



Oblates of St. Benedict Belmont Abbey

January, 2012



Meeting in January

Oblates will meet in January on the 15th. Should you have any questions, please contact:

The meeting will be held as usual in the Gallagher Room. Oblate 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 continue reading and reflecting on 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. It is freely available on the Internet but a pdf copy is available on the Oblate website.

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



Going on a mission

Chapter 4 of the Rule of St. Benedict admonishes us to "First of all love the Lord God with your whole heart, your whole soul and all your strength, and love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt 22:37-39, Mark 12:30-31; Luke 10:27)

Later in ch4; verses 10-19, "Renounce yourself in order to

follow Christ; Discipline your body, do not pamper yourself, but love fasting. You must relieve the lot of the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick and bury the dead. Go to help the troubled and console the sorrowing."

It is based on my understanding of this part of the rule that I go to Costa Rico.

On January 15 I will leave with ten others to fly to San Jose in the Central Valley of Costa Rico. After landing, we will be taken by bus to the community of Concepcion. There we will be quartered at Mt. Sanai Methodist Church by Pastor Alex Sanchez. Our quarters consist of 2-inch thick mattresses laid out on a concrete floor; our clothes remain in the suitcases as there is no other place to store them. We have chairs that we borrow from the dining table and need to carry them back and forth. Showers are some 50 to 75 feet across the courtyard. Hot water is questionable because of the strain on the electric breakers.

We are going to pour the concrete floors of classrooms; we erected the walls last January. We will also be building and placing the bond beams for the second floor. All this work is done in concrete as termites never hibernate in Costa Rico and wood structures have a very short lifespan. There is also the earthquake factor. All work is done by hand for two reasons; one, equipment is too expensive, secondly most equipment cannot be brought into the courtyard. We will eat meals prepared by local women of the church, a large portion of which will be rice. All materials and food are purchased by the team so as not to be a burden on the local church. Complaining is not allowed or tolerated. The work day is 7 a.m. until around 5:30 p.m. The church is used seven days a week for education and worship.

Every day starts with devotions and prayer. There are services three times during the week. Quiet time is provided for Bible reading and daily reflections. After 13 days, such a short time, we return to the states and our normal daily lives, having gained just a small idea of what it would be like to actually be a monk living in a monastery where if it gets done you do it.

God asked Moses, "What is it that you have in your hand?" My answer is a shovel, a trowel, a hammer; all to use for the glory of God. Your answer?

- Richard J Gould, ObISB

Finding God ... in service of our brothers

There is a stage in the spiritual life in which we find God in ourselves – this presence is a created effect of His love. It is a gift of His, to us. It remains in us. All the gifts of God are good. But if we rest in them, rather than in Him, they lose their goodness for us. So with this gift also.



When the right time comes for us to go on to other things, God withdraws the sense of His presence, in order to strengthen our faith. After that it is useless to seek Him through the medium of any psychological effect. Useless to look for any sense of Him in our hearts. The time has come when we must go out of ourselves and above ourselves and find Him no longer within us but outside us and above us...in service of our brothers.

- Thomas Merton, "Thoughts in Solitude"



Likeness to God

There is a likeness to God which is lost only with life itself, left to everyone by the Creator of all as evidence of a better and more sublime likeness. As far as merit is concerned, this likeness to God in us is of no importance with God, since it derives from nature, not from will or effort.

But there is another likeness, one closer to God, inasmuch as it is freely willed. It consists in the virtues and inspires the soul as it were to imitate the greatness of Supreme Good by the greatness of her virtue, and his unchangeable eternity by her unwearied perseverance in good.

In addition to this there is yet another likeness. It is so close in its resemblance that it is styled not merely a likeness but unity of spirit. It makes us one with God, one spirit, not only with the unity which comes of willing the same thing but with a greater fullness of virtue: the inability to will anything else.

- William of Saint Thierry

Recent stories on the Belmont Abbey oblates' website

- What we are called to emulate
- Truly, this is the way of love
- Psalm 100(99): In prayer we abandon ourselves to God's embrace
- Remove Rocks from the 'Stream of Life'
- Opening ourselves to the energy that comes from God
- And justice looked down from heaven

To read, go to <http://oblatesosbbelmont.org/>

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/>.

JANUARY

- 15 Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 17 Anthony, Memorial
- 21 Agnes, Memorial
- 22 Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week III)
- 24 Francis de Sales, Memorial
- 25 Conversion of Paul, Feast
- 28 Thomas Aquinas, Memorial
- 29 Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week IV)

FEBRUARY

- 2 Presentation of the Lord, Feast
- 5 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week I)
- 6 Paul Miki, Memorial
- 10 Scholastica, Feast
- 11 Our Lady of Lourdes, Memorial
- 12 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Week II)
- 14 Cyril & Methodius, Memorial

Meeting in February

Oblates will meet in January on the 19th. Should you have any questions, please contact:

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