way. If the heart is closed, conversion is snuffed out. We all need conversion and we all need to support conversion in one another. We have the challenge of getting on with others, of testing our patience and growing in tolerance of others' weaknesses and oddities. We are all different and in our daily communication, "one size" does not fit all.

The cost of following Christ is to accept all the moments of life and to try to see, even when it is difficult, the possibility of salvation. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor, who was executed by the Nazis in 1945, wrote: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." But, this death is life-giving to others and to ourselves.

We are not helpless. We have the gospel and the Rule to guide us in all matters. Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me" (Matthew 11:29). We are all taught in the Rule to be seekers of God and that means that life is a journey of conversion of heart. Our life, our spiritual life, and conversion are intertwined. We must constantly practice what the gospel teaches. We can convert; we can change, but of course, it takes a great deal of prayer, work, discipline, time, and the kind assistance of our brothers and sisters.

On the Book Shelf

Humility Rules, 12-Step Guide to Genuine Self Esteem by Fr. Augustine Wetta, OSB.

Leona Martin A Difficult Life by Marie Baudouin-Croix.

Laudato Si by Pope Francis. Brother Edmund recommends this one.

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

On May 16, 1956, **Abbot Raphael Heider (1903-1971)** was in Portland for the golden priestly jubilee of Archbishop Edward D. Howard of Portland and the thirtieth anniversary of his consecration as bishop. On May 19, a black bear was seen on campus by Fathers leaving in the early afternoon for their weekend parish assignments. ... On May 21, **Brother Jerome Keppers (1880-1960)** was hospitalized with a stroke from which he never recovered. ... On May 24, an old landmark, the greenhouse just northwest of the infirmary, was being razed by **Father Leonard Feeney (1908-1980)** and a crew of boys who are clearing up and landscaping the slope west of the hill. ... On May 25, Abbot Raphael and college president **Father Damian Glenn (1907-1986)** were in Seattle in connection with the government loan for construction of the new dormitory. ... On May 28, plans were being readied for considerable work on the play areas, refurbishing the exterior of the gymnasium and the theatre, painting and general maintenance. On May 31, **Abbot Raphael** and **Father Damian** represented Saint Martin's at the consecration of Bishop Thomas E. Gill as auxiliary bishop of Seattle at Saint James Cathedral.

On June 2, all hands were put to cleaning and preparing student's rooms for the Fathers who would be at the abbey next week (a retreat to be given by Father Owen Frederickson of St Bede Abbey of Peru, Illinois). ... The retreat began on June 5 and ended on June 8, followed by the corporation meeting, there was a general exodus from the abbey as the Fathers left for their various parish and graduate school assignments. ... On June 11, **Father Bede Ernsdorff (1909-1982)** attended a session in chemistry at the University of Washington. ... On June 14, six priests and five clerics attending summer sessions headed for Seattle. On June 15, Father Andrew McHugh, who had been ill with the flu for several days, left for summer studies in English at the University of Washington.

On July 10, 1956, six novices were invested by **Abbot Raphael** - three for the clerical novitiate and three for the brother's novitiate (a common novitiate for all monks was not instituted until the late 1960's, following the second Vatican Council). Michael Anderson became Frater Martin, William Naumes became Frater Matthew, and Joseph O'Brien became Frater Harold. Edward Laverdiere became Brother Bruno, Lawrence McGuire became Brother Jude, and Philip Lassila became Brother Patrick. At this time (1956), there were 1898 monks in the American Cassinese Congregation, and that number would peak above 2000 during the 1960's before undergoing a decline, to 689 in 2018. The late abbot president Martin Burne was once asked if vocations were declining for lack of commitment and (rather surprisingly, for he could be doctrinaire) he said no - this was cyclical and the numbers would turn up again. Let us pray that he was right - and in the meantime, let us pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Piers was a very valued colleague during the time I taught at Woodside Priory School near Stanford University. Among the things we shared an interest in was music. Twice weekly, for much of a year, we traveled from the Priory to “St. Matt’s” in San Mateo to sing in the excellent church choir. At Easter, we rehearsed and lustily sang out a chorus from Mascagni's one act opera “Cavalleria rusticana.” “For the Lord is the giver of life to all...” While I loved the piece, Piers did not, but sing it at Easter we did, none-the-less! I do think of that chorus at Easter and during the Easter season. The Lord is the giver of life, manifested by all of the new life which envelopes us at this season of the year as I write, the Abbey’s star magnolia is just blossoming, but His own life-giving Resurrection which we celebrate at Easter.

