



# Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

September, 2013



## September Meeting

The next Oblate meeting is on September 20th, and will begin at 3:30 in the Gallagher Room. First and Second year Novices will meet at 2:30, also in the Gallagher Room.

## Oblate Formation

Based on the program you are attending, please reflect on the following questions before the meeting:

### First Year Novices:

What is going on in your life right now?  
Why do you wish to become an Oblate of St Benedict?  
What words or phrases in the Prologue do you find challenging? Inviting?

### Oblates:

#### Chapter 1 In Spite of Love

- What are the three types of love, and which of them is the best?
- As an Oblate what is your definition of unconditional love?
- Why does peace and love flow from unconditional love?
- Look at RB 4 "tools of good works" and find examples of how St. Benedict demonstrates unconditional love.

#### Chapter 2 Hear I Am

- *Hineni* means "Here I am" (A wonderful Hebrew phrase) (p.13, 2nd line)
- God calls Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah and they respond with "Here I am"
- The response is that of love. In prologue (58:9) Isaiah inspires us with his words of God, "you shall call and the Lord shall answer."
- How does Benedict inspire us in Prologue 14-18 when he leads up to saying "Here I am"?
- Write about how as an oblate your heart is moved and inspired to say "Here I am" to God.

#### Chapter 3 Quick-ey'd love

- In your life how does God have his loving eyes on me at every moment?
- Hearing John say "If God so loved us, we also must love one another (1 John 4:11)
- How in your life as an Oblate has God been a Hound of Heaven?
- Did this bring you to quick-ey'd love?
- How as an Oblate with the prayers we do, do we stop hiding our face from God and look into his eyes?

- Please use this next phrase for your *Lectio Divina*: When I rest my Gaze in God no matter what I call it, I am in prayer. Let the group know how God moved you during this time.

## Chapter 4

- When St. Benedict writes the question (RB prologue 15) "Is there any one here who yearns for life and desires to see good days?" Do you feel a hunger for God? Do you respond with a heart that says "yes I do?"
- Give examples. In this section of the prologue Benedict continues "Let peace be your quest and aim. Ps 33[34].
- Do you feel a peace in your heart? A peace that lets you live a good life? Do you feel that being an Oblate has been part of the cause of this? Continuing on (RB, prologue 18; Isaiah 58:9)- Benedict writes "My eyes will be upon you and my ears will listen for your prayers: and even before you ask me, I will say to you: Here I am."
- What are ways that Oblates have learned to pray in order to make this contact with God? Will these prayer techniques help us to remain in God's presence?

## Advice on Journaling

Whether you follow a reading plan or just read what you feel lead to, journaling is a great benefit to your daily devotional routine. Second years are being encouraged to keep journals



for their own spiritual development. This is a good practice for everyone who practices *Lectio Divina* but also everyone trying to develop a deeper relationship with God. As with *Lectio*, journaling is a discipline that requires both persistence and discipline.

"All spiritual disciplines and practices, including journaling, are about learning to be aware and awake, open to God, ourselves and the world around us. Journaling is meant to give clarity to your day and rest to your night, reminding you even when you are not writing in your journal that God

is there with you, in and through it all.”<sup>1</sup> Here is a short “checklist”:

1. Purchase a Journal to write in. This can be a simple spiral bound notebook or one bound in leather. Today we also have the option of using a computer. Some people put their journal on a password protected thumb drive. There are also on-line journals that can be used but I don't recommend them – nothing on-line is totally protected. My own preference is a software program call “The Journal” by DavidRM Software (which is cheaper than Microsoft Office or Word Perfect) and can be both password protected and encrypted. What you put in your journal are suppose to be your personal thoughts, your own encounter with your Creator. They are not meant for anyone else unless you specifically choose to share them.

Another thought would be to keep a small pad of paper with you so you can right down thoughts during the day and then transfer them later into your permanent journal. I have seen this done by a couple of monks of the monastery. This is particularly helpful with *Lectio*.

2. Have a specific time – make it an important meeting. If you don't the pressures of daily life will allow this special time to slip away.

3. Always start with a prayer for guidance (RB Prologue:4)

4. Write down any thoughts that come to you from *Lectio*.

5. Write down what you wish to share with God. Don't hold back, He is “big” enough to handle your concerns – and even complaints. I often think about Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*. He trust God, spoke to him all the time, he shared his worries, his joys, his anger and his disappointments.

6. Don't forget to set some spiritual goals and go back and review them periodically.

7. Close with prayer. Remember, the whole purpose is to deepen your relationship with God.

### Desert Wisdom

It was said of Abba Gelasius that he had a leather Bible worth eighteen pieces of silver. In fact it contained the whole of the Old and New Testaments. He had put it in the church so that any of the brethren who

wished, could read it. A strange brother came to see the old man and, seeing the Bible, wished to have it, and stole it as he was leaving. The old man did not run after him to take it from him, although he knew what he was doing.



So the brother went to the city and tried to sell it, and finding a purchaser, he asked thirteen pieces of silver for it. The purchaser said to him, 'Lend it to me, first, so that I may examine it, then I will give you a price.' So he gave it to him. Taking it, the purchaser brought it to Abba Gelasius for him to examine it and told him the price which the seller had set. The old man said to him, 'Buy it, for it is beautiful, and worth the price you tell me.' This man when he returned, said something quite different to the seller, and not what the old man had said to him. 'I have shown it to Abba Gelasius,' he said, 'and he replied that it was dear, and not worth the price you said.' Hearing this, he asked, 'Didn't the old man say anything else?' 'No,' he replied. Then the seller said, 'I do not want to sell it any more.'

Filled with compunction, he went to find the old man, to do penance and ask him to take his book back. But he did not wish to make good his loss. So the brother said to him, 'If you do not take it back, I shall have no peace.' The old man answered, 'If you won't have any peace, then I will take it back.' So the brother stayed there until his death, edified by the old man's way of life.

### 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://oblatesosbbelmont.org/ordo/>.

#### OCTOBER

20 Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week I)  
27 Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week II)  
28 Simon and Jude, Apostles. Feast.

#### NOVEMBER

1 All Saints. Solemnity.  
2 Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed.  
3 Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week III)  
4 Charles Borromeo, Bishop. Memorial.  
9 Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome. Feast.  
10 Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week IV)  
11 Martin of Tours, Bishop. Feast.  
16 Gertrude the Great, Virgin, Religious. Memorial.  
17 Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time. (Week I)

<sup>1</sup>Journaling as a Spiritual Practice, Helen Cepero, p. 12

