



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

November, 2011



November Meeting

The next Oblate meeting is on Sunday, November 20 at 3:30 p.m. in the Gallagher Room.

Oblate novices will hear Paul Marvin lead a discussion on Lectio Divina. Paul has started attending the novice class. He has been practicing Lectio for years, but first began teaching it about five years ago as Catechist at his Anglican church. "It turned out to be the single most important thing we did together," Paul said. "The teenagers especially really loved it." Paul continues to teach it to adult Sunday schools, Bible studies and church workshops.

Novices may also continue reviewing "Part One: Everyday Life" in "Finding Sanctuary" by Abbot Christopher Jamison (ISBN:13:978-0814631683).

Brother Edward asked that the oblates read four items for the meeting:

- 1) Chapter 9 on short prayer from "Toward God" by Fr. Michael Casey, OSCO. (Brother Edward said he realizes he is jumping around the chapters, but just flow with it.)
- 2) The prologue to The Rule.
- 3) The first chapter of "The Life of Our Most Holy Father Saint Benedict."
- 4) The Lord's Prayer, to chew on its meaning and context related to the other readings.

Free copies of "The Life" were distributed to oblates who attended the last meeting. If you missed it there will be additional copies at the meeting.

First year oblate novices will meet in the Gallagher Room one hour before regular meetings.

Notification of changes in meeting times

At the last meeting the Oblates agreed on some procedures in case meetings need to be canceled or postponed due to bad weather. The website, <http://www.oblatesosbbelmont.org>, will be updated and an email sent the Friday before the meeting if road conditions are anticipated to be bad. Joan Link, ObISB, has volunteered to call any oblates without Internet access. Please let her know if you have not given her your phone number and you need to be called. If Joan is out of town that weekend, Gary Nielson, ObISB, will call them.



Creating a "secret place" to encounter the Lord

"The cell is above all the place where the monk encounters God. It is a physical space, yet a space 'in accordance with the image of one's inward nature.'... The primary tools of the cell are solitude, silence, listening, and the Spirit." (Keller, Oasis of Wisdom, p. 51)

"The spiritual life, however, is not limited solely to participation in the liturgy. The Christian is indeed called to pray with his brethren, but he must also enter into his chamber to pray to the Father, in secret; yet more, according to the teaching of the Apostle, he should pray without ceasing." (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*: 12)

Our Lord set the example for all his followers and commanded us: "*But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who is in secret will reward you* (NRSV Matt. 6:6). It is taken for granted that monks have a cell -- a place apart where he encounters God. But what of the Oblate who is trying to live the Rule outside of the monastery and a different vocation. It is no different. Jesus did not say only monks, nuns, priests, are to go to their secret room -- he commanded all of us to enter our secret room. This is essential for anyone wanting to progress spiritually.

In the past the very wealthy would have a chapel built for their own personal prayer space but in the modern world a special chapel is a luxury. But also finding any space in a house that you can create a "cell" or personal prayer space can be a challenge -- but it can be done. We all know the difficulties: work, phone calls, families, friends, neighbors, dozens of ways we are in the world today distracted. But it is particularly when we are most stressed, when there is the most noise that you need this "cell."

Abba Markos spoke to Abba Arsenios: 'Why do you flee from us?' The the elder said to him: 'God knows that I love you. But I cannot be with God and [at the same

time] with men. The thousands and myriads [of angels] above have [but] one will; men, though, have many wills. I cannot leave God and go among men.

See, monastic life does not sound so different from family life! Finding that balance between being with God and being "among men." is the biggest struggle.

So what do we look for in a "cell."

First, it should be in accordance with the image of one's inward nature and a place where one can be alone, for prayer is a "conversation with the mind of God, in which the presence of others can be a distraction (Bunge. Earthen Vessels, p. 55).

Second, it should be as secluded and peaceful as possible. Well, as secret as family life will allow. Having anywhere "secret" with small children is very difficult, but as children grow they will learn not to disturb you -- especially if you set a particular time. And through your example they will learn to imitate you.

Third, the space should be marked with a cross or crucifix as well as a candle, both symbols of Jesus. Placing a bible at the spot will re-enforce that the area not be disturbed -- particularly if the bible is left open. Lighting the candle also marks the beginning of prayer.

Fourth, placing one or two special icons, pictures, or statues helps to designate the space further as being special -- but not so many that they become a distraction;

Lastly, place in the space or near the different items you need for prayer. Beside the bible you could include the Liturgy of the Hours, prayer books, rosary.

That's it. It does not have to be a chapel, just a "secret place" where we can encounter our Creator, Brother, and our Guide.

- George Cobb

Just Chant!

One day, while driving around Charlotte and listening to the radio, Lady Gaga's 'Just Dance' happened to come



on. It gave Abbey Sophomore Anthony Wyatt the crazy idea that someone should make a parody of it about monks and call it "Just Chant." So he sat down with his guitar and crafted a song, which he uploaded to YouTube "for the world to see." You can listen to it if you have a computer and go to YouTube.com and search for "Anthony Wyatt monks."

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/>.

NOVEMBER

20 Christ the King. Solemnity. (Week II)
21 Presentation of the Virgin Mary, Memorial
22 Cecilia, Memorial.
24 Andrew Dung-lac and His Companions, Memorial.
SEASON OF ADVENT
27 First Sunday of Advent (Week I)
30 Red Mon. Andrew,* Apostle. Feast.

DECEMBER

3 Francis Xavier, Memorial.
4 Second Sunday of Advent. (Week II)
7 Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church. Memorial.
8 Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Solemnity.
11 Third Sunday of Advent. (Week III)
12 Our Lady of Guadalupe. Feast.
13 Lucy, Memorial
14 John of the Cross, Memorial.
18 Fourth Sunday of Advent. (Week IV)

Meeting in December

Oblates will meet in December on the 18th. Should you have any questions, please contact:
George K. Cobb, ObISB, Belmont Abbey Monastery
100 Belmont-Mt. Holly Road, Belmont, NC 28012
gkcobb0428@gmail.com.