The early months of this year have been times when members of the monastic community have received public recognition. **ABBOT NEAL ROTH** was awarded its Distinguished Leader Award by Leadership Thurston County. The award, which was presented at an awards dinner in a local hotel, honored **ABBOT NEAL**’s twenty years of service as a spiritual and compassionate community leader, an advocate for education, and for being the living embodiment of the Benedictine values of hospitality, stewardship, stability, and peace. **PRIOR NICOLAUS WILSON** led the contingent of Abbey members attending. The University president and many members of the greater Abbey and University communities also were in attendance.

FATHER GEORGE SEIDEL received the University’s Distinguished Alumni award during a luncheon held in connection with the University’s 2018 Homecoming celebrations. **FATHER GEORGE** is a 1950 graduate of Saint Martin’s High School, and a 1955 graduate of the college. A gifted musician, **FATHER GEORGE** holds a doctorate in philosophy, is a published author, and has taught philosophy at Saint Martin’s to generations of students. He used to have a regular “gig” playing improvised jazz at a local restaurant, is a member of a jazz combo, the Professors Three, and is a favorite entertainer at the alumni association’s annual Food and Wine Festival. **FATHER GEORGE** is the Abbey organist, a member of the Abbey Schola, and a long-time valued confrere.

On the same afternoon, our Abbey historian and archivist **FATHER GERARD KIRSCH** “Father ‘G.’” to many of his students, was inducted into the University’s Hall of Fame and of Honor. This Hall recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to athletics here at Saint Martin’s. While not an athlete himself, **FATHER GERARD** has for years acted as chaplain to our teams and rarely misses a home game, always (naturally!) on the side of the home team. Like **FATHER GEORGE**, **FATHER GERARD** is a graduate of both our late high school and Saint Martin’s College. His Kirsch/Monda family has long had an association with our Abbey and schools. Our late confrere **FATHER GEORGE MONDA** was a great uncle; **FATHER CHRISTOPHER ABAIR**, deceased, a cousin. **BROTHER BASIL KIRSCH**, a long-time member of Assumption Abbey, North Dakota, when he died several Christmases ago, was one of **FATHER GERARD**’s three brothers. In addition to his passionate interest in history and historical genealogy, **FATHER GERARD** plays the piano for his pleasure and has done some composition. A work of Madelaine L’Engle that he set to music has been performed in liturgical settings at Saint Placid Priory, where **FATHER GERARD** has long acted as chaplain.

FATHER PAUL WECKERT, vocation director, and **FATHER PETER TYNAN**, member of the Abbey’s vocation team and University chaplain, recently hosted a group of RCIA students who were here to learn about the Abbey... **PRIOR NICOLAUS** still has not moved into the official suite of rooms assigned to the Abbey Prior. **BROTHER MARK BONNEVILLE**, director of our physical plant, **PRIOR NICOLAUS**, and others are in the process of “refreshing” the rooms, which have not had a new paint job or major work done on them since the monastery building was new - and it will celebrate its 60th “birthday” next year! ... **ABBOT NEAL** and **FATHER KILIAN MALVEY** traveled to Southern California early in the year at the behest of the Alumni/Advancement Office of the University. At about the time you read this they will be on another friend-building trip for the University to Hawaii.

