



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

February, 2009



February Meeting

The next Oblate meeting is on February 15 and will begin at 3:30 in the Gallagher Room. If the meeting needs to be cancelled because of weather, it will be posted on the website at : <http://oblates.gastonhobbit.org>.

Abbot Placid to Teach Prayer

Abbot Placid will be leading the discussion on February 15 on Prayer in the Benedictine Tradition, in particular the Liturgy of the Hours. I hope you will all make a special effort to attend.

Lenten Observances

Lent will soon be upon us and St. Benedict calls on us to ...*deny [ourselves] some food, drink, sleep, needless talking and idle jesting, and look forward to holy Easter with joy and spiritual longing.*

One of my favorite shows is "Clean Sweep," where a family is challenged to make a clean sweep of one or two rooms in their house and get rid of all the clutter. Usually they are amazed at how much "clutter" they have accumulated and how much they really did not need.



So, how have you been accumulating "treasure" during the past year? How much of it is essential and how much is just the temporary treasures that we thought were important at the time? The Desert Fathers and Mothers, which are so popular with many of you, were constantly reminding us about

how little was essential in life. They were absorbed with only one treasure, Jesus Christ, and many had a clear understanding of what was essential and what was not.

Many of us maintain busy schedules: family, work, volunteer obligations, etc. All of these take up the bulk of our day and many complain that they do not have time to pray as they would like because of it. Possessions can clutter up our homes, but schedules can clutter up the mind and heart as well.

So perhaps this Lent we can make a "Clean Sweep" of our lives and see how much is "clutter" and how much is essential? Take the time to look honestly at how we spend our money and give our time. Read Chapters 39, 40, and 49 of the Rule (they are short) and take to heart what Benedict asks of us. But do not forget the warning in Chapter 49:

⁸*Everyone should, however, make known to the abbot what he*

intends to do, since it ought to be done with his prayer and approval. ⁹Whatever is undertaken without the permission of the spiritual father will be reckoned as presumption and vainglory, not deserving a reward. ¹⁰Therefore, everything must be done with the abbot's approval.

Perhaps it would be wiser not to ask all 130 Oblates to seek the abbot's approval. You should ask your confessor, spiritual director, or a close confidant (spouses can be very honest here!) for advice and follow that person's counsel. Remember, "*nothing harsh, nothing burdensome.*" What you are seeking is a change of life style that you can continue after Lent – and few of us are called to the desert!

Lenten Alms

At the last meeting it was agreed to maintain our tradition of giving a donation to AIM-USA:

<http://www.aim-usa.org/index.asp?pagename=lenten>

We usually make this donation together in the name of the Abbey. Please send any checks to Gail Warlick, Office of the Abbot, 100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, Belmont, NC 28012. We did not set an amount but please be as generous as possible.

Novena in Honor of St. Benedict

March 21 is the Commemoration of the Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict. In anticipation, all Oblates are encouraged to participate in a novena beginning March 12. The Novena prayer follows:

Glorious Saint Benedict, sublime model of virtue, pure vessel of God's grace! Behold me humbly kneeling at your



feet. I implore you in your loving kindness to pray for me before the throne of God. To you I have recourse in the dangers that daily surround me. Shield me against my selfishness and my indifference to God and to my neighbor. Inspire me to imitate you in all things. May your blessing be with me always, so that I may see and serve Christ in others and work for His kingdom.

Graciously obtain for me from God those favors and graces which I need so much in the trials, miseries and afflictions of life. Your heart was always full of love, compassion and

mercy toward those who were afflicted or troubled in any way. You never dismissed without consolation and assistance anyone who had recourse to you. I therefore invoke your powerful intercession, confident in the hope that you will hear my prayers and obtain for me the special grace and favor I earnestly implore.

(mention your petition)

Help me, great Saint Benedict, to live and die as a faithful child of God, to run in the sweetness of His loving will, and to attain the eternal happiness of heaven.

Amen.

Wisdom from the Desert



There was a brother who renounced the world, gave all his possessions to the poor except for a certain amount which he kept for himself, and then went to Abba Antony. The old man soon understood what the situation was. "If you will," he said, "please go into the village and buy meat. Dispose it all over your naked body and come back to me."

When he had done this, birds as well as dogs attacked his whole body to get at the meat, and tore him with beak and claw. On coming back he was asked by Antony if he

had done what was asked of him. "Just look at my torn flesh," he replied. "Anyone who renounces the world," said Antony, "and keeps money back for himself, is torn as you are, but by demons."

Oblate Website

The newsletter can contain so much and there is a large amount of material that does not get into the newsletter each month. Much of this material is on the Oblate website at <http://oblates.gastonhobbit.org>. This is a temporary domain which will be moved in the next couple of months. In the meantime I wanted to show you what you are missing if you are not going to the site. The following is a list of titles posted just in January:

Discipleship and a Call to Repentance
A Peek at new Psalter
Abba Antony: You are in Need of Prayer
The Vatican YouTube Site
Mass and Prayer Service for Unborn
For God's Littlest Ones, Elegy To The Unborn
Right to Life Petition
A Pro-life Prayer for Every Day
March for Life Prayer
Novena to Our Lady of Guadalupe
Prayer for the President and All Government Officials
Interview with God
When God reveals to you that the time is right
Lectio Divina as School of Prayer

Litany of Saint Maurus
Keeping the Commandments
Being a Benedictine Oblate
Pray without Ceasing
New Year's Resolutions
The Monastic Way of Conversion
Why Benedictine?
Pyotterius is Taught Humility
To Love the Lord God with all one's heart (RB 4:1)
A Mother's Love
New Sub-Prior Appointed
Oblate Guidelines

As soon as news or material is available, it is posted on the website. There are several videos that are very popular. The site is updated usually two to three times a week. This is your website, so do not be afraid to offer comments, articles, or suggestions. Just email them to gkcobb0428@gmail.com.

The Ordo

Listed are the Feast days and Memorials that are observed at the Monastery and follows the Ordo of the American Cassinese Congregation. You can also see the observed feast days by going to: <http://oblates.gastonhobbit.org/ordo>

FEBRUARY

- 15 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week II)
- 21 Peter Damian, Bishop, Religious, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
- 22 Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week III)
- 23 Polycarp, Bishop, Martyr. Memorial.

LENT BEGINS

On Ash Wednesday and the three following days, the psalms and canticles are those of the Fourth Week of the Psalter.

- 25 Ash Wednesday (Week IV)
- 26 Walburga, Abbess, Secondary Patron, Belmont Abbey. Solemnity.

MARCH

- 1 First Sunday of Lent (Day of Fast and Abstinence for Catholics (Week I)
- 8 Second Sunday of Lent (Week II)
- 9 Frances of Rome, Married Woman, Religious Founder, Co-patron of Benedictine Oblates. Optional commemoration
- 12 Novena in honor of our holy father Benedict begins
- 15 Third Sunday of Lent. (Week III)
- 19 Joseph, Husband of the Virgin Mary, Solemnity
- 21 Passing of Our Holy Father Benedict, Abbot, Solemnity

March Meeting

Our next meeting will be March 15, 2009.