May you have a blessed Eastertide.
May the Lord bless you and your life in abundance!

“Where Have All The Oblates Gone?” Oblate Mary Randall

Now that I have retired and able to attend more of our Oblate meetings, I find it somewhat depressing, that so many Oblates are gone from our midst. Many have died and are living in heaven for sure. And God rest their souls. However, I suspect many are like the Master in the parables who invited many of his friends to dinner only to find out they had plenty of excuses not to attend.

When I first entered our Oblates program here at Saint Martin’s Abbey in 1985, I was one of twenty who entered within a two-year period. The majority of them came from Sacred Heart and St. Michael’s parishes. Over the years, I saw many of them drop out with some of them having genuine reasons for doing so. Especially those who moved out of state.

As I look at our active membership today, three quarters of our Oblates live in other cities and towns “two fields afar” as the Irish would say. Yet, our local membership of Tumwater, Olympia, Lacey, Shelton, and Yelm has dropped in numbers substantially.

As I reflect on the number of our priest monks who contribute their ministries to these local faith communities, I ponder why there are not more lay people “with an attitude of gratitude” joining our ranks to carry out the mission of the Gospel through the lens of Benedictine spirituality. Where does recruitment lie? With the Abbey monks, our Abbey Oblates, or perhaps both.

As we enter into the season of spring, may we all reflect on how better we can spread the joy that being Benedictine brings to our lives. How the shared prayer life and deep sense of community enriches every one of us. It is a treasure, indeed, that we are called to share with others seeking deeper meaning to their lives.

In the Spirit of Saint Benedict,
Oblate Mary Randall

Oblates Mission Statement

We, the Benedictine Oblates of the Saint Martin’s Abbey, according to our particular vocation in life and our personal commitment to the Benedictine community of Saint Martin’s endeavor through prayer, hospitality, listening to others, and service, to live the values found in the Holy Rule of St. Benedict.

Prayer Requests

Oblate Margaret Mazeski who is hospitalized with pneumonia.
Oblate Michael Roberts who struggles daily with health issues.
Oblate Michael Wilson who lives with health issues.
Oblate Robert St. Clair.
For the elderly and those without companionship.
For vocations to St. Martin’s Abbey.

God's Faceless Selves by Father Benedict Auer, O.S.B.

Searching for God

may be my full time occupation:
looking down the alleyways of life,
and searching maps too soon obsolete,
yet finding only clues which soon peter out.

Inklings of this Creator

fill out the contours of my day:
from a moonstruck morning madness
to an afternoon misted in clouded reverie
until a nighttime terror enshrouds my godless way.



So I am on the lookout
with an Elijah-ed earnestness for a semblance of
my God shadowed somewhere
on my cave walled self, yet I hear
only what I want echoing in my waxed shut ears.

Image found at www.hrreview.co.uk

My fearsome occupation

is to see that ultimate face peering
into mine with an awesomeness too much
that I am slay-ed on the spot, yet each day
I miss His countenance because I close my mind's eye:
yet He daily fills my life with thousands of faceless Selves.

MONASTIC PRAYER SCHEDULE

During Summer, Christmas and Spring Breaks

Weekdays

Morning Prayer 6:25 am
Mass 8:00 am
Midday Prayer 12:00 noon
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

Saturdays

Morning Prayer 6:25 am
Mass 8:00 am
Midday Prayer 12:00 noon
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

Sunday

Morning Prayer 8:00 am
Mass 11:00 am
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

During the School Year

Weekdays

Morning Prayer 6:25 am
Midday Prayer 12:00 noon
Mass 5:00 pm
Evening Prayer 7:30 pm

Saturdays

Morning Prayer 6:25 am
Mass 8:00 am
Midday Prayer 12:00 noon
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

Sunday

Morning Prayer 8:00 am
Mass 11:00 am
Evening Prayer 5:00 pm

**You are always welcome to share in the prayer life
at the Abbey.**

May 6th —Oblate Community Sunday

Come join us for Mass in the Abbey church at 11 A.M. Join us for social time. Food is available for purchase in the student cafeteria

At 1:30 attend a presentation in the Abbey Church where Father Peter will speak on “Vainglory, the Forgotten Vice.”

Those wanting to be invested or make their Oblation please notify Brother Edmund so he can prepare.

Oblate Community dates for

May 28th at 1:30 PM Sister Gertrude will be at the Abbey for the monks community retreat. You are welcome to attend her talks in the Abbey church.

June 29– July 1st Regional Oblate and Directors Conference at St. Martin’s in Lacey, WA.

July 8th picnic Presentation by Anatha Attar on “Pilgrimage Making Travel Sacred”

September 9th (day of Investitures and Oblations) Br. Luke will give a presentation on “Benedictines & Ecology”

August 11th Oblate Retreat at Lambert Lodge Sister Laura Swan presenter.

December 2nd presenter Father Kilian.

Northwest regional conference: You are the hosts.

St. Martin’s Oblates are hosting the Regional Oblate and Directors meeting in 2018 here at St. Martin's University June 29 - July 1st.

Oblates, we need you to get actively involved with the Regional Conference NW NAABOD June 29-July 1st volunteer for duties such as greeters, golf cart drivers, registration tables, please come to the next meeting on February the 24th at 10 a.m. in the Student Cafeteria. A sign-up sheet will be on the name tag table in the atrium on the Oblate Community Sunday, March 4th.

Subject matter will be taken from the World Congress of Oblates (Oblate Bene Reece and Brother Edmund will attend this November) and each participating community will distill the wisdom they learned to the rest of the Oblates. All Oblates are welcome to attend. Conference registration form is included in this newsletter on page 10.

Northwest North American Association of Benedictine Oblate and Directors (NW NAABOD)

This wonderful event is approaching fast. Every Oblate is encouraged to participate in this conference. If you can't make the three days try attending on Saturday. Registration can be found on page 10 of this newsletter. We still need your help. The following positions are available.

Greeters. Job entails helping people get settled in to their dorm room and finding their way around.

2 openings

Golf cart drivers to transport people around campus to prayers and meals.

Friday shift evening prayers and return from meal. (4:30 to 6:15)

Saturday shift 6:10 pickup, 8:30 return to Spangler hall and 11:45 to Noon prayers.

One opening

Saturday shift PM. Transport from Lunch to Spangler 1pm, 4:45 to evening prayers, 6:15 from meal to Spangler hall.

One opening

Sunday 7AM breakfast, 8:30 Spangler Hall. 11AM Mass. 1 pm return to Spangler hall.

2 openings.

Audio visual helper, in case we get stuck with the technology. **One opening.**

Small group Facilitator aides in discussions and note taking.

Four openings

Please contact Brother Edmund via email or phone

Brother Edmund at 360-438-4457

Email: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

For this conference we are presenting a visual poster of the volunteer work we do. These pictures will tell the story of St. Martin's Oblates in action. Each Community involved with this coming conference has been asked to do the same project. Please send in a photo of yourself doing some sort of volunteer work. And or a list of your volunteer work in parish or the greater community. The address is above.

NW NAABOD Conference
 "Benedictine Oblates in Movement"
 St. Martin's Abbey and St. Placid's Priory
 June 29-July 1, 2018

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name:			
Mailing Address:		City:	State: Zipcode:
Emergency contact:		Phone:	
E-Mail:			
Monastery/Priory:			

Cost		
Single room, shared bath, conference and meals(2 bks, 2 Lunches, 2 Dinners)	\$185.00	
Double room, shared bath, conference and meals(2 bks, 2 Lunches, 2 Dinners)	\$165.00	
Meals (2 bks, 2 Lunches, 2 Dinners) and conference	\$100.00	
Just conference no meals	\$50.00	
Just Saturday conference with meals (Lunch and dinner)	\$65.00	
Early arrival lodging, June 28th, no meals	\$65.00	
Late departure lodging, July 2nd, no meals	\$65.00	

Please indicate if you have special needs of mobility or dietary restrictions.

For those attending on Saturday only please arrive between 8 and 9 A.M. At Spangler Hall.

Total _____

Amount paid: _____

**Please make Checks payable to:
 St. Martin's Abbey Oblates**

Balance due May 31, 2018.
 Please add extra \$25.00 for late payments.

Please complete this form and return it with your payment to:
 Br. Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B. Oblate Director
 St. Martin's Abbey 5000 Abbey Way SE Lacey, WA 98503

Questions or concerns contact Br. Edmund Ebbers: 360-438-4457 Email: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

VISION STATEMENT WORKSHEET

Oblates at our last meeting were asked to think about the future of Oblates in the world. They filled out this questionnaire. If you were not at the meeting or have more to say please fill out this questionnaire and send your responses to:

Benedetta Reece at anforait@yahoo.com

Benedetta Reece St. Michael Parish, 1208 11th Ave SE, Olympia, WA 98507.

The deadline for returning this form to us in June 30, 2018.

In rating the statements, 1 as of least importance and 10 as of greatest importance. Circle the number.

Statement No. 1: The Rule as our living tradition

On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is it for the Congress to concentrate on this in 2021?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your reflections:

Statement No. 2: Listening through prayer and contemplation

How important is it for the Congress to concentrate on this in 2021?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your reflections:

Statement No. 3: Oblate Formation to ensure the future

How important is it for the Congress to concentrate on this in 2021?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your reflections:

Statement No. 4: The Oblate as the Good Steward

How important is it for the Congress to concentrate on this in 2021?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your reflections:

Statement No. 5: Oblates are networked

How important is it for the Congress on this in 2021?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Your reflections:

GOOD WORKS

Contact Brother Edmund at 360-438-4457

Email: br_edmund@stmartin.edu

Oblate Advisory Meeting

Time: 10:00AM

Place: Guest dining room lower floor across from the refectory (monastic dining room)

2018: May 5th, July 7th, Sept. 8th, Dec. 1st.

If you are interested in becoming more involved please contact Brother Edmund.

LAMBERT LODGE WORK

Time: 10:00 - 3:00

Some time in October 2018

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

Gardening and Wood:

Saturdays 1:00pm to 3:30pm

Gardeners to tend the roses and cemetery and Abbey gardens are needed. Please call Br. Edmund to schedule a time.

Rosary Makers will meet:

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

The First Saturday of each month except in Sept. will be 8th and no meeting in July.

We have supplies and will teach you how. There are never enough Rosaries for the Missions and Military. Your help is greatly appreciated

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

Reminder in case you misplaced or forgot to renew your Oblation.

Renewal of Oblation

I renew my oblation as an Oblate of St. Benedict of the community of St. Martin's Abbey. I promise again to serve God and all people according to the Rule of St. Benedict.

Let us Pray:

God, most compassionate and loving, strengthen me in my commitment to follow you in the way of St. Benedict. Through my daily prayer and work may I be inspired to live in Christ and to bring His love to the world and His peace to all hearts. I make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Oblate Signature: _____

Date: _____

Oblation Renewals: Attached is a form. Please fill out and return to the Oblate Director with your offering. If you don't normally make a contribution during the year, this would be a fine time to make an offering. Mail your form to the Oblate Director Brother Edmund Ebbers, O.S.B.

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

We received letters of gratitude.

The St. Martin's Oblates sent gifts totaling \$600 for the support of AIM (Alliance of International Monastic's serving the poorest of the poor in 3rd World countries) and the Educational Apostolate at Sant' Anselmo which assists with scholarships to educate the poorer monastic's in the